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Wednesday
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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements1
Written Answers.....6

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

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

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

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 6 November 2024

Biodiversity COP16

[HLWS193]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: My honourable friend, the Minister for Nature, Mary Creagh MP, has made the following Written Statement:

The climate and nature crisis defines our times and it is the most vulnerable who bear the brunt. Over half of global GDP is moderately or highly dependent on nature. Loss of biodiversity poses a serious risk to global food security by undermining the resilience of many agricultural systems to threats such as pests, pathogens and climate change. The government is committed to ending poverty on a liveable planet.

The UN Biodiversity Summit (CBD COP16) held in Colombia closed on the morning of Saturday 2 November. The UK Government took a leading role in driving forward key elements of work necessary to mobilise more international finance for nature and deliver on our mission to halt and reverse nature loss. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and I led the UK delegation.

The conclusion of complex negotiations on Digital Sequence Information (DSI) means that businesses have the option of voluntarily contributing to a new fund – known as the Cali Fund – if they use this genetic information from nature. DNA that has been sequenced from the natural world is available online for use in research. This research can be applied to important work across agriculture, conservation, medicine and public health. This Fund will then support further use of DSI and the conservation and sustainable use of nature, with a significant proportion flowing to Indigenous People and local communities. Progress was made on several fronts, including the UK launching the Biodiversity Finance Trends dashboard to increase transparency and demonstrate that nature finance flows are increasing. The government welcomed the launch of the Framework for high integrity biodiversity credits markets developed by the Independent Advisory on Biodiversity Credits (IAPB) which was sponsored by the UK and France. Alongside the Framework, the IAPB also showcased a suite of pilot projects in Cali as a meaningful way to illustrate the current state of the market and its development prospects.

At the conference, the Secretary of State set out new criteria to meet our 30by30 targets, which commit to the protection of 30% of land and ocean by 2030. A newly [published update](#) outlined criteria for eligible land in England and laid out next steps to achieve this milestone, essential for nature conservation and biodiversity.

The UK was pleased that a new permanent body for Indigenous Peoples and local communities was created at COP16 to increase their formal decision-making power,

given that they live on an estimated 50% of the world's land. I launched the principles for Inclusive, Gender-Responsive, Locally-Led Biodiversity Action which will help focus and co-ordinate action to strengthen the gender equality and social inclusion aspects of the transformative change required to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and tackle the biodiversity crisis. The Secretary of State and I made commitments to increase support to the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund and join the Legacy Landscapes Fund.

The UK was however, disappointed that COP16 concluded before reaching an agreement on international strategies for mobilising nature finance. It is only through our international action and leadership that we the tackle the twin threats of climate change and biodiversity loss which threatens growth, our future prosperity and wellbeing.

Defence Nuclear Enterprise

[HLWS190]

Lord Coaker: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (John Healey) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The UK is exploring options to re-establish a nuclear fuel cycle for reactor fuel for defence purposes. The Government is committed to modernising defence nuclear fuel production under the Defence Nuclear Enterprise. We are commencing engagement with industry to develop options for how this requirement can be delivered.

The UK takes its nuclear responsibilities and obligations seriously. This fuel production cycle will be fully consistent with the UK's international obligations, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It will also be fully consistent with the UK's voluntary moratorium, established in 1995, on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The UK will continue to maintain the highest standards of safeguarding of civil nuclear materials, ensuring a separation from defence materials and complying with our obligations under the UK's Voluntary Offer Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Energy Infrastructure Planning

[HLWS192]

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath: This Statement concerns an application for development consent made under the Planning Act 2008 by West Burton Solar Project Limited for the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic array electricity generating station situated in Lincolnshire.

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must make a decision on an application within three months of the receipt of the Examining Authority's report unless exercising the power under

section 107(3) of the Act to set a new deadline. Where a new deadline is set, the Secretary of State must make a Statement to Parliament to announce it.

The current statutory deadline for the decision on the West Burton Solar Project application is 8 November 2024.

I have decided to allow a short extension and to set a new deadline of 24 January 2025 to allow time for necessary public consultation on potential variations to the application.

The decision to set the new deadline for this application is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant or refuse development consent.

Failure to Prevent Fraud: Corporate Offence Guidance

[HLWS194]

Lord Hanson of Flint: To strengthen corporate criminal liability a new offence of failure to prevent fraud was included in the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023. The offence is intended to hold large organisations to account if they profit from fraud and to drive a culture change towards improved fraud prevention procedures.

The offence will hold corporates to account if they fail to prevent a fraud that benefits them, or in some circumstances, their clients. It is limited to large organisations and partnerships only.

Organisations will have a defence in court if they can prove that they had reasonable procedures in place to prevent the fraud, or if it was not reasonable, in all the circumstances, to have any procedures in place. The Government is required to publish guidance to explain the fraud prevention procedures that organisations should have in place to have a defence in the event of prosecution.

The guidance is similar in structure to the guidance for the existing offences of failure to prevent bribery in the Bribery Act 2010 and failure to prevent the criminal facilitation of tax evasion in the Criminal Finances Act 2017. Most organisations subject to the offence will therefore be familiar with the concepts and approach set out in the guidance.

In developing the guidance, the Home Office has worked closely with prosecutors, regulators and across Government. We have also engaged with industry, including trade/ professional bodies. The Devolved Governments have also been consulted.

The guidance has been published today and is available on GOV.UK.

To allow organisations to prepare and develop their fraud prevention procedures, Government intends to commence the offence nine months after publication of this guidance.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: Winter Pressures Funding

[HLWS191]

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:

I am pleased to announce to the House, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has today taken an important step towards tackling homelessness.

The Deputy Prime Minister will chair the first cross-government Inter-Ministerial Group on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, following the confirmation at Budget of nearly £1 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. Further, my department will be providing £10 million of Rough Sleeping Winter Pressures Funding to local authorities across England this winter.

