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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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<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

*Monday, 11 November 2024*

## COP29: Priorities

[HLWS199]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** We are halfway through the critical decade for tackling climate change, but the world is off-track from limiting global warming to 1.5C. We are facing a triple planetary crisis of climate, biodiversity loss and pollution posing critical threats to the UK's national interests across security, resilience, health, the economy and partnerships with other countries.

With global temperatures continuing to rise, the impacts of the climate and nature crises—storms, floods, droughts, food and water insecurity, displaced communities—will be a profound source of global disorder. To engage only with the effects of climate change, war, poverty, pandemics or irregular migration when they arrive on our doorstep is to set ourselves up to fail. This is why the UK needs to re-establish itself as a climate leader on the global stage.

Taking on the challenge of climate change is also an incredible opportunity for jobs and growth all across the country. It will improve our health, our quality of life and our overall prosperity.

The Government has already begun work to deliver on this opportunity, through our mission to achieve clean power by 2030 and accelerating our transition to net zero. We have lifted the de facto ban on onshore wind in England, consented significant amounts of solar, introduced legislation to switch on Great British Energy, created the UK's first carbon capture clusters, and held the most successful renewables auction to date.

We have put clean energy at the heart of our mission-driven Government, because we know that boosting homegrown, renewable energy is the best way to reduce our exposure to volatile fossil fuel markets, protect bill payers, and strengthen our energy independence. The UK will restore its position as a global leader on climate action, building on the power of example to encourage other nations to follow its lead, and working with international partners to support decarbonisation globally.

COP28 in Dubai saw the first Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement which illustrated the scale of the challenge; by 2030, emissions need to fall by 43% versus the 2% currently projected and climate finance must increase at least fivefold, drawing on all sources.

The 29th conference of the parties under the UNFCCC (COP29) will be hosted by Azerbaijan in Baku from 11 to 22 November. It presents the first opportunity in 15 years to agree a new finance goal to replace the current \$100 billion target. At the same time, countries must demonstrate progress towards delivering on existing commitments including those in the Global Stocktake – to transition away from fossil fuels, triple renewables,

double energy efficiency, and halt and reverse nature and forest loss.

The UK will work with the COP29 presidency and other partners to push for progress in the following three key areas:

- Scaling up finance from all sources to accelerate global transitions. We need to agree an ambitious New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance, for the period after 2025. The UK is committed to working with countries to design a climate finance goal that is fit for purpose and supports those most vulnerable to climate impacts, crowding in private finance while recognising the constraints on the public finances in the UK. Outside the negotiations, we need to accelerate reform of the global financial system to address the transition and resilience finance gaps and barriers that countries face.
- Scaling up ambition and action to keep 1.5 Paris Agreement goal within reach ahead of COP30. As agreed at COP28, countries must come forward with ambitious, all-economy, 1.5C-aligned Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for 2035 by next February to bridge the emissions gap. As the Prime Minister announced at the United Nations General Assembly in September, the UK will come forward with our own ambitious, 1.5 aligned NDC at COP29 and will support others to do the same. Globally, we need to accelerate the global transition in energy and other sectors and the UK will show progress on this through initiatives such as the Breakthrough Agenda and the Global Clean Power Alliance, a progressive alliance of developed and developing countries working together to accelerate the deployment of clean power globally and mobilise public and private finance to support clean energy. The Alliance will help to bridge the financing gap with the Global South and enable more countries to secure the benefits of clean, cheap power.
- Building resilience to current and future climate impacts. The UK is committed to achieving a climate-resilient and nature positive world, supporting the most vulnerable and marginalised who are experiencing the worst impacts of the climate and nature crises. Within the NCQG process, we will work for an ambitious outcome on adaptation finance that maximises nature co-benefits. We would also like to see progress on both the Global Goal on Adaptation and the operationalisation of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD).

Across all these areas, we must recognise the crucial, often overlooked role of high ambition action on nature including forests in mitigating and adapting to climate change. This means aligning UNFCCC outcomes with the targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework and joining up approaches to tackling climate, biodiversity, and pollution across NDCs, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) all in the broader context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It includes protecting

the ocean through the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue and restoring forests through the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership.

The Prime Minister, along with other ministers will attend COP over the two weeks and I will be leading the UK's delegation during the negotiations.

We are determined to do everything in our power to accelerate global action to reduce emissions this decade and keep within reach the 1.5C goal in the Paris Agreement.

## Written Answers

Monday, 11 November 2024

### Afghanistan: Women

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of the new promulgated rules in Afghanistan by the Taliban forbidding women from listening to other women's voices; and when they last raised the topic of gender apartheid and the rights of women in Afghanistan in the UN Human Rights Council and at the General Assembly. [[HL2142](#)]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** We have repeatedly condemned Taliban restrictions on women and girls' rights internationally, most recently in statements at the UN General Assembly on 8 October and at the UN Human Rights Council on 9 October. Officials have directly pressed the Taliban to reverse their repressive 'vice and virtue' law and that we consider it to be a grotesque backwards-step.

We are aware of calls for the inclusion of gender apartheid as a crime against humanity. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Afghanistan attended an event in Parliament on this on 29 October. There are complex legal and political questions associated with gender apartheid and we will take these into account when forming our position.

### Alan Milburn

Asked by *Baroness Neville-Rolfe*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Merron on 17 September (HL1071), how many Departmental meetings since the last general election Alan Milburn has attended where Ministers were not present. [[HL2121](#)]

**Baroness Merron:** Central Government Corporate Transparency Commitments require Government Departments to publish details of Ministers and Senior Officials meetings with external individuals or organisations on a quarterly basis. We will be publishing the meetings that Alan Milburn attended, in accordance with the Transparency guidelines.

### Artificial Intelligence: Arts

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect creative industries from the unlicensed use of creative works for training generative AI; and what assessment they have made of the risk this poses to the livelihoods of the people behind these works. [[HL2081](#)]

**Lord Vallance of Balham:** The Government supports growth in both the creative industries and the AI sector, recognising the value of human-centred creativity.

This is a complex topic, and we want to take the time to hear stakeholder views and carefully consider the issues and their impacts – including the use of creative works to train generative AI.

The Minister for AI and Digital Government and the Minister for Creative Industries, Arts, and Tourism held roundtables with the creative and AI sectors in September.

DSIT and DCMS continue to engage with stakeholders to inform and develop our approach.

### Artificial Intelligence: Copyright

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure copyright is protected regarding the increasing development of generative AI. [[HL2007](#)]

**Lord Vallance of Balham:** The Government recognises the value of human-centred creativity underpinned by copyright and is committed to supporting the creative industries and AI sectors to grow in partnership.

We are urgently considering the issues concerning generative AI training and copyright. Most recently, the Minister for AI and Digital Government and the Minister for Creative Industries, Arts, and Tourism held roundtables with the creative and AI sectors in September.

Whilst clarity is needed, this is a complex topic and we must take time to hear and carefully consider stakeholder views, so DSIT and DCMS continue to engage with them to inform our approach.

### Bacterial Diseases: Medical Treatments

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency about expediting the use of phage treatments in last-resort medical cases. [[HL2140](#)]

**Baroness Merron:** The Government is committed to supporting innovation and the development of new, safe, and effective medicines. Officials in the Department are working closely with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to explore the use of bacteriophages, also known as phages.

Although there are currently no licensed bacteriophage medicines in the United Kingdom, patients may still access them as part of a clinical trial, as unlicensed medicines, or as medicines prepared under the supervision of a pharmacist.

The MHRA is actively developing non-binding, regulator-agnostic information to help innovators

understand what type of quality, safety, and efficacy data is needed by regulators to evaluate phage products for market authorisation.

### Bedford Prison

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to tackle high levels of violence at HMP Bedford, following the Report on an independent review of progress at HMP Bedford, published on 22 October. [HL2080]

**Lord Timpson:** In response to the recent report by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, HMP Bedford has a new strategic plan focusing on measures to manage violence, including providing consistent keywork sessions; mandatory drug testing; staff training, including enhanced training in Challenge Support Intervention Plan processes and procedures; improving staff-prisoner relationships; improving debt-management processes; and providing a more purposeful and constructive regime, with more time out of cell.

The establishment has also introduced wing-safety surgeries (identified as positive practice by HM Chief Inspector), which provide a regular opportunity for prisoners to discuss concerns with the safety team. A new strategic lead has been put in place who will be supported by an experienced operational member of residential staff.

A hot-spot strategy (also identified as positive practice) is being utilised to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the issues and times when incidents occur, to help eliminate potential escalation points.

The national safety team has established a safety summit, involving focus groups and forums of staff and prisoners, so as better to understand the reasons violence occurs. The prison is also running regular wing-council meetings, with violence as a standing agenda item for discussion with the prisoners. In addition, an operational officer has been appointed as a floor-walker to support and coach staff in managing violent incidents.

### British Indian Ocean Territory: Sovereignty

*Asked by Lord Kempson*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether consultations were held with representatives of the Chagossian community prior to the decision to hand over sovereignty of the British Indian Ocean Territory to Mauritius and, if so, how many meetings were held; and what other steps were taken. [HL1811]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** The negotiations were between the UK and Mauritius, with our priority being to secure the full operation of the base on Diego Garcia. However, we recognise the huge importance of the islands to Chagossians and have worked to ensure this agreement reflects their interests. Mauritius will be free to implement a programme of resettlement on the islands other than Diego Garcia, and we will finance a new trust

fund for Mauritius in support of Chagossians. Working with Mauritius, we will also restart visits to all the islands for Chagossians. Ministers and officials will continue regular engagement with members of the community.

### Bupropion

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many prescriptions for bupropion were issued in each year since 2014; and what was the annual cost to the National Health Service of those prescriptions for each of those years. [HL2088]

**Baroness Merron:** The attached table shows the number of prescriptions issued for bupropion and the net ingredient cost (NIC) from 2014 to 2023, and from January to August for 2024, as this is the latest data available.

Based on the information within the Prescription Cost Analysis published statistics from the NHS Business Services Authority, there are two chemical formulations that include bupropion, those being: bupropion hydrochloride; and the combination of naltrexone and bupropion. It should also be noted that the total NIC shown in the attached table is the basic price of the prescribed medicine before discounts, dispensing costs, or fees. This includes items that have been dispensed in the community in England regardless of where prescribed.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL2088 Table [TABLE FORMATTED FOR HL2088.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-10-29/HL2088>

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many Yellow Card reports of sexual dysfunction and persistent sexual dysfunction the MHRA received for bupropion in each year since 2014; and what consideration NHS England has given to adding sexual dysfunction as a side effect on the patient information leaflets for bupropion. [HL2089]

**Baroness Merron:** In the United Kingdom there are two authorised products containing bupropion. The first contains bupropion hydrochloride and is prescribed to help individuals stop smoking, when they also have motivational support, for instance through a stop smoking programme. The second is a combination product containing bupropion hydrochloride and naltrexone hydrochloride, and is prescribed in obese or overweight adults to manage weight, together with a reduced calorie diet and physical exercise.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has received three Yellow Card reports of sexual dysfunction related reactions suspected to be associated with bupropion hydrochloride, the single constituent, and one Yellow Card report of sexual



dysfunction for the combination product, bupropion hydrochloride and naltrexone hydrochloride, between 1 January 2014 and 29 October 2024.

The following table shows the number of suspected Yellow Card reports of sexual dysfunction related reactions and bupropion containing products received by the MHRA between 2014 and 2024:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Reports of sexual dysfunction single constituent bupropion</i>	<i>Reports of sexual dysfunction combination product bupropion and naltrexone</i>
2014	0	0
2015	0	0
2016	0	0
2017	0	0
2018	0	0
2019	0	0
2020	1	1
2021	0	0
2022	1	0
2023	0	0
2024	1	0

Source: data provided by the MHRA. Note: the data includes reactions grouped under the Medical Dictionary for Regulatory Activities' (MedDRA) Higher Level Terms: erection and ejaculation conditions and disorders; orgasmic disorders and disturbances; sexual and gender identity disorders NEC; sexual arousal disorders; sexual desire disorders; sexual dysfunction NEC; sexual function and fertility disorders NEC; and spermatogenesis and semen disorders.

Persistent sexual dysfunction does not represent a specific medical condition, so this precise term is not a category available to undertake a structured search of the MHRA's Adverse Drug Reaction database, and would rely on manual assessment of individual cases. The structured data field search terms are drawn from the regulatory drugs dictionary, MedDRA, or from terms adopted in clinical coding guidance such as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* or the *International Classification of Diseases*.

It is important to note that the inclusion of a particular report on the MHRA's system does not necessarily mean that the adverse reactions reported have been caused by the suspect drug. Additionally, the number of reports received should not be used as a basis for determining the incidence of a reaction, as neither the total number of reactions occurring, nor the number of patients using the drug, is known.

The product information, which includes the patient information leaflet, for single constituent bupropion

reflects the data currently available, and does not include sexual dysfunction as a possible side effect. The product information for the combination bupropion and naltrexone product contains the terms loss of libido, libido disorder, and erectile dysfunction. As with other medicines, the safety of bupropion is kept under review by the MHRA, and consideration will be given to any emerging evidence on this issue.

## Cancer: Health Services

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Minister of State at the Department for Health and Social Care on 31 October (HC Deb col 374WH), when they will publish their stand-alone cancer strategy. [HL2329]

**Baroness Merron:** The Health Mission sets the objective of building a National Health Service fit for the future. As part of that work, and in response to the Darzi report, we have launched an extensive programme of engagement to develop a 10-Year Health Plan to reform the NHS. The plan will set out a bold agenda to deliver on the three big shifts from hospitals to the community, from analogue to digital, and from sickness to prevention.

In addition, following publication of the 10-Year Health Plan, we will develop a new national cancer plan, which will include further details on how we will improve outcomes for cancer patients.

We are now in discussions about what form that plan should take, and what its relationship to the 10-Year Health Plan and the Government's wider Health Mission should be, and will provide updates on this, including on publication dates, at the earliest opportunity.

## Cancer: Older People

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to integrate frailty assessments into cancer care pathways for older patients within the NHS. [HL2073]

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what mechanisms are in place to monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of frailty assessments for older cancer patients in the NHS. [HL2074]

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve access to community oncology services for older people. [HL2075]

**Baroness Merron:** The Department has several mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of frailty assessments for older cancer patients. The GP contract requires all practices to take steps each year to identify any registered patient aged 65 and over who is living with moderate to

severe frailty. Where a patient, including those with cancer, is identified with severe frailty, the practice must undertake a clinical review, including an annual medication review, and provide the patient with any other clinically appropriate interventions (i.e. blood tests and further examinations or referrals).

In addition, practices must ensure that each of its registered patients aged over 75 years old are assigned a named general practitioner, who is required to respond to the patient's needs in a timely manner, including undertaking clinical reviews and ensuring that the patient receives an annual health check if requested.

Developed through collaboration between a wide range of health and social care organisations, professionals and subject matter experts, NHS England recently published [Proactive care: Providing care and support for people living at home with moderate or severe frailty guidance](#) in an online-only format for integrated care boards and provider organisations involved in the design and delivery of proactive care. The guidance aims to support a more consistent approach to proactive care across England for people living at home with moderate or severe frailty, in line with the latest evidence and best practice. A proactive care approach can improve people's health outcomes and their experiences of healthcare by slowing the onset or progression of frailty and enabling people to live independently for longer.

This Department and NHS England are committed to improving access to community oncology services by moving towards a Neighbourhood Health Service, with more care delivered in local communities to spot problems earlier. This includes maximising the pace of roll-out of additional diagnostic capacity, delivering the final year of the three-year investment plan for establishing community diagnostic centres (CDCs) and ensuring timely implementation of new CDC locations and upgrades to existing CDCs, with capacity prioritised for cancer diagnostics.

### Child Trust Fund

*Asked by Lord Laming*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proposal by the Share Foundation to introduce a 'Default Withdrawal at 21' scheme for HMRC-allocated child trust funds. [HL2066]

**Lord Livermore:** The Government is grateful for the suggestion made by the Share Foundation of a way in which HMRC could develop a system of paying out the savings held in matured Child Trust Fund (CTF) accounts that have not been accessed by the account owners by the age of 21.

This proposal is complex and could not be implemented easily, or without allocating significant resources. The savings in these accounts belong to the account owner even if they are not aware of the account's existence. For HMRC to close these accounts, obtain the savings in

those accounts and transfer them with or without the owner's consent would require careful legal consideration. This is quite apart from the operational systems and resources across Government departments and CTF providers that would be required to monitor the transactions.

The Government is committed to reuniting all young adults with their CTFs and recognises the importance of ensuring that young adults can benefit from these funds as they reach adulthood.

To that end, HMRC continues to work with CTF providers, industry representatives and stakeholders to explore ways of increasing the profile of CTFs and enabling account owners to be aware of and trace their accounts. HMRC has ongoing work with the University and Colleges Admissions Service to encourage awareness among student peer groups and a communications plan which targets young people. HMRC has recently amended gov.uk to reference The Share Foundation's CTF account tracing service, providing an additional way for young people to trace their accounts.

### Children in Care: Education

*Asked by Lord Laming*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to match-fund the incentive costs of Stepladder Plus, a money management and learning programme for 15–17 year olds in care operated by the Share Foundation. [HL2065]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** The department is committed to reforming the children's social care system so that all children can grow up in stable and loving homes. To support this, the department has recently announced that it is investing an additional £44 million in kinship and foster care.

The King's Speech on 17 July committed to a Children's Wellbeing Bill, which will ensure our education and children's social care systems transform lives for millions of children and young people in England. The department will use the Bill to deliver the government's commitment on children's social care.

The department wants to ensure that children leaving care have stable homes, access to health services, support to build lifelong loving relationships and are engaged in education, employment and training.

The department does not currently have any plans to provide match funding to incentivise children in care to participate in the Stepladder Plus programme.

### Children: Internet

*Asked by Baroness Owen of Alderley Edge*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure children are educated about how to operate safely online. [HL2070]



**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** As part of the statutory relationships and health education in primary schools and relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) in secondary schools, pupils are taught about online safety and harms.