The Inter-Ministerial Group will bring together ministers from across Government to drive progress on the development of our strategy to get back on track to ending homelessness, making sure we are working across government, and in partnership with local authorities and Mayors, to tackle the root causes. This first meeting marks an important step to developing our strategy and follows the announcement at Budget of nearly £1 billion of funding for homelessness and rough sleeping for 2025/26, an increase of £233million on 2024/25. This will help to prevent the rising number of families in temporary accommodation and help to prevent rough sleeping.

The £10 million funding allocated across London and to 115 local authorities outside London will provide a range of services to tackle rough sleeping this winter in the areas with greatest rough sleeping pressures. This includes specialist support to vulnerable groups such as veterans, care leavers and victims of domestic abuse sleeping rough. It also includes support to people at risk of rough sleeping as well as immediate off-the-street accommodation and support to prevent individuals returning to the streets. Services provided from the Winter Pressures 2024/25 funding will enable local authorities to act during periods of extreme weather over winter and help save lives.

Today's announcement is a further demonstration of our commitment to getting back on track to ending homelessness, and I hope that colleagues across the House will work with me in this endeavour.

Media Mergers Regime

[HLWS189]

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 is committed to a pluralistic media landscape, where citizens are able to access information from a range of sources in order to form opinions. The

public's ability to access a wide range of news, views and information about the world in which we live is central to the health of our democracy.

The Enterprise Act 2002 gives the Secretary of State the power to intervene in media mergers if she believes one or more public interest considerations may be relevant. The Secretary of State may ultimately order a media merger to be blocked or unwound if she decides that it has operated or may be expected to operate against the public interest.

However, the media landscape has changed significantly since the Enterprise Act became law more than two decades ago. The world has changed; Ofcom's news consumption survey, published in September 2024, shows over two thirds (71%) of UK adults now access news online. It is essential that our regimes move with the times, are fit for purpose, and are future-proofed to protect the availability of a wide range of accurate and high-quality news, particularly for younger audiences, as technology and news habits evolve.

To reflect the way news is increasingly consumed and the need to protect the freedom of the press as a cornerstone of democracy, I am today launching a six-week technical public consultation on expanding the legislation which governs media mergers, to allow the Secretary of State to intervene in mergers involving a wider range of print news publications, online news publications and news programmes. This follows advice from Ofcom as part of its 2021 Statement on the Future of Media Plurality.

The consultation will seek views from industry, Parliament, and the public, on whether our proposed updates to the regime achieve our desired effects.

Oxford Nanopore Technologies: Strategic Partnership

[HLWS196]

Baroness Merron: We have announced the Government's intention to enter into a strategic partnership with Oxford Nanopore – a world-leading UK-based life sciences company whose technology is used to advance biomedical research and translate discoveries for improved patient care across cancer, genetic disease and infectious disease. This collaboration also involves NHS England and two of our world-leading scientific institutions – Genomics England and UK Biobank.

The collaboration will seek to utilise Oxford Nanopore's technology to enhance research and, using insights from the UK's genetic databases, could pave the way for new treatments for cancer and rare diseases.

The collaboration is another vote of confidence in the UK's life sciences sector, which will help kickstart economic growth and support the 10-Year Health Plan's ambition to shift the health service from analogue to digital and from sickness to prevention, helping keep patients out of hospital. The collaboration also builds on the Chancellor's commitment to support UK spinouts announced as part of the Budget.

Separately, following a successful pilot at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital, we are announcing the scale-up of NHS England's Respiratory Metagenomics Programme, offering fast track genetic testing for patients with suspected respiratory infectious diseases. Through this programme, Nanopore's sequencing technology will be rolled out from 10 to up to 30 NHS sites to detect new pathogens emerging in the UK. Patients suspected of having severe acute respiratory infections will now be diagnosed within six hours thanks to this technology, compared to the previous norm of around three days.

This will create an 'early warning system' for future pandemics, supporting the Government to take quicker action on emerging infectious disease, and monitor the threat of future pandemics.

I will provide further updates to the House on this collaboration as it develops.

Silicon Valley Bank UK: Bank of England's Transfer Power

[HLWS195]

Lord Livermore: My honourable friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Tulip Siddiq) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

In March 2023, the Bank of England used its transfer power under the Special Resolution Regime (provided for by the Banking Act 2009, as amended) to resolve Silicon Valley Bank UK by transferring ownership of the firm to HSBC UK.

Section 79A of the Banking Act 2009 requires the Bank to provide a report to the Chancellor of the Exchequer where it has used the power to make share transfer instruments or property transfer instruments to sell a firm in whole or in part to a commercial purchaser.

The Bank has provided this report to the Chancellor. The government and the Bank of England are committed to transparency concerning the application of its resolution powers so copies of the report have been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses and the report is also available on the Bank's website, www.bankofengland.co.uk.

I thank the Bank of England's staff for the dedication they demonstrated when they took swift and decisive action to protect financial stability and secure a good outcome for Silicon Valley Bank UK's customers.

South West Water: Customer Rebate

[HLWS198]

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

The Government is fixing the foundations to put public finances on a sustainable path to restore stability and taking difficult decisions on tax, welfare and spending. This includes needing to address a £22 billion black hole. To support this effort, the taxpayer-funded contribution to

the water and sewerage bills of South West Water (SWW) household customers will end after 31 March 2025.

The rebate was originally introduced in 2013 because SWW customers faced significantly higher water bills than customers in other regions due to the level of investment the company was required to make in the region's infrastructure to meet environmental and water quality standards. Over the last decade the difference between water bills in the South West region and others has decreased. Over the next Price Review period (2025-2029) Ofwat's latest projections are that SWW customers will have similar bills to those in other regions.

The Government is committed to taking action to address water poverty and help vulnerable customers with their water bills. All water companies have measures in place for people who struggle to pay for their water and wastewater services, including measures such as WaterSure, social tariffs, payment breaks and holidays, and debt management support. We expect all water companies to proactively engage with their customers to ensure they know what support schemes are available and how to use them.

Updated Ministerial Code

[HLWS197]

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

The Ministerial Code

The Government has today published an updated Ministerial Code. The Code is available on GOV.UK.

The new Code will be instrumental in setting out the high standards that the British people expect and that Ministers must follow.

Changes to the Code include incorporating the Seven Principles of Public Life directly into the Code; strengthening the powers of the Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Ministerial Standards; setting out guiding principles for Ministers on gifts and hospitality; and introducing improved transparency arrangements to align more closely the publication of ministerial gifts and hospitality with the House of Commons register.

The new Code has also been restructured into three distinct sections: Ministers' Standards of Conduct; Ministers' Interests; and Ministers and Government Procedures. This brings ethical standards to the forefront of the new Code, ending the confusing blend of public service values and everyday governing processes found in previous versions.

The new Ministerial Code also:

Reinserts an explicit reference to international law and treaty obligations as part of ministers' overarching duty to comply with the law.

Includes updated terms of reference for the Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Ministerial

Standards (previously the Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests).

Ensures the Code reflects existing rules, guidance and procedure, including the guidance on use of non-corporate communications channels for Government business, quasi-judicial decisions, and public appointments.

This new Ministerial Code will help to restore the public's trust in politics, and shape this Government's mission to return Britain to the service of working people.

The List of Ministers' Interests

The List of Ministers' Interests is also being published today on GOV.UK by the Independent Adviser on Ministerial Standards. The list provides details of the personal interests of members of the Government that are judged by the Independent Adviser to be relevant to their ministerial portfolios and duties.

The List of Ministerial Responsibilities

The Government will today be publishing the List of Ministerial Responsibilities and the List of Non-Ministerial Departments and Executive Agencies on GOV.UK. I have requested that a copy of the List of Ministerial Responsibilities be deposited in the libraries of the Houses of Parliament.

The List of Ministerial Responsibilities includes details of ministerial departments, their correspondence contact details, the Ministers within each department, and their portfolio responsibilities.

The List of Non-Ministerial Departments and Executive Agencies includes details of each of these organisations, along with associated correspondence contact details, the parent department and the responsible government minister.

The Special Adviser Code of Conduct

The Government has today published an updated Code of Conduct for Special Advisers, in line with the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. The Code is available on GOV.UK.

Alongside establishing the key responsibilities of special advisers, the updated Code of Conduct for Special Advisers sets out the standards of behaviour this Government expects of them and formalises the existing policy for managing interests.

The Code of Conduct for Special Advisers is part of special advisers' terms and conditions of service.

The Special Adviser Contract

The Government has today published an updated Special Adviser Model Contract which is available on GOV.UK. The Model Contract sets out the terms and conditions that apply to all special advisers appointed by ministers and employed by government departments.

This Government has introduced a small number of changes to the terms of the Model Contract. These are:

To require special advisers to obtain the required level of security clearance for their role within the first 4 months of starting in post.

To enable special advisers to leave government with a severance payment at the start of the pre-election period before a general election (or at the dissolution of Parliament).

To confirm that special advisers are entitled to an annual review of their salary, and the process for determining any increases in salary.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 6 November 2024

101 Calls and Emergency Calls: Standards

Asked by *Lord Wasserman*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to require all police forces in England and Wales to publish regularly up-to-date information on the time taken to answer (1) 999 calls, and (2) 101 calls. [HL1958]

Lord Hanson of Flint: 999 performance data, including time taken to answer calls, is available for forces in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland on the police.uk website.

Data is available per force from November 2021 and new data is published monthly, one month in arrears. Members of the public can order the data to show average response times by each force, and the number and percentage of calls answered under 10 seconds, between 10 and (under) 60 seconds, and at 60 seconds or longer.

Unlike 999, there has been no national, consistent dataset for 101 performance data. Officials have worked closely with Policing to obtain agreement on definitions for the key metric of 'Average Wait Time to Answer' for 101 calls.

The Home Office will continue to work with Policing towards enabling consistent 101 performance data to be published.

Afghanistan: Diplomatic Relations

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask His Majesty's Government what diplomatic representation they have in Afghanistan. [HL1950]

Lord Collins of Highbury: The British Embassy in Kabul suspended operations in August 2021. The Doha based UK Mission to Afghanistan visits Kabul regularly, raising priority UK issues directly with senior members of the Taliban, falling short of recognition. The Mission presses the Taliban on counter-terrorism, promotes the UN-led Doha process and always raises the unacceptable violations of the rights of women and girls, most recently in October 2024. Not having a permanent presence does not stop the UK from having an impact and directly helping the people of Afghanistan, as shown in the recent Independent Commission for Aid Impact report.

Airwave Service and Emergency Services Network: Expenditure

Asked by *Lord Wasserman*

To ask His Majesty's Government how much has been spent since April 2015 on (1) establishing the

Emergency Services Network, and (2) running the existing Airwave service. [HL1960]

Lord Hanson of Flint: The ESMCP 2021 Full Business Case estimated the total cost of providing critical emergency services communications between 2015/16 and 2036/37 was £11.3bn. This is the combined Airwave and legacy contracts and costs of the replacement ESN service. It assumed Airwave and legacy system costs of approximately £450m annually compared with ESN at around £250m. The annual running cost of ESN compared to Airwave and legacy costs is expected to save over £200m a year.

Asylum: Housing

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that companies providing accommodation for asylum seekers are not profiteering from them. [HL1956]

Lord Hanson of Flint: All Home Office commercial contracts are designed to ensure the best value for taxpayers and the Home Office closely monitors its contractors' performance, including financial results. All accommodation contracts contain a profit share clause, meaning that any profits above the agreed contractual mark-up are returned to the Home Office.