The statutory guidance for relationships education for primary school can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-education-primary>.

The statutory guidance for RSHE for secondary school can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-secondary>.

This guidance includes being taught about what positive, healthy and respectful online relationships look like, the effects of pupils' online actions on others, how to recognise and display respectful behaviour online, and where to get help and support for issues that occur online.

Teaching about online safety also complements the computing curriculum, which covers the principles of online safety at all key stages, with progression in the content to reflect the different and escalating risks that pupils face. The statutory guidance for the computing curriculum can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-computing-programmes-of-study>.

The guidance 'Teaching online safety in schools' sets out how to teach about all aspects of internet safety in a coordinated and coherent way across the curriculum, and can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-online-safety-in-schools>.

The department is currently reviewing the RSHE statutory guidance. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education has been clear that children's wellbeing must be at the heart of this guidance for schools and as such the government will look carefully at the consultation responses, discuss with stakeholders and consider the relevant evidence before setting out next steps. As part of the review, the department will consider whether additional or revised content should be included in the guidance, including content regarding online safety and harm.

The Curriculum and Assessment Review is also looking at the curriculum as a whole and how to break down barriers to opportunity and give every child the best start in life. The government's ambition is for a broad, rich and cutting-edge curriculum that equips children and young people with the essential knowledge and skills required to thrive as citizens, in work and throughout life.

In addition, the statutory 'Keeping children safe in education' guidance which all schools and colleges must have regard to when drawing up and implementing their own safeguarding policies has been strengthened with regards to online safety in recent years. Governing bodies

and proprietors should ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing their whole school or college approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures, including doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to harmful online content on the school's or college's IT system.

## China: Catholicism

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of China regarding the continuing persecution of the 10 Catholic bishops detained in that country. [HL2044]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The environment for freedom of religion or belief across China is restrictive, which includes the persecution of Catholic Bishops.

This Government stands firm on human rights, including the right to freedom of religion or belief. The Foreign Secretary has raised human rights with his Chinese counterpart Foreign Minister Wang Yi, including during his recent visit to China on 18 October.

More broadly, this Government will champion freedom of religion or belief for all abroad. We will work to uphold the right to freedom of religion or belief through our position at the UN, G7 and other multilateral fora, and through bilateral engagement.

## Civil Servants: TikTok

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Smith of Basildon on 9 October (HL1436), how many civil servants have currently been granted a formal exemption and are approved to have TikTok on Government devices. [HL1972]

**Baroness Twycross:** Cabinet Office does not collect this data centrally. Where an essential business requirement necessitates the use of TikTok, this is managed through a formal exemptions and approvals process which takes place at departmental level.

## Climate Change

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will sign the Climate Intelligence World Climate Declaration; and, if not, why not. [HL2275]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The World Climate Declaration is not consistent with the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report, the most authoritative assessment of climate science globally, and the Government has no plans to sign it.

## Commonwealth: Equality

*Asked by Lord Boateng*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to right enduring inequalities in the Commonwealth in the light of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa. [HL2014]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** At CHOGM 2024 in Samoa, the UK announced a series of initiatives aimed to address inequality. This included the new UK Trade Centre of Expertise, which will drive export-led growth across the Commonwealth by providing support to developing countries, increased technical assistance to small states to help them unlock access to climate finance, and continued funding for Commonwealth and Chevening scholars to create opportunities for future generations. The UK also announced increased support to protect and promote the rights and inclusion of LGBT+ persons and persons with disabilities in Commonwealth countries. I engaged civil society extensively during CHOGM, attending The Commonwealth Equality Network's reception to launch their CHOGM Shadow Report as well as participating in the Commonwealth Youth, Women's and People's Forums.

## Contraceptives

*Asked by Baroness Jenkin of Kennington*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the joint statement on contraception by the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics and the International Confederation of Midwives in September, what steps they are taking to integrate person-centred and respectful contraception provision into sexual, reproductive, maternal and adolescent care services, and emergency obstetric and neonatal care. [HL2166]

**Baroness Merron:** We are committed to ensuring that the public receives the best possible contraceptive services. Contraception advice is delivered in sexual health services, general practice, some pharmacies, abortion and maternity services, and online. NHS England strives to ensure that this is integrated into a range of different health encounters that women are likely to have.

For example, sexual and reproductive health services in England provide a range of services, including contraception provision and advice, particularly for vulnerable groups and teenagers. These services are free, open-access, and confidential, to support people to make informed choices.

Contraception advice is provided during both antenatal consultations and at the time of postnatal discharge. Many maternity services also provide both user-based and longer acting methods of contraception at this opportunity.

The *Three year delivery plan for maternity and neonatal services* made a commitment to offer all women a personalised care and support plan by 2026, taking into

account physical health, mental health, and social complexities, with a risk assessment updated at every contact.

NHS England has published guidance to support general practitioners to provide women with comprehensive mental and physical postnatal check-ups six to eight weeks after they give birth.

The postnatal consultation provides an important opportunity for contraceptive health needs to be assessed and for general practitioners to listen to women in a discrete, supportive environment. As per the guidance, women should be asked about contraception and supported to make planned choices about future pregnancies.

Women's health hubs pilots are being rolled out across the National Health Service, together with sexual health services. These can provide a wider choice of options for women, including longer acting methods of contraception.

*Asked by Baroness Jenkin of Kennington*

To ask His Majesty's Government how they will ensure equitable postpartum and post-abortion contraception provisions. [HL2167]

**Baroness Merron:** We are committed to ensuring that the public receives equitable access to the best possible contraceptive services. Contraception advice is delivered in sexual health services, general practice, some pharmacies, abortion and maternity services, and online. NHS England strives to ensure that this is integrated into a range of different health encounters that women are likely to have. For example, contraception advice is provided during both antenatal consultations and at the time of postnatal discharge. Many maternity services also provide both user-based and longer acting methods of contraception at this opportunity.

NHS England has published guidance to support general practitioners to provide all women with comprehensive mental and physical postnatal check-ups six to eight weeks after they give birth. The guidance, which was written in collaboration with the Royal College of General Practitioners, provides clear advice to address unwarranted variation for the delivery of safer, more equitable, more personalised care. This includes flexible appointment times tailored to a women's needs.

The postnatal consultation provides an important opportunity for contraceptive health needs to be assessed. During this, women should be asked about contraception and supported to make planned choices about future pregnancies.

Contraception is commonly offered and provided by abortion services, in line with National Institute for Care and Excellence guidelines on abortion care, that were published in September 2019. The guidelines set out that commissioners and providers should ensure that a full range of contraceptive options is available for women on the same day as their surgical or medical abortion. Providers should also ensure that healthcare professionals have the knowledge and skills to provide all contraceptive

options, including the contraceptive implant, injections, and intrauterine methods of contraception.

*Asked by Baroness Jenkin of Kennington*

To ask His Majesty's Government how they will ensure education on, and access to, contraceptives for marginalised and under-served populations. [HL2168]

**Baroness Merron:** We are committed to ensuring that the public has equal access to the best possible contraceptive services. The women's health area on the National Health Service website brings together over 100 different women's health topics, including contraception, as a first port of call for women seeking health information. Education surrounding contraceptives should be delivered to all pupils via the Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum. RSHE became compulsory in all schools in September 2020. The statutory guidance is clear that as part of the topic 'intimate and sexual relationships', pupils in secondary schools should know the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy, and options available. These subjects should be taught to all pupils in schools, and teachers have the flexibility to deliver the curriculum in a way that meets the needs of their individual pupils.

Contraception is a core service for women's health hub pilots. Women's health hubs bring together healthcare professionals and existing services to provide integrated women's health services in the community, centred on meeting women's needs across the life course and reducing health inequalities. The Department has invested £25 million over 2023/24 and 2024/25 to support the establishment of at least one pilot women's health hub in every integrated care system.

To offer greater choice in how women can access contraception services across the country, the NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service was launched in April 2023, enabling pharmacists to issue ongoing supplies of contraception, initiated in general practice surgeries and sexual health services. The service relaunched in December 2023 to enable community pharmacies to also initiate oral contraception.

Survey outputs from the 2023 *Women's Reproductive Health Survey* will be used to inform future policy development and support strategy work by improving our ability to monitor changes and inequalities in women and girls' access to contraceptives.

### Conversion Therapy

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Collins of Highbury on 29 October (HL1459), which international counterparts they have recently had discussions with regarding their work on conversion practices. [HL2104]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** Officials have liaised with a range of international counterparts in relation to conversion practices policy. The Government will

continue to engage with a range of other jurisdictions as well as domestic stakeholders, as policy in this area develops. We are committed to listening to all viewpoints and concerns with respect.

### Crime: Victims

*Asked by Baroness Coussins*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to conduct a consultation on the proposed amendments to the Victims' Code which were agreed during the passage of the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024. [HL2195]

**Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede:** We aim to consult on the revised Victims' Code early next year as part of our commitment to ensure that victims and survivors of crime have the information and support they need.