Aviation: Fuels

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Statement by Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill on 22 July (HLWS15), when they will introduce a Bill to establish a revenue certainty mechanism for sustainable aviation fuel; what is their assessment of the impact that delays in the introduction of the Bill have had on investment in the United Kingdom; and what progress they have made towards introducing a sustainable aviation fuels mandate to start from by 1 January 2025. [HL1946]

Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill: As announced in the King's Speech, we will legislate in this session to introduce a revenue certainty mechanism for sustainable aviation fuel. We are on track to have legislation in place by the end of 2026. We will continue to work to support the development of a UK SAF sector.

The Government will be ready to implement the SAF Mandate on 1 January 2025. The SAF Mandate statutory instrument was approved by the House of Commons on 9 September with the House of Lords approving the regulation today (6 November). The Department for Transport has shared draft guidance with obligated parties and aims to publish final versions of the guidance before the end of 2024. An IT system to administer the SAF Mandate is on track to be operational for the start of the SAF mandate scheme and is currently being tested with industry.

BlueLight Commercial: Cost Effectiveness

Asked by Lord Wasserman

To ask His Majesty's Government what cost savings have resulted from police forces in England and Wales using the services of BlueLight Commercial since its establishment in June 2020. [HL1962]

Lord Hanson of Flint: Since BlueLight Commercial's foundation in the 2020/21 financial year they have worked to deliver financial benefits within policing in England and Wales of £287 million. This includes cashable savings, efficiency savings, cost avoidance and revenue generation activity.

British Museum: Restitution

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the UK's international reputation for respect for freedom of religion of the retention by the British Museum of the Ethiopian tabots and the inability of members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church who seek their return to the places from which they were forcibly removed to access them. [HL1973]

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask His Majesty's Government when they last raised with the trustees of the British Museum the return of contested sacred objects in its collection forcibly removed from their places of origin. [HL1974]

Baroness Twycross: The government has not made an assessment, and has not raised the return of contested sacred objects with British Museum trustees.

The British Museum operates independently of the government. Decisions relating to the care and management of its collections, including the Ethiopian tabots, are a matter for its trustees.

The British Museum has a longstanding and cordial relationship with senior members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, both in Ethiopia and in London. The museum recognises the significance of the tabots and has held meaningful talks with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church on this issue. The tabots are housed in a special location in the museum which is maintained in consultation with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and overseen by a committed curatorial and conservation team. The tabots are available to be visited by Ethiopian Orthodox priests and prelates which is reflective of Church practices.

The museum's stated ambition is to lend the tabots to an Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the UK where they can be cared for by the clergy within their traditions.

Chad: Refugees

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made an assessment of the impact of funding challenges

facing refugee camps in Chad on the levels of irregular migration in Europe. [HL1997]

Lord Collins of Highbury: Sudan has the largest displacement crisis in the world. 11 million people have been forcibly displaced and over 900,000 refugees and returnees have arrived in Chad. The UK recognises the severity of the crisis and the underfunding of the international response. Alongside monitoring the humanitarian impact of the Sudan conflict and any irregular migration to Europe as a consequence, the UK continues to support Chad: we are the third-largest donor to the response in Eastern Chad, providing £19.5m since the outbreak of the conflict in April 2023. The UK has also contributed to focusing international attention on the conflict, notably through the Duchess of Edinburgh's visit to two refugee camps for Sudanese refugees in Chad in October this year.

Children: Maintenance

Asked by Baroness Hazarika

To ask His Majesty's Government how many times the Child Maintenance Service has identified inaccurate financial disclosures of the paying parent via HM Revenue and Customs; and in those cases, (1) how many times was enforcement action taken, and (2) how much maintenance was collected as a result. [HL1936]

Asked by Baroness Hazarika

To ask His Majesty's Government on how many occasions they have provided supporting evidence to assist in the prosecution of individuals committing tax fraud or avoidance following deliberate inaccurate financial disclosures to the Child Maintenance Service. [HL1937]

Baroness Sherlock: The department does not hold information on the number of inaccurate financial disclosures of the paying parent via HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). CMS take steps to ensure the child maintenance case is accurate prior to taking any enforcement actions.

The department legally relies on data from HMRC and its own benefits data to assess people's earned income and benefit status, which are key parts of the maintenance calculation. This makes it difficult for most parents to misstate their income. The receiving parent can also ask the Department to consider the paying parent's more complex earnings, such as unearned income, which are more vulnerable to fraud and error.

To ensure calculations are accurate the department continues to build on its already proportionate and cost-effective controls, such as:

- a dedicated Financial Investigation Unit who address allegations of misrepresentation and fraud;
- use of verified income from HMRC and benefit systems as outlined in legislation and a principal part of service design;

- use of child benefit systems to verify qualifying child(ren);
- procedures and policy to request additional verification; and
- a robust mandatory consideration and appeals process.

The Financial Investigation Unit conduct investigations into potential criminal offences linked to Child Maintenance such as DNA testing fraud and providing false income information to the department, this can result in prosecution through Crown Prosecution Service.

The Department publishes quarterly statistics for the [Child Maintenance Service](#) and the latest statistics are available up to [June 2024](#). Table 7: Financial Investigations Unit Actions, Great Britain, April 2017 to June 2024, in the latest [National Tables](#), does provide the available information on investigations into potential criminal offences, such as DNA testing fraud and providing false income information.

Civil Service: Equality

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Smith of Basildon on 1 October (HL1036), whether it is their intention to publish the full dataset gathered from the Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Expenditure Review. [HL2001]

Baroness Twycross: We are currently considering the Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Expenditure Review commissioned by the previous Government.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by *Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether all integrated care boards in England have been supplied with stock of both the Spikevax and the Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccines this winter. [HL2067]

Baroness Merron: The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) manages the central storage and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines for the United Kingdom's programme. For the autumn and winter programme, the UKHSA has supplied both the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine (Spikevax) and the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (Comirnaty) to the National Health Service.

NHS England works closely with the regional and integrated care board (ICB) teams to ensure they deliver the right vaccine to the right place at the right time. Every ICB has received both vaccines as part of the autumn and winter campaign.

Asked by *Lord Mendelsohn*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether immunocompromised people eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine this winter, who have had an adverse reaction

to Spikevax in the past, will be compensated if advised by local services to pay privately to access a Comirnaty vaccine. [HL2068]

Baroness Merron: Guidance from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) states that there are very few individuals who cannot receive the COVID-19 vaccines approved in the United Kingdom. Anyone concerned about possible reactions to a vaccine should in the first instance speak to the clinician responsible for their care for advice. Published UKHSA clinical guidance for health professionals and immunisation practitioners on COVID-19 vaccination includes guidance for the management of patients with a history of allergy, including circumstances where a person may be referred to an expert allergist and, after a review of the individual's risks and benefits of vaccination, and where it is indicated, they could then be vaccinated in hospital under clinical supervision. NHS England will continue to follow this clinical guidance and offer the appropriate vaccination to those who are eligible, including those who are immunocompromised, under expert supervision in a hospital setting, where appropriate.

Dangerous Dogs

Asked by *Lord McInnes of Kilwinning*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many registered XL bully dogs are aged (1) 0 or 1 years, (2) 2 or 3 years, (3) 4 or 5 years, (4) 5 or 6 years, (5) 7 or 8 years, (6) 9 or 10 years, (7) 11 years or more. [HL2028]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: The table below provides a breakdown of registered XL Bully dogs by the ages requested.

<i>Age of dog</i>	<i>Number of dogs</i>
0 or 1 years old	16,461
2 or 3 years old	26,304
4 or 5 years old*	8,849
5 or 6 years old*	4,392
7 or 8 years old	1,954
8 or 9 years old	1,039
11 years old or older	807

*Please note that 5 year old dogs have been included in both age ranges.

Dental Services

Asked by *Baroness Redfern*

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made in reforming the NHS dental contract, and what plans they have to roll out a new patient-centred system. [HL1895]

Baroness Merron: To rebuild dentistry in the long term and increase access to National Health Service

dental care, we will reform the dental contract, with a shift to focus on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists. There are no perfect payment models and careful consideration needs to be given to any potential changes to the complex dental system, so that we deliver genuine improvements for patients and the profession.

We are continuing to work with the British Dental Association and other representatives of the dental sector to deliver our shared ambition to improve access to treatments for NHS dental patients.

Disclosure of Information

Asked by Lord Kamall

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch on 28 October when she stated that they "are looking at the calls for an office for the whistleblower" and "are considering other ideas as well" (HL Deb col 911), which specific alternative ideas they are considering to assist whistleblowers. [HL2111]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: The Government is focussed on delivering the commitment in the Plan to Make Work Pay, to strengthening protections for whistleblowers, including by updating protections for women who report sexual harassment at work. The Employment Rights Bill delivers on that commitment.

Organisations and individuals have put forward many different ideas for how to strengthen the whistleblowing framework, including proposals for an office. The Government is always open to ideas.

Disinformation: Middle East

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to counter misinformation relating to the conflict in the Middle East. [HL1952]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: This department takes very seriously the threat which misinformation and disinformation related to the conflict in the Middle East can pose. We have taken a multi-faceted approach and work in lockstep with various organisations, including social media companies and other government departments such as the Foreign Office.

Ministers have been clear that major social media platforms should remove illegal content, including hate speech, along with content which is in breach of their terms of service. The major social media platforms will be bound by these responsibilities when the Online Safety Act comes into force, and ministers have been clear that platforms should not wait for regulation to be in force before taking relevant action.

Drugs: Rehabilitation

Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to publish the findings or results of Dame Carol Black's recent work on drugs in the criminal justice system. [HL2015]

Baroness Merron: There are no plans to publish Dame Carol Black's recent work on drug treatment in prisons.

Following Professor Dame Carol Black's 2021 review of drug misuse and treatment in the community, Dame Carol was asked to assess the scope, quality, and effectiveness of treatment and recovery provision in prisons in England, and the support provided by the HM Prison and Probation Service regime. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention, the Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending, the Minister for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention, and the Chief Executive of NHS England have received Dame Carol's completed report.

The Government is considering the implications of the report's findings across departments and agencies, ensuring that improved drug treatment for prisoners is part of the delivery of our Health and Safer Streets Missions.

Emergency Services Network

Asked by Lord Wasserman

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the technology underlying the new Emergency Services Network will be capable of meeting all the operational requirements of the emergency services, including 'device-to-device' communications used when the wider network is unreachable, for example in rural locations. [HL1961]

Lord Hanson of Flint: The Home Office fully understands the capabilities needed by the emergency services to transition safely to ESN, and is considering a number of options for off-network comms. Airwave will only be shut down when the conditions for a safe and timely transition to ESN have been met.

Faith Schools: VAT

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of VAT on independent school fees on small independent faith schools, particularly those educating the children of Muslim families. [HL1940]

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. This will apply to any fees charged after 29 July 2024 for terms starting after 1 January 2025.

The government has thoroughly assessed the impacts of the VAT policy on small faith schools, including considering all of the evidence submitted through the consultation process. Based on the evidence provided, it is not apparent that small faith schools will be affected more by this policy than other schools.

The government closely examined proposals put forward for how small faith schools could be carved out of the policy, concluded that any carve out would reduce the amount of revenue raised from this policy, be unfair to those schools with fees just above the threshold, and would create many tax avoidance opportunities that would be difficult for HMRC to police.