### Culture and Languages: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Caine*

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made in establishing each of the following bodies and offices provided for by the Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022: (1) the Office of Identity and Cultural Expression, (2) an Irish Language Commissioner, (3) a Commissioner for the Ulster Scots and the Ulster British tradition; and when they expect all of these bodies and offices be fully functioning. [HL2096]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** The Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Bill 2022 makes provision for the establishment of the Office of Identity and Cultural Expression, an Irish Language Commissioner, and a Commissioner for the Ulster Scots and the Ulster British tradition. The Executive Office is responsible for taking forward the necessary arrangements to implement the provisions of the Identity and Language Act 2022 and the Government expects the Executive Office will make an announcement in due course regarding next steps on implementation of the legislation.

### Curriculum and Assessment Review

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Sheffield*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to include an assessment of the unique challenges facing further education colleges and institutions in their ongoing curriculum and assessment review. [HL2083]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** The government has established an independent Curriculum and Assessment Review, covering ages 5 to 18, chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE. The terms of reference were published in July and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/curriculum-and-assessment-review>.

The review will seek to address the key problems and hard barriers to achievement in curriculum and assessment, including post-16 education. It will look at ensuring all young people aged 16 to 19 have access to rigorous and high-value qualifications and training that will give them the skills they need to ensure they are ready for the changing workplace.

Professor Francis is supported by an expert group of individuals with experience throughout the education system. Primary, secondary and post-16 sectors are represented to give due authority and respect to the expertise of education professionals in shaping the curriculum and outcomes they deliver.

The review will be undertaken in close consultation with education professionals and other experts, parents, children and young people, and stakeholders such as employers, colleges, universities and trade unions.

The Review Group has recently launched a call for evidence, which sets out key questions and themes where it would particularly welcome input, closing on 22 November. The review will also include a range of engagement activity across every region during the autumn term, including visits to schools and colleges, as well as Q&A events and discussions with young people.

The Review Group will publish an interim report in the new year setting out their interim findings and confirming the key areas for further work. The final review with recommendations will be published in autumn 2025.

### Dangerous Dogs

*Asked by Lord McInnes of Kilwinning*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of estimate of the number of unregistered XL bullies in England and Wales. [HL2030]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Since the formation of this policy under the last Government, Defra has not held data on the number of unregistered XL bullies in England and Wales.

### David Amess

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what response they have made to Katie Amess, daughter of the late Sir David Amess MP, who has said that her father was "catastrophically failed by the Prevent programme"; and what consideration they have given to holding a full inquest into Sir David's death. [HL2043]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** Sir David Amess's death was senseless and tragic, and our thoughts continue to be with his family and friends.

This government takes the safety of members of parliament extremely seriously and significant work has been taken forward since Sir David's tragic killing. The Prevent strategy is a vital tool to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It has been

significantly strengthened over the last decade, including the introduction of the Prevent and Channel Duties in 2015 and we continue to learn lessons and drive improvements to Prevent.

Any decisions on the inquest are for a coroner to decide, but we are committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure Prevent works effectively to protect us from terrorism.

### Dementia

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that new dementia treatments can be deemed cost-effective by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, in the light of the investment required to scale up diagnostics. [HL2126]

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that disease-modifying dementia treatments are available through the NHS. [HL2127]

**Baroness Merron:** The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) makes recommendations for the National Health Service on whether new medicines should be routinely funded by the NHS, based on an assessment of their costs and benefits. The NHS in England is legally required to fund NICE-recommended medicines, normally within three months of the publication of final guidance. The NICE only recommends medicines that offer additional health benefits to patients and their carers, and demonstrate value for money for the taxpayer.

The NICE is currently evaluating two new licensed disease-modifying treatments for Alzheimer's disease and has been unable to recommend them in its draft guidance. The NICE concluded that the relatively small benefits they provide balanced against the overall cost of providing the treatments, including intensive monitoring for serious side effects, means that they cannot currently be considered good value for the taxpayer. However, the NICE has not yet published final guidance and will take the comments received in response to its draft guidance fully into account in developing its final recommendations.

A number of other disease-modifying treatments for dementia are in late-stage development and are expected to come to market in the next few years. To prepare for the new generation of dementia treatments in development, NHS England is working to ensure that diagnostic and treatment capacity, and clinical pathway redesign and investment are in place to support the adoption of any new licensed and NICE recommended treatments as soon as possible.

The Government will transform the NHS from a late diagnosis, late treatment health service, to one that catches illness earlier and prevents it in the first place. We will also put Britain at the forefront of transforming



treatment for dementia by backing more research into the disease. Part of this will be ensuring that we support manufacturers to develop products that are potentially cost effective to implement, and that new treatments assessed as clinically and cost effective are rolled out in a safe and timely way.

The Department funds dementia research via the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). Alongside Alzheimer's Research UK, Alzheimer's Society, and the People's Postcode Lottery, the NIHR is funding the Blood Biomarker Challenge which seeks to produce the clinical and economic data that could make the case for the use of a blood test in the NHS to support diagnosis of dementia.

### Dentistry and Doctors: Regulation

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to use their powers under section 60 of the Health Act 1999 to enable doctors and dentists to reform their regulatory procedures. [HL2250]

**Baroness Merron:** The Government is currently considering its priorities for professional regulation, and will set these out at the earliest opportunity.

### Developing Countries: Contraception

*Asked by Baroness Jenkin of Kennington*

To ask His Majesty's Government how they will ensure education and access to contraceptives for marginalised and under-served populations via FCDO-supported sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes. [HL2109]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The UK is proud to defend and promote universal and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to modern methods of contraception. The UK has a broad range of programming focused on reaching the most vulnerable and marginalised people with education and contraceptive access including through the UNFPA Supplies Partnership; core funding to UNFPA; via our Women's Integrated Sexual Health Programme (WISH) in Africa; and through our support to Global Financing Facility (GFF) for Women Children and Adolescents to strengthen government systems to deliver on reproductive health.

### Development Aid: Genito-urinary Medicine

*Asked by Baroness Jenkin of Kennington*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the joint statement on contraception by the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics and the International Confederation of Midwives, when they expect person-centred and respectful contraception provision to be integrated into FCDO-supported sexual, reproductive, maternal and adolescent care services, as

well as into emergency obstetric and neonatal care. [HL2107]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The FCDO actively supports women's and girls' right to be able to make their own, informed decisions about modern methods of contraception. We have significantly increased access to voluntary family planning globally. In 2023, the UNFPA Supplies Partnership, which includes the UK, reached 23 million women and girls in the lowest income countries.

Midwives are crucial to ensuring guidance and access to contraception is integrated into maternal health services. The FCDO recently signed an agreement with the International Confederation of Midwives, aiming to strengthen midwifery associations in three countries. Funding will support midwives to implement the midwifery models of care framework.

*Asked by Baroness Jenkin of Kennington*

To ask His Majesty's Government how they will ensure equitable postpartum and post-abortion contraception provisions via FCDO-supported sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes. [HL2108]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The UK has taken action to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) through FCDO-supported programmes to ensure equitable postpartum and post abortion contraception provisions. The UK delivers on this through several programmes including the Reproductive Health Supplies programme and WISH Dividend programme, and through partners including the Safe Abortion Action Fund to deliver on providing access to key sexual and reproductive health services including post-partum and post-abortion contraception options and to support governments to prioritise equitable access to comprehensive SRHR.

### Drugs: Rehabilitation

*Asked by Lord Carlile of Berriew*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to their policy paper From Harm to Hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives, published in December 2021, whether they will secure funding for local drug treatment services to help ensure the continuity of care for those released from custody with a drug treatment need. [HL2017]

**Baroness Merron:** Local authorities are responsible for commissioning services to prevent, mitigate and treat alcohol and drug related health harms, in response to local need. This includes supporting those who have been released from custody with high quality drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services.

The Department of Health and Social Care is continuing to invest in improvements to local alcohol and drug treatment and recovery services to enable people to access high quality help and support should they need it. Funding for drug and alcohol services in England is



provided through the public health grant. In addition, in 2024/25, the Department of Health and Social Care has allocated local authorities a further £267 million to improve the quality and capacity of drug and alcohol treatment and recovery, alongside £105 million made available by the Department of Health and Social Care, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to improve treatment pathways and recovery, housing and employment outcomes for people with drug and alcohol problems. The Chancellor will conclude a multi-year Spending Review in spring 2025.

### **East Midlands Railway**

*Asked by Lord Bradshaw*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with East Midlands Railway regarding the restoration of regular train services between Lincoln and Newark Northgate following their withdrawal in the emergency timetable introduced in June 2021, resulting in gaps in services between Lincoln and London via Newark Northgate. [HL2191]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** Officials and East Midlands Railway are having conversations regarding the restoration of train services between Lincoln and Newark Northgate. Reinstatement is dependent upon the implementation of the East Coast Main Line timetable recast and successful conclusion of the relevant industry and departmental processes.

### **Electronic Travel Authorisations: Northern Ireland**

*Asked by Lord Elliott of Ballinamallard*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether workers and short-term travellers will be able to travel from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland using an electronic travel authorisation. [HL1980]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The ETA scheme applies to passengers visiting or transiting the UK, who do not currently need a visa for short stays and who do not have a valid UK immigration status prior to travelling.