Furthermore, it is the government's position that state education is suitable for children of all faiths. All children of compulsory school age are entitled to a state-funded school place if they need one, and all schools are required to follow the Equality Act.

Further detail can be found in the summary responses published on GOV.UK.

Financial Conduct Authority

Asked by Lord Reay

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Livermore on 20 September (HL1065), what plans they have, if any, to reform the Financial Conduct Authority to help make the City of London more competitive. [HL1892]

Asked by Lord Reay

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of the Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority's proposals on mandatory equality reporting on the competitiveness of financial services companies operating in the United Kingdom. [HL1893]

Lord Livermore: The government has no plans to reform the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), but it is committed to working with the FCA to ensure that it is supporting the government's growth mission. Effective, proportionate regulation is key to a thriving UK economy and delivering the government's mission to drive the inclusive growth and international competitiveness of the UK's financial services sector.

The FCA and Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) are non-governmental bodies which are independent from the Treasury and have broad powers to make rules in order to advance their statutory objectives. The regulators are required by legislation to carry out their general functions, which include rule-making, in a way that advances their competitiveness and growth objectives.

In line with statutory requirements, the FCA and PRA have included in their consultations an explanation of the compatibility of the proposed rules with their duties, including consideration of the competitiveness and growth objectives.

Football

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk that the Football Governance Bill could prevent England from participating in international football tournaments. [HL2006]

Baroness Twycross: The Regulator will be independent from the Government, tightly focused on the financial sustainability of the game. This is consistent with UEFA's governing principles.

The FA gave evidence to the bill committee in the previous Parliament that a tightly focused bill on football governance "is not likely to present huge or significant problems" to UEFA. We have clarified the independence of the regime, by removing a clause from the previous bill requiring the Regulator to have regard to the Government's foreign policy and trade considerations to be considered when approving takeovers.

Gaza: Israel

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Reporters Without Borders article One year in Gaza: how Israel orchestrated a media blackout on a region at war, published on 3 October; and what representations, if any, they have made to the government of Israel regarding the barring of international journalists from the Gaza Strip. [HL1872]

Lord Collins of Highbury: The UK has endorsed the Media Freedom Coalition's statement, which raises concerns about the safety of journalists and their access to information due to the escalation of hostilities between Israel and Hamas, as indicated by the Reporters Without Borders article. The statement called on all parties to the conflict to comply with international law and guarantee the protection of journalists and media workers covering the conflict. The UK remains committed to Media Freedom and to championing democracy and human rights around the world. Independent media is essential to a functioning society.

Government Departments: Ethics

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to raise standards of integrity in government. [HL1951]

Baroness Twycross: The Government is a government of service and it is committed to restoring trust and

confidence in public life. The Prime Minister will soon issue his Ministerial Code which outlines the standards expected of all Ministers.

In addition, the Government will establish a new independent Ethics and Integrity Commission, with its own independent Chair. We will ensure that this Commission has the powers and remit necessary to fulfil its responsibilities.

Gulf Strategy Fund

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made a decision on continuing the Gulf Strategy Fund; if not, when the decision will be made; and what criteria were or will be considered during the policy review. [HL1908]

Lord Collins of Highbury: The Gulf Strategy Fund has an allocation of £6m for the Financial Year 2024/25. Funding for future years will be decided once we know the outcome of the Spending Review.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will review the Gulf Strategy Fund to increase transparency of how the funds are used, including by publishing details of the implementers and beneficiaries of the fund. [HL1953]

Lord Collins of Highbury: The FCDO is committed to Transparency. We are currently reviewing the transparency of the Gulf Strategy Fund, to build on the Thematic Summaries already published annually on GOV.UK. Publication of the summary for 2023/24 will follow this review.

Housing: Older People

Asked by Lord Best

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish the report of the Older People's Housing Taskforce by the end of the year. [HL1922]

Asked by Lord Best

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to address the deficit in supply of older people's housing with care and support for the ageing population. [HL1923]

Asked by Lord Best

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to address the specific needs of older people's housing in the revision of the National Planning Policy Framework and supporting guidance. [HL1924]

Asked by Lord Best

To ask His Majesty's Government what percentage of their 1.5 million target for new homes will be designed to meet the specific needs of older people. [HL1925]

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage: The Government has committed to building 1.5 million new homes over the next 5 years including those to meet the needs of older people.

This Government is committed to ensuring that new housing meets the needs of people in a local area, including older people, and these needs should be taken into account when local plans are made. The Government is carefully considering responses to the recent consultation on proposed updates to the National Planning Policy Framework, and intends to issue its response before the end of the year, alongside a revised National Planning Policy Framework.

The Government will set out plans for housing with care and support in due course.

We will provide an update in relation to the Older People's Housing Taskforce report in due course.

Imran Khan

Asked by Lord Hannan of Kingsclere

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Pakistan about the continuing detention of Imran Khan; and what assessment they have made of reports that he has been denied phone calls and visits. [HL1934]

Lord Collins of Highbury: The Foreign Secretary met with Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on 4 September and 24 October to discuss a range of key issues, including Pakistan's domestic political situation. We have consistently urged the Pakistani authorities to demonstrate their democratic credentials by acting in line with their international obligations and with respect for the fundamental freedoms of all its citizens, including the right to a fair trial, due process and humane detention.

Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture

Asked by Baroness Fookes

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to encourage the Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture to include the ornamental sector of horticulture within its remit. [HL2159]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: The Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture (TIAH) is an independent industry led organisation. Although ornamental horticulture is not within TIAH's initial scope, through the Environmental Horticulture Group, they have been working with the sector in areas where there are common issues and working towards longer term inclusion.

London Underground: Strikes

Asked by Lord Moylan

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the economic impact on the south-east of England of planned strikes on London Underground services. [HL1943]

Lord Henty of Richmond Hill: Transport in London is devolved to the Mayor and TfL. Thanks to constructive dialogue between TfL and the unions the strikes planned by both RMT and ASLEF for early November have now been called off.

Malaysia: HMS Prince of Wales

Asked by Lord Beamish

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Malaysian Government on the protection of the wreck of HMS Prince of Wales, sunk in December 1941. [HL2092]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: Illegally salvaged artefacts from HMS Prince of Wales seized by Malaysian authorities are part of an ongoing Malaysian criminal investigation. The UK Ministry of Defence and the British High Commission continue to work closely with the relevant authorities in the region to afford these sites suitable protection. As investigations into the illegal salvage are still ongoing, it would be inappropriate to comment further until these investigations have concluded.

Mental Health Services: Young People

Asked by Baroness Tyler of Enfield

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to take forward the plans for community hubs supporting young people's mental health mentioned in the Labour Party Manifesto 2024; if so, which Department is responsible for their delivery; whether these hubs will be open-access; and how many they intend to fund through the programme. [HL1957]

Lord Hanson of Flint: The Government is committed to rolling out a network of Young Futures Hubs. These will bring together services to help improve children and young people's access to support to reduce crime and improve mental health and careers opportunities.

This is a cross-government endeavour and expertise has been brought together from across departments to deliver on this manifesto commitment. The government will be engaging with national and local partners, local communities and children and young people to explore options for the design and delivery of the hubs.

Myanmar: Armed Conflict

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Myanmar following the increase in civilian casualties in Rakhine following the launch of the Arakan Army counter-offensive in October 2023. [HL2178]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: The UK has called for the protection of civilians by all parties both in public and in private. In May 2024, the UK along with international partners released a statement calling on the Military regime, and all armed actors, to ensure the protection of civilians in Rakhine state. In July 2024, we issued a similar call through a joint press statement with likeminded partners at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). We will continue to work with international partners to ensure there is accountability for acts committed against the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities, including through the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

National Rural Crime Unit

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Lincoln

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of the National Rural Crime Unit since its inception. [HL1941]

Lord Hanson of Flint: The National Rural Crime Unit is a specialist unit, and its activities exemplify the importance of collaboration in this area, involving farmers, policymakers and police working together at national and local level to examine how UK farming businesses can be better protected against crime.

The National Rural Crime Unit has recovered stolen property, including agricultural machinery and vehicles, worth £10 million since 2023. It has also co-ordinated operational responses across the UK that resulted in multiple arrests as well as disrupting organised crime groups.

Older People: Human Rights

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will support, and help with the creation of, a United Nations convention on the rights of older persons. [HL2059]

Lord Collins of Highbury: The UK Government is committed to equality and opportunity for all, with a particular focus on those most likely to be marginalised and discriminated against, including on the grounds of their age. We are open in principle to the idea of a multilateral instrument dedicated to the human rights of older people and will continue to play a constructive role in discussions on this issue at the UN and other relevant fora.

Pakistan: Christianity

Asked by *Lord Marlesford*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Pakistan with a view to preventing the persecution of Christians in that country. [HL1886]

Lord Collins of Highbury: The UK condemns the persecution of religious minorities, including Christians, in Pakistan. Minister Falconer underlined the importance of promoting religious tolerance and harmony when he met with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister Azam Tarar on 4 September. Officials at BHC Islamabad regularly raise our concerns surrounding the mistreatment of minorities with the Pakistani authorities, including law enforcement officials. We continue to support projects promoting the rights of religious minorities in Pakistan, including facilitating interfaith dialogue and protecting marginalised communities from hate speech online.

Pakistan: Judiciary

Asked by *Lord Hannan of Kingsclere*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the remarks by the International Commission of Jurists that the passing of the 26th Constitutional Amendment by the government of Pakistan is a “blow to judicial independence, the rule of law, and human rights protection”; and what representations they have made to that government in that regard. [HL1935]

Lord Collins of Highbury: Any amendment to Pakistan's constitution is a matter for Pakistan. An independent judiciary able to check and balance other state organs is a critical element of a functioning democracy.

Poetry

Asked by *Lord Watson of Wyre Forest*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote poetry in public institutions and cultural programmes. [HL1963]

Baroness Twycross: After 14 years of indifference and cultural vandalism, this government is committed to making sure that arts and cultural activities will no longer be the preserve of a privileged few.

The Department for Culture and Media and Sport, via its Arms-Length body, Arts Council England (ACE) plays an important role in promoting poetry, primarily through its grants and support for arts institutions, festivals, and individual practitioners.

For example, ACE supports the Poetry Society who promote poetry through innovative education and commissioning programmes, performances, readings and competitions for all ages across the country. The Ledbury Poetry festival, also supported by ACE, brings together

world leading poets to read, debate and share their work during its main programme over two weeks in the summer, and continues throughout the year with projects that involve local schools and hundreds of local people through its community projects.

Additionally, as the national development agency for libraries in England, ACE also supports public libraries through funding, advocacy and collaboration. Public libraries promote poetry by encouraging reader development and helping to inspire, educate, support and entertain people of all ages and backgrounds.

Police: Information Sharing

Asked by *Lord Wasserman*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the achievements of the National Enabling Programme are maintained and further developed by police forces, following the closure of that programme in April 2022. [HL1959]

Lord Hanson of Flint: The National Enabling Programme (NEP) rolled out the Microsoft 365 (M365) suites and the Identity and Access Management capability to 40 forces. In the last year, the capability saw significantly increased use which further facilitated police collaboration.

The Police Digital Service completed the roll out to the remaining forces in 2022-23 and is facilitating the growth of these services. The Home Office is working with the Police Digital Service and policing to identify opportunities to improve the business-as-usual service and enable greater exploitation through the M365 Productivity Project.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus: Vaccination

Asked by *Lord Blunkett*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Baroness Merron on 15 October (HL1173 and HL1174), how many GP practices and primary care centres in Sheffield have not yet received an allocation of the respiratory syncytial virus vaccine. [HL2093]

Baroness Merron: The South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board has had confirmation that all primary care practices in Sheffield have now ordered and received at least one delivery of respiratory syncytial virus vaccines.