British and Irish nationals do not require an ETA, and an exemption also exists for legal residents of Ireland entering the UK from Ireland.

Other individuals crossing the land border into Northern Ireland will need to continue to enter in accordance with the UK's immigration framework, including the requirement to obtain an ETA when the scheme is fully rolled out.

### **Ferries: Research**

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to commission research on the economic value of

ferries, as proposed at the fourth Islands Forum in May. [HL2052]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The previous administration initiated an Islands Connectivity Project to investigate transport barriers faced by islands across the UK, which was to be funded with underspend identified elsewhere in the department. The project was paused due to the election and, as part of the recent savings exercise, the Treasury requested the return of underspends from this financial year, including those earmarked for this project.

As funding cannot be extended beyond this financial year, we cannot guarantee the viability of continuing the project. My department is working closely with the Cabinet Office and Department for Transport to establish certainty over the future of the Islands Forum and the projects associated with it.

### **Financial Services: Software**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of concerns regarding gambling behaviour associated with investment apps. [HL2087]

**Baroness Twycross:** Investment apps typically fall under the framework of financial services regulation, rather than gambling regulation, and would not typically be considered as offering a form of gambling. Within the framework of financial services regulation, HM Treasury is responsible for setting the overall legal framework and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is responsible for regulating and supervising the financial services industry. One of the FCA's primary operational objectives is to secure an appropriate degree of protection for consumers.

The FCA is empowered by legislation to make rules as it considers necessary or expedient to advance its objectives and in 2022, it published research raising concerns about design features in trading apps, including those with game-like elements, and warned stock trading app operators to review their design features. The research noted that some customers appeared to exhibit behaviours similar to harmful gambling. Under the FCA's Consumer Duty trading apps are explicitly required to pay attention to the needs of customers who may be vulnerable. The Duty also contains an expectation that firms avoid designing features which exploit the behavioural biases of consumers and requires product manufacturers to undertake appropriate testing of their products. In June 2024, the FCA noted that it was keeping trading apps under review over concerns about gamification.

Within the framework of gambling regulation, we are aware of an increase in the number of novel products which blur the line between gambling and other markets such as financial investment. The Gambling Commission has enhanced its licensing approach to novel products and in 2021 strengthened its Memorandum of Understanding with the FCA to ensure effective cooperation. The

Gambling Commission has made clear that it will not normally grant a licence to products that use language usually associated with investments or financial products.

### Fisheries: EU Countries

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with the European Union on (1) sand-eel fishing, and (2) bottom trawling. [HL2198]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** The European Union (EU) has raised a dispute that the UK's decision to prohibit fishing for sand-eel within UK waters is not compliant with the Trade and Cooperation agreement (TCA). The dispute proceedings are confidential therefore there is little more I can say at this time.

### Forced Labour

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Centre for Social Justice and Justice report, At what cost? Exploring the impact of forced labour in the UK; and how they intend to (1) address its four central findings, and (2) respond to its recommendations. [HL2047]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Government welcomes the Centre for Social Justice report, which provides valuable insights and recommendations on improving the UK's response to forced labour. We remain committed to strengthening our response to modern slavery and are working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders to tackle forced labour in the UK.

The Government is establishing the Fair Work Agency (FWA), a single enforcement body dedicated to ensuring compliance and protecting vulnerable workers from exploitation. The FWA will provide a single point of contact for reporting labour exploitation and related concerns, allowing for a more coordinated and comprehensive response to exploitation and abuse. The FWA will be adequately resourced, with powers to proactively investigate and enforce compliance with labour laws.

### Foreign Investment in UK

*Asked by Lord Leigh of Hurley*

To ask His Majesty's Government how much of the £63 billion of inward investment announced as a result of the International Investment Summit had been previously identified or announced. [HL1993]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** The International Investment Summit resulted in £63 billion of private investment commitments. It will see billions of pounds flowing into our tech, digital, manufacturing and life

sciences sectors, spurring growth in all four nations of the United Kingdom and creating almost 38,000 new jobs in the process.

### Foreign Investment in UK: DP World

*Asked by Lord Leigh of Hurley*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether any inducements were offered, discussed or agreed to persuade DP World to attend the International Investment Summit. [HL1992]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** No benefits – financial or otherwise – were offered, discussed or agreed to persuade DP World to attend the International Investment Summit.

### Furs: Trade

*Asked by Baroness Gale*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they plan to publish the results of the call for evidence to the consultation on the fur market in Great Britain, which opened on 31 May 2021. [HL2056]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Ministers are reviewing policies, which will be announced in due course, including the consultation on the Fur Market in Great Britain. Defra is continuing to build the evidence base on the fur sector. This includes commissioning our expert Animal Welfare Committee on what constitutes responsible sourcing of fur. The report that they produce will support our understanding of the fur industry and help inform our next steps.

This Labour Government will introduce the most ambitious programme for animal welfare in a generation.

### Gambling: Fines

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many fines were imposed on gambling companies by the Gambling Commission for failing to meet their social responsibility obligations in (1) 2018, (2) 2019, (3) 2020, (4) 2021, (5) 2022, and (6) 2023. [HL2130]

**Baroness Twycross:** In 2018, there were 3 fines imposed by the Gambling Commission on gambling companies for failing to meet their social responsibility obligations. For the years 2019 to 2023, I refer the noble Lord to the answer I provided to your question [HL1825](#) :

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

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

## Gambling: Rehabilitation

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many young people aged 13 to 18 have been treated by the NHS for problem gambling in the past year. [HL2177]

**Baroness Merron:** The most recent data available shows that between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, eleven young people aged 13 to 18 years old were referred to National Health Services for treatment related to their gambling.

## Gender Recognition: Germany

Asked by *Baroness Jenkin of Kennington*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether a person who changes their legal sex status in Germany after the commencement of that country's Self-Determination Act will be able to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate in the UK without needing to provide medical reports. [HL2060]

Asked by *Baroness Jenkin of Kennington*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to remove Germany from the list of approved countries for the overseas route of gender recognition after the German Self-Determination Act comes into force on 1 November. [HL2061]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** At the time of the commencement of The Gender Recognition (Approved Countries and Territories and Saving Provision) Order 2023, the international systems that were on the list were comparable to the UK's standard route to legal gender recognition. Gender recognition systems across the world constantly change and we are working with our counterparts in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to ensure that any changes are monitored and noted for future updates. The Government will update the list annually, considering developments in other countries' systems.

## Gene Therapies

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the progress in using, and (2) the suitability of, the Innovative Medicines Fund in providing NHS access to gene therapies in England. [HL2124]

**Baroness Merron:** The Innovative Medicines Fund (IMF) was launched in June 2022 and builds on the successful Cancer Drugs Fund to support patient access to the most promising new medicines, while further evidence is collected on their use to address clinical uncertainty. £340 million is available through the fund this financial year for the National Health Service to fund early access to the most promising treatments, including gene therapies, while additional data is collected that will

inform a future National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) evaluation to decide whether the medicine should be routinely funded. The NICE has recommended two treatments for use through the IMF, both of which are gene therapies, which are:

- etranacogene dezaparvovec, for treating moderately severe or severe haemophilia B; and
- exagamglogene autotemcel, for treating transfusion-dependent beta-thalassaemia in people aged 12 years old and over.

## Genetically Modified Organisms: Crops

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether farmers in the vicinity of the recently announced open field trials of gene-edited crops on 25 commercial farms in England will be given notice of the trials and the opportunity to object. [HL1851]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** These plants only contain genetic sequence that could arise through traditional breeding. However, unlike equivalent trials for traditionally bred plants, Defra asks for confirmation that the person with overall responsibility for them will put in place appropriate measures, as necessary, to minimise the possibility of material from the plants entering the human food or animal feed systems.

## Government Digital Service: Equality

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Twycross on 27 September (HL1033), whether the Government Digital Service has a list of banned words and phrases. [HL2002]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** The Government Digital Service issues guidance outlining how to write in the GOV.UK style, which is used by teams across government when publishing information to the website. This guidance is publicly available on GOV.UK. It provides examples of words and terms to avoid and specifies that publishers must not use offensive language.

GDS continuously reviews and updates this guidance to ensure content across the website is consistent, easy to understand and accessible to everyone.

## Hammersmith Bridge: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill on 26 September (HL1120), whether the second strengthening stage of works on Hammersmith Bridge has started; and if not, when it will (1) start, and (2) be completed. [HL1987]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** The first, ‘Stabilisation’ stage of works is now expected to complete in Spring 2025 and will ensure that the Bridge can safely remain open to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic on a permanent basis. The schedule for the ‘Strengthening’ works is under development by the Borough.

### Health Services

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask His Majesty's Government over what timescale the delivery of an additional 40,000 elective NHS appointments per week will be achieved. [HL2222]

**Baroness Merron:** Tackling waiting lists is a key part of our Health Mission, and we will deliver an additional 2 million operations, scans, and appointments during our first year in Government, which is equivalent to 40,000 per week, as a first step in our commitment to ensuring that patients can expect to be treated within 18 weeks. Further details regarding the additional appointments will be confirmed at the earliest opportunity.