Serbia: Sanctions

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to sanctioning individuals involved in the issuing of the All-Serb Assembly joint declaration of June 2024 as part of their Bosnia and Herzegovina sanctions regime. [HL1790]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: The UK is committed to supporting the sovereignty, territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as set out in the Dayton Peace Agreement. We maintain a range of tools to tackle destabilising behaviour; our sanctions regime remains one of them. We do not speculate on future designations.

Special Advisers: Political Activities

Asked by Baroness Neville-Rolfe

To ask His Majesty's Government what guidance has been given to Government special advisers on whether they can campaign in the United States presidential elections. [HL1944]

Baroness Twycross: Special advisers are required to follow the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Stonewall

Asked by Lord Reay

To ask His Majesty's Government whether (1) the Bank of England, (2) the Financial Conduct Authority and (3) the Financial Ombudsman Service receive advice from, or participate in, programmes overseen by Stonewall. [HL1948]

Lord Livermore: This is a matter for the Bank of England, Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), and Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) which are independent, non-governmental bodies.

The Bank of England, FCA and FOS will each respond to the Noble Lord by letter, and a copy of these letters will be placed in the Library of the House of Lords.

Stonewall: Arms-Length Bodies

Asked by Baroness Barran

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Twycross on 16 September (HL694), which arms-length bodies are currently affiliated to Stonewall at public expense, according to records held by the Government. [HL1917]

Baroness Twycross: Information on how issued funding is spent by arms-length bodies, including payments to third party organisations, is not gathered centrally.

Sudan: Peace Negotiations

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 in November to ensure regional actors are taking steps to prevent the escalation of the conflict in Sudan. [HL2082]

Lord Collins of Highbury: The UK uses its position as penholder at the UN Security Council to call on Member States to refrain from external interference which foments conflict and instability; for instance during our explanation of vote following the adoption of resolution 2750 on 11 September to renew the UN Darfur arms embargo and sanctions regime. The UK will assume the UN Security Council Presidency from 1 November. There is an open briefing on Sudan planned, which will reiterate our calls to the warring parties to cease hostilities and halt escalation of violence.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Asked by Baroness Foster of Aghadrumsee

To ask His Majesty's Government how much revenue has been generated from charging Irish operators using the red lane through Northern Ireland ports, as set out in paragraph 132 of the Safeguarding the Union Command Paper (CP1021). [HL1932]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: The Government is committed to ensuring the smooth flow of trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Charging arrangements for Irish operators using the red lane are not currently in place, the new Government are looking into this matter and will provide an update in due course.

UNRWA: Development Aid

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to reconsider their funding of UNRWA, in the light of reports that (1) Ismail Haniyeh, and a bodyguard of Yahyah Sinwar, were both former UNRWA teachers; and (2) UNRWA staff have stolen food intended for Gazans. [HL1796]

Lord Collins of Highbury: We were appalled by the allegations that those involved in the 7 October attacks against Israel may have included United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) staff. The Secretary-General and the Commissioner General of UNRWA took these allegations seriously and acted decisively. We expect robust processes to continue to be followed. UNRWA must meet the highest standards of neutrality as laid out in Catherine Colonna's report, including staff vetting and acting swiftly when concerns arise. The UK has allocated £1 million to support UNRWA to implement the report's recommendations. The FCDO will continue its own annual assessment of UK funding to UNRWA, which plays a vital role in saving lives in Gaza. We separately note that UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini confirmed on 17 October that allegations a staff member died alongside former Hamas leader Yahyah Sinwar were unfounded. We have not received reports of UNRWA staff stealing food, nor are we aware of allegations regarding Ismail Haniyeh being reported to UNWRA.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1	
Biodiversity COP16.....1	Gaza: Israel 10
Defence Nuclear Enterprise.....1	Government Departments: Ethics..... 10
Energy Infrastructure Planning.....1	Gulf Strategy Fund 11
Failure to Prevent Fraud: Corporate Offence Guidance.....2	Housing: Older People..... 11
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: Winter Pressures Funding.....2	Imran Khan 11
Media Mergers Regime2	Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture..... 11
Oxford Nanopore Technologies: Strategic Partnership.....3	London Underground: Strikes 12
Silicon Valley Bank UK: Bank of England's Transfer Power3	Malaysia: HMS Prince of Wales 12
South West Water: Customer Rebate3	Mental Health Services: Young People 12
Updated Ministerial Code.....4	Myanmar: Armed Conflict 12
Written Answers.....6	National Rural Crime Unit..... 12
101 Calls and Emergency Calls: Standards.....6	Older People: Human Rights 12
Afghanistan: Diplomatic Relations6	Pakistan: Christianity..... 13
Airwave Service and Emergency Services Network: Expenditure6	Pakistan: Judiciary 13
Asylum: Housing.....6	Poetry..... 13
Aviation: Fuels6	Police: Information Sharing..... 13
BlueLight Commercial: Cost Effectiveness7	Respiratory Syncytial Virus: Vaccination 13
British Museum: Restitution.....7	Serbia: Sanctions 13
Chad: Refugees.....7	Special Advisers: Political Activities 14
Children: Maintenance7	Stonewall 14
Civil Service: Equality8	Stonewall: Arms-Length Bodies..... 14
Coronavirus: Vaccination.....8	Sudan: Peace Negotiations 14
Dangerous Dogs8	UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland..... 14
Dental Services.....8	UNRWA: Development Aid..... 14
Disclosure of Information.....9	
Disinformation: Middle East9	
Drugs: Rehabilitation.....9	
Emergency Services Network9	
Faith Schools: VAT.....9	
Financial Conduct Authority10	
Football.....10	