### Health Services: Artificial Intelligence

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to regulate the use of artificial intelligence in healthcare, particularly in relation to AI-ECG risk estimation. [HL2228]

**Baroness Merron:** The Department has invested £9.3 million to bolster the safety of artificial intelligence (AI) in health and care, and to ensure the regulatory pathway is clear for both developers and adopters. Ensuring technologies are safe is a top priority, and through this funding the Department has supported the launch of regulatory projects such as the AI and Digital Regulation Service and the AI Airlock.

AI-electrocardiogram (ECG) risk estimation technologies are classified as medical devices. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulation Agency (MHRA), an arm's length body of the Department, is responsible for regulating medical devices and ensuring their safety, efficacy, and performance. AI-ECG risk estimation tools will need to go through the relevant regulatory approvals and register with the MHRA prior to being placed on the market.

### Health Services: Children and Young People

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure there are adequate numbers of skilled professionals to meet the needs of seriously ill children and young people. [HL2277]

**Baroness Merron:** Ensuring that children and young people are cared for by the right professional, when and

where they need it, is crucial to improving outcomes for children. This includes making sure that there are adequate numbers of skilled professionals to meet the needs of seriously ill children and young people.

We are developing a 10-Year Health Plan to reform the National Health Service. A core part of the 10-Year Health Plan will be our workforce, and how we ensure we provide the staff, technology, and infrastructure the NHS needs to the care for all patients, including children and young people.

### Health Services: Roma and Travellers

*Asked by Baroness Whitaker*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve access to digital primary healthcare services among Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people. [HL2138]

**Baroness Merron:** We know that patients are struggling to access general practice (GP), and that these struggles can be particularly acute in inclusion health groups such as gypsy, Roma, and traveller communities.

We want to ensure that digital healthcare services are available to those who need them. The GP contract requires GPs to provide an online consultation tool, allowing patients to manage appointments, and view and request repeat prescriptions digitally. This service also simplifies electronic registration with GP surgeries. Digital registration is designed to accommodate diverse patient needs, enhancing accessibility, and making it easier for patients to register without visiting the practice in person.

However, to ensure that patients aren't digitally excluded, the GP contract is clear that patients should always have the option of visiting their practice in person, and all online tools must always be provided in addition to, rather than as a replacement for, other channels for accessing GPs. Practice receptions should be open so that patients without access to a telephone or online services are in no way disadvantaged.

*Asked by Baroness Whitaker*

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made since the 2021 Friends, Families and Travellers mystery shopping exercise in ensuring that nomadic Gypsy and Traveller patients are not wrongfully refused access to GP services. [HL2139]

**Baroness Merron:** We are very clear that a general practice (GP) cannot refuse registering a patient based on the race or ethnicity, gender, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, disability, or medical conditions of the patient. This encompasses patients from gypsy, Roma, and traveller communities.

GPs have a responsibility to register people who are homeless, have no fixed abode, or are legitimately unable to provide documentation as proof of living within the catchment area. An individual should not be refused registration or appointments because they do not have a



proof of address or personal identification. It is not considered a reasonable ground to refuse registration.

The *General Medical Services Regulations* were updated to require practices to use a standardised registration system that doesn't require identification or an address. Additionally, the regulations now require GPs to provide an online consultation tool, allowing patients to manage appointments, and view and request repeat prescriptions digitally. This service also simplifies electronic registration with GP surgeries. Digital registration is designed to accommodate diverse patient needs, enhancing accessibility, and making it easier for patients to register without visiting the practice in person.

However, to ensure that patients aren't digitally excluded, the GP contract is clear that patients should always have the option of visiting their practice in person, and all online tools must always be provided in addition to, rather than as a replacement for, other channels for accessing a GP. Practice receptions should be open so that patients without access to telephone or online services are in no way disadvantaged.

### Heating: Hydrogen

*Asked by Lord Naseby*

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress has been made in the domestic heating market with the use of blends of hydrogen up to 20 per cent by volume in Great Britain's gas network. [HL2069]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Government remains committed to examining the case for hydrogen heating and is reviewing plans. This work aims to gather evidence on the feasibility, costs and benefits of hydrogen heating that can inform decisions on its potential role.

### High Speed 2 Line: Finance

*Asked by Lord Hain*

To ask His Majesty's Government as a result of the latest total for public investment in HS2 how much funding under the Barnett formula they estimate will go to (1) Scotland, (2) Wales, and (3) Northern Ireland. [HL1982]

**Lord Livermore:** The Barnett formula will continue to apply as set out in the published Statement of Funding Policy.

The UK Government is responsible for much of the rail infrastructure in Wales, and therefore spends money on this infrastructure rather than funding the Welsh Government to do so through the Barnett formula. In line with this responsibility, the UK Government is currently delivering an ambitious programme to upgrade Welsh railways.

In Scotland and Northern Ireland, rail infrastructure is a devolved responsibility, so the Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive receive funding through

Barnett formula. The Barnett formula is applied at fiscal events when UK Government departmental budgets are set rather than being applied when departments announce how they are spending their budgets.

The Block Grant Transparency publication breaks down all changes in the devolved governments' block grant funding from the 2015 Spending Review up to and including Main Estimates 2023-24. The most recent report was published in July 2023.

Overall, the devolved governments' funding is at least 20% more per person than equivalent UK Government spending in other parts of the UK and the devolved governments can allocate their funding in devolved areas as they see fit.

### Immigration: Digital Technology

*Asked by The Earl of Clancarty*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Hanson of Flint on 24 October (HL Deb col 742), whether they intend to introduce physical proof of immigration status for EU citizens living in the UK; and if so, when. [HL2019]

*Asked by The Earl of Clancarty*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Hanson of Flint on 24 October (HL Deb col 744), when they will carry out their review of the digitisation of immigration status; and when the results will be known. [HL2020]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** eVisas are a key part of delivering a border and immigration system which will be more digital and streamlined by 2025, a change that will enhance the applicant's experience, deliver excellent value, and increase the immigration system's security and efficiency.

Successful EUSS applicants are given a UK Visas and Immigration account, which they can use to view and share their immigration status with others securely and in real-time. The Withdrawal Agreement explicitly allows for status to be provided in digital form. We will continue working towards a border and immigration system that is digital by default, and issuing immigration status in the form of an eVisa is part of this.

As with all such major change programmes, we are keeping our eVisa systems under review during the implementation period to identify and address any emerging issues.

### Import Controls: Forced Labour

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Hanson of Flint on 22 October (HL1356), what assessment they have made of the likelihood of goods made by Uyghur forced labour entering the UK via cargo planes flying from Urumqi in Xinjiang to Bournemouth. [HL2048]



**Lord Hanson of Flint:** While Border Force does not routinely assess whether goods on freight entering the UK may have been made using forced labour, we work closely with law enforcement partners to share intelligence to ensure all goods abide by customs and excise rules.

The Government encourages businesses to monitor their global supply chains with rigour, uncover and remedy any instances of modern slavery they may find. Under Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, commercial businesses who operate in the UK and have a turnover of £36 million or more must report annually on the steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains by publishing an annual modern slavery statement.

The Home Office is currently working with a wide group of stakeholders to update the Section 54 statutory guidance. This will further support businesses to produce high quality statements, which are underpinned by effective measures to prevent and effectively respond to instances of modern slavery in supply chains.

### Integrated Care Boards: Debts

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask His Majesty's Government which integrated care boards are reporting a projected system-wide deficit for this financial year; and what is the projected deficit for each of them. [HL2000]

**Baroness Merron:** 31 out of the 42 integrated care boards agreed a deficit plan for the year for their overall systems with NHS England, which aggregated to a total planned overspend of £2.3 billion. NHS England has since provided additional funding to systems to match those plans, meaning there are currently no projected system-wide deficits based on those start year plans.

### Internet: Safety

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made in determining the eligible entity criteria and procedural requirements for the Online Safety Act 2023's super-complaints function; and when they will introduce the regulations to bring it into effect. [HL2076]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** The government consulted on the eligible entity criteria and procedural requirements for the super-complaints' regime under the Online Safety Act 2023 earlier this year. We are carefully considering responses to the consultation to inform secondary legislation, which we intend to lay in spring next year.

### Intertrade UK

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent on 23 October (HL1672), whether they will now answer the question put; namely, what financial support they have provided to Intertrade UK; on how many occasions it has met; what decisions it has taken; who was invited to attend such meetings; and who actually attended. [HL2098]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** Intertrade UK has not met as yet.

Following the appointment of Baroness Foster as the chair of Intertrade UK, the next steps will be to appoint the other members of the group and we will announce these appointments in due course.

### Intimate Image Abuse

*Asked by Baroness Owen of Alderley Edge*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the funding of the Revenge Porn Helpline is adequate and sustainable in the light of growing demand. [HL2071]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Home Office is providing £150,000 to the Revenge Porn Helpline in 2024/5. They provide high-quality support and advice to victims of non-consensual intimate image sharing and raise awareness of intimate image abuse nationally and internationally. Since its establishment in 2015, the Helpline has demonstrated an ability to successfully remove from circulation 90% of the images reported to the Helpline by victims.

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the finding in the Internet Matters report The new face of digital abuse: Children's experiences of nude deepfakes, published on 22 October, that nearly half a million children have encountered AI deepfake nudes online, what plans they have to ban apps that create deepfake nudes. [HL2079]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** Any child sexual abuse material, whether AI generated or not, is illegal in the UK. It is also illegal to share or threaten to share an AI-generated intimate image of an adult without consent. The government will take further action by delivering the manifesto commitment to ban the creation of sexually explicit deepfakes.

The Online Safety Act requires services in scope to proactively tackle child sexual abuse content and intimate image abuse content. The Act also requires services to use highly effective age assurance to prevent children from encountering pornography. These requirements apply to AI-generated content.

### Iran: Baha'i Faith

Asked by *Baroness Whitaker*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the joint letter by United Nations Special Rapporteurs on 31 July regarding a rise in the instances of imprisonment of Baha'i women in Iran; and whether they intend to make any representations to the government of that country calling for their release. [HL2013]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The UK condemns Iran's restrictions against Freedom of Religion or Belief. Baha'is face particularly acute repression by the authorities in Iran, which includes but is not limited to unfair arrest, detention and lengthy prison sentences. We are aware of the UN Special Rapporteurs' joint letter - the increased targeting of Baha'i women is an alarming escalation. We are committed to working with international partners to hold Iran to account for its repression of the Bahai's, and other religious minorities, including at the UN Third Committee.

### ISG Limited: Project Bank Accounts

Asked by *Lord Aberdare*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether project bank accounts (PBAs) were in place on all public sector projects undertaken by ISG Limited for Government departments, in line with the Government's Construction Playbook which states that PBAs "should be used unless there are compelling reasons not to"; and if not, which such projects did not use PBAs, and why. [HL1965]

**Baroness Twycross:** The Construction Playbook sets out key policies and guidance for how public works projects and programmes are assessed, procured and delivered and includes guidance that "Project Bank Accounts are not always suitable, but should be used unless there are compelling reasons not to". It is for Contracting Authorities to determine how to implement this guidance appropriately for each contract. The Cabinet Office does not hold data on the use of Project Bank Accounts for other departments.

### Livestock: Transport

Asked by *Baroness Fookes*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to improve conditions for farm animals being transported for slaughter or further fattening. [HL2157]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** The Government is considering its priorities for improving welfare for all animals, including those that are transported to slaughter or further fattening.

We are putting in place regulations to ensure the ban on exports of livestock and horses for slaughter is implemented and enforced effectively. The Animal

Welfare (Livestock Exports) Enforcement Regulations 2024 were laid before Parliament on 12 September, debated and approved in both Houses on 5 November and will come into force on 1 January 2025.

### Local Government: Insolvency

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide financial support to local councils facing bankruptcy. [HL2086]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** On Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October, Minister McMahon wrote to all MPs to confirm that we will continue to operate a process to support councils in the most difficult positions.

At the Autumn Budget, we announced £1.3 billion of new grant funding in 2025/26 for local government to deliver core services, of which £600 million is for social care and £700 million to support general pressures. Together with local income from council tax and locally-retained business rates, this will provide a real-terms increase in total core spending power of around 3.2%.

Any council that considers its financial position to be unmanageable should talk to MHCLG.

### Medical Records: Digital Technology

Asked by *Lord Freyberg*

To ask His Majesty's Government what evaluations have been conducted on NHS-developed electronic health record systems in Leeds, Birmingham and Southampton; what benefits and risks have been identified in comparison to commercial systems developed by EPIC, Cerner and Infosys; and whether they plan to replace the NHS-developed systems with these commercial solutions. [HL2023]

**Baroness Merron:** NHS England carried out an evaluation of National Health Service-developed electronic health record (EHR) solutions in late 2022, the findings of which were endorsed at the NHS England Digital, Data and Technology Committee in March 2023. The review found that while NHS-developed EHR systems have some benefits, the lack of appetite for their adoption in neighbouring organisations was a limiting factor in their broader use, at a time when sharing EHRs across organisations is being encouraged. The review concluded that there was no current basis to replace NHS-developed solutions, except where, through local decision making, it was deemed appropriate to do so.

### Myanmar: Crimes against Humanity

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of calls by Amnesty International on 24 October for the UN Security Council to refer the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court. [HL2286]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** We condemn the ongoing serious human rights violations in Rakhine State, as well as previous atrocities against the Rohingya. These actions require further scrutiny and the UK is supportive, in principle, of any attempts to bring these issues before the International Criminal Court. Our assessment, however, remains that there is insufficient support amongst Security Council members for an International Criminal Court (ICC) referral. It will not advance the cause of accountability in Myanmar for an ICC referral to fail to win Security Council support or to be vetoed.

### Myanmar: Military Aircraft

*Asked by Baroness Nye*

To ask His Majesty's Government why Russian companies supplying aircraft parts to the Myanmar military have been sanctioned while Chinese companies supplying jets have not. [HL2325]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** Since the coup in February 2021, the UK has announced sanctions on 25 individuals and 39 entities under the Myanmar Sanctions Regulations, targeting the military's access to resources, funds and equipment. We keep all evidence and potential designations under close review, and it would not be appropriate to speculate about future sanctions as to do so could reduce their impact. The UK is clear that countries should not sell arms, including aircraft parts, to the Myanmar military.

### Neonicotinoids

*Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to ban the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, including thiamethoxam. [HL2149]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** This Government has been clear that we will change existing policies to ban the use of neonicotinoid pesticides that threaten bees and other vital pollinators before the next General Election. This includes thiamethoxam.

*Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on wildlife in England and Wales, and in particular on bees. [HL2150]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** This Government has been clear that we will change existing policies to ban the use of neonicotinoid pesticides that threaten bees and other vital pollinators by the next General Election. This is because there is clear and abundant evidence that neonicotinoids are harmful to species other than those they are intended to control, and particularly pollinators, including bees.

*Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will end emergency authorisations of neonicotinoids which are poisonous to bees. [HL2186]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** This Government has been clear that we will change existing policies to ban the use of neonicotinoid pesticides that threaten bees and other vital pollinators by the next General Election.

### Neonicotinoids: Sugar Beet

*Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they intend to make a decision on the application by British Sugar and the National Farmers' Union to be allowed to use the neonicotinoid Cruiser SB, which contains thiamethoxam, on sugar beet in 2025; and how many representations they have received on the issue. [HL2151]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** A decision on the emergency authorisation application from British Sugar and the National Farmers' Union to use the neonicotinoid Cruiser SB, which contains thiamethoxam, on sugar beet in 2025 will be taken in line with legal requirements. The Secretary of State will take full account of the available evidence and expert advice, and a decision will be made in due course.

At the time of writing, Defra has received a significant number of representations on this issue, reflecting the strength of interest from a range of interested organisations and members of the public.

### NHS England: Equality

*Asked by Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Twycross on 27 September (HL1033), whether NHS England has a list of banned words and phrases. [HL2003]

**Baroness Merron:** NHS England does not have a list of banned words or phrases. NHS England encourages the use of plain English and inclusive language to help everyone to make informed decisions about their health needs.

### NHS England: Stonewall

*Asked by Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Merron on 3 October (HL1032), whether NHS England is affiliated to Stonewall; and which arm's-length bodies of the Department for Health and Social Care are affiliated to Stonewall, and at what cost. [HL2004]

**Baroness Merron:** The department supports arm's-length bodies (ALBs) 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.

Latest reporting shows that the only ALB with a subscription to Stonewall is NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) for the Diversity Champions Programme, with a cost of £3,090 for 2024/25.

### NHS Trusts: Stonewall

*Asked by Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Merron on 3 October (HL1032), what is the Government's Health Mission, and how they envision equality, diversity and inclusion policies developed by NHS trusts aligning with the Government's Health Mission and priorities. [HL2132]

**Baroness Merron:** The Government's Health Mission is to build a health and social care system fit for the future, working in partnership with health and care system partners. The goals of the mission are to: ensure the National Health Service is there when people need it; reduce the lives lost to the biggest killers; and create a fairer Britain where everyone lives well for longer.

The Department and NHS England support the NHS trusts to define their own appropriate policies to support equality, diversity, and inclusion.

### NHS: Artificial Intelligence

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government how the NHS are using generative AI transcription tools; and what steps they are taking to prevent the risk of errors generated by the technology. [HL2050]

**Baroness Merron:** New artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are being developed that have the potential to improve healthcare delivery and to provide significant cost savings to the National Health Service. These technologies could help ease the administrative burden faced by staff and make systems more efficient. One example is the use of transcription tools such as automated voice to text tools.

Several NHS trusts are running trials, including a multi-site assessment of the impact of using automated transcription software. The NHS AI team is monitoring these developments and developing guidance for the responsible use of these tools. This guidance will be informed by the Government's broader guidance on the use of Generative AI in the public sector.

The NHS operates within a comprehensive regulatory framework. The Department has provided £9.3 million of funding to ensure the regulatory pathway is clear for both developers and adopters. Through this funding, the Department has supported the launch of regulatory projects such as the AI and Digital Regulation Service,

bringing together information, advice, and guidance, from multiple healthcare regulators to support adopters and developers of AI to easily understand what regulatory and evaluation pathways need to be followed before an AI tool can be safely deployed across health and care.

### NHS: Finance

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether any of the £22.6 billion allocated to the NHS for day-to-day spending in the Autumn Budget had already been allocated to NHS budgets before the announcement, and if so, how much. [HL2223]

**Baroness Merron:** As advised by HM Treasury's 2024 Autumn Budget, the health and social care budget will grow by £12.5 billion in 2024/25 and by £22.6 billion in 2025/26, compared to 2023/24. £7.6 billion of the 2024/25 growth was confirmed in 2024/25 Main Estimates in July 2024. This is the first time a budget for 2025/26 has been agreed with HM Treasury.

### Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures: Licensing

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Merron on 6 August (HL534), when they intend to publish feedback to the licensing of non-surgical cosmetic procedures consultation, which ran from 2 September to 28 October 2023. [HL1998]

**Baroness Merron:** The Government is currently considering what steps may need to be taken in relation to the safety of the non-surgical cosmetics sector, and will set out its position at the earliest opportunity.

### Pakistan: Ahmadiyya

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following recent attacks on Ahmadi Muslim mosques and the desecration of graves in Pakistan, in which police are reported to have been involved, what steps they are taking to urge the government of that country to protect such mosques' graves and uphold its obligations under international human rights law. [HL2045]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** We are aware of reports of the desecration of Ahmadi mosques and graves in Pakistan. The UK strongly condemns all instances of hate or violence directed towards Ahmadiyya Muslims and other marginalised religious communities in Pakistan. The Minister for Afghanistan and Pakistan underlined the importance of promoting religious tolerance and harmony when he met with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister Azam Tarar on 4 September. On 28 October, the British High Commissioner to Pakistan raised concerns around threats of violence directed towards Ahmadiyya Muslims in Pakistan with the Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam



Nawaz Sharif. Alongside our diplomatic engagement, 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: Russia**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Pakistan about increasing military cooperation and industrial collaboration between Pakistan and Russia, including the recent visit to Pakistan by a high-level Russian delegation led by the Deputy Defence Minister. [HL2141]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The UK respects Pakistan's right to choose its own international partners. The Foreign Secretary raised UK concerns relating to Russia's illegal war in Ukraine with Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar of Pakistan at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting on 25 October 2024. President Putin's invasion of Ukraine is a serious violation of the UN Charter and we are clear that engagements with the Russian Government should not be treated as business as usual. We continue to discuss global peace and security with Pakistan at Ministerial and official levels.

### **Party Wall etc Act 1996**

*Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Taylor of Stevenage on 23 October (HL1457), what steps they are taking to keep the Party Wall Act 1996 under continuous review; who they are engaging with to do so; which stakeholders will they be engaging with; and what steps they will take to ensure that there is adequate engagement with the public. [HL1984]

*Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Taylor of Stevenage on 23 October (HL1457), when they expect to make a decision on changes to be made in relation to the Party Wall Act 1996. [HL1985]

*Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Taylor of Stevenage on 23 October (HL1457), whether their first principle when considering changes to the Party Wall Act 1996 will be "do no harm". [HL1986]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** His Majesty's Government is committed to keeping the Party Wall Act under continuous review.

Government officials maintain records of correspondence on the Party Wall Act from

parliamentarians and members of the public alike, noting any recommendations concerning the efficacy and application of the act to ensure that any necessary changes can be carefully considered and effectively addressed. No date or decision has been made to review the party wall act. If and when the act is reviewed it would require an open public consultation.

### **Police: Roads**

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Hanson of Flint on 21 October (HL1180), what assessment they have made of the decline in the number of full-time equivalent police officers employed in road policing roles over the last 10 years; and how many (1) traffic collisions, and (2) injuries to drivers, pedestrians and other road users, there have been in each year over the same period. [HL1994]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Government has not conducted any such assessment.

As a general rule, how the police enforce the law is a matter for individual Chief Constables who will decide on the deployment of officers in dealing with all the issues for which the force is responsible, taking into account any specific local problems and demands.

### **Primary Health Care: Travellers**

*Asked by Baroness Whitaker*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Merron on 25 October (HL1693), what assessment they have made of the June report, Enablers of digital inclusion in primary care for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities, published by the Roma Support Group, and Friends, Families and Travellers, on access for Roma and Traveller people to digital services in primary care contexts such as GPs, opticians, pharmacies, and dentists. [HL2188]

**Baroness Merron:** *Enablers of digital inclusion in primary care for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities* recommends that primary care services offer flexibility and choice, including non-digital access routes, and that accessibility should be prioritised when designing digital services.

We will ensure patients have multiple routes of access to primary care by guaranteeing a face-to-face general practice appointment to anyone who wants one, and by implementing a modern booking system to end the 8:00am rush. Digital tools used in primary care settings must meet required minimum standards of functionality set by NHS England, ensuring a consistent quality of service for patients, and all organisations providing National Health Services, including primary care providers, must follow the Accessible Information Standard.



## Prisoners' Release

*Asked by Lord Mott*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the recent early release of some prisoners, whether they carried out a risk assessment in relation to the families of those who were released. [HL2040]

**Lord Timpson:** This Government inherited a prison system in crisis and was forced to implement SDS40 to avoid complete collapse of the Criminal Justice System, a risk that would greatly affect victims, families, and the country. In designing the measure, and with thorough consideration of the families of those who were being released, we took every possible step to mitigate risk, including an 8-week implementation period, offence exclusions, and a huge amount of collaboration with partners across the Criminal Justice System.

Exclusions include a series of offences (including stalking, coercive or controlling behaviour and non-fatal strangulation) related to domestic abuse, along with sex offences irrespective of sentence length and serious violent offences with a sentence of four years or more. Critically, the implementation period also gave Probation time to prepare properly and engage with key partners ahead of the initial releases, including informing eligible victims within the Victim Contact Scheme or Victim Notification Scheme and engaging with MAPPA and MARAC.

Once released, offenders will be closely monitored by probation and subject to strict licence conditions, which if breached could lead to their immediate recall to prison.

## Prisoners' Release: Electronic Tagging

*Asked by Lord Kempson*

To ask His Majesty's Government, since the general election, what (1) number, and (2) proportion, of prisoners released early have been electronically tagged; and what assessment has been made by the Ministry of Justice and its arm's-length bodies as to whether Serco has had sufficient capacity to tag all the prisoners who it was originally deemed should be tagged. [HL2063]

**Lord Timpson:** Data on SDS40 releases forms a subset of data intended for future publication. The number of prison places projected to be saved by SDS40 releases are set out in the Impact Assessment (between 4,600 and 5,900 prison places for the male estate).

Serco had sufficient capacity in terms of both equipment levels and resources to tag all those being released from custody with an Electronic Monitoring requirement under this scheme. As with all releases from custody, prior notification was issued to Serco with licence notification paperwork to identify numbers and locations of those requiring tagging.

By 04 November, all required visits to attempt tag installation for SDS40 cases had been made.

## Prisoners: Children

*Asked by Lord Mott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what guidance they have issued to schools relating to the safeguarding of the children of prisoners. [HL2039]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** All children, from whatever background and no matter what challenges they face, deserve a safe environment in which they can learn. The department recognises the impact that a parent going to prison can have on a child's learning, behaviour, mental health and wellbeing.

The government's 'Keeping children safe in education 2024' statutory guidance for schools and colleges outlines specific guidance concerning children with a family member in prison or who are affected by parental offending. The guidance asks schools to consider the additional needs of these children and highlights the risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. It also signposts staff to the National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO) website, which provides specialist advice and resources to support professionals working with offenders' children and their families to help mitigate negative consequences for those children. The NICCO website can be accessed here: <https://www.nicco.org.uk/>.

The government is committed to identifying and better supporting children of prisoners. The department will be working closely with the Ministry of Justice to deliver on this commitment.

## Private Education: VAT

*Asked by Lord Aberdare*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether, in light of their guidance published on 10 October on charging and reclaiming VAT on goods and services related to private school fees, providers offering Level 6 qualifications which are funded through the Dance and Drama Award scheme will be affected by the changes to VAT. [HL1964]

**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.

Higher education taught at schools that are otherwise in scope of the policy (for instance, performing arts schools) are being carved out of the VAT policy, as set out in the Government's response to the technical consultation.

## Railways: Wales

*Asked by Lord Hain*

To ask His Majesty's Government what percentage funding for rail infrastructure spending was allocated to Wales from 2011–12 to the most recent financial year

for which figures are available, relative to (1) the total rail infrastructure spending, and (2) population. [HL1983]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** The UK Government is responsible for rail infrastructure across England and Wales. Decisions on investment in rail infrastructure are taken to ensure that the railways are funded to operate safely and efficiently and in line with the strategic goals of the government.

From 2011/12 until 2023/24, the population of Wales represented, on average, 5.26% of the total population in England and Wales. For the same period, an average of 5.03% of the total investment on the conventional rail network in England and Wales (i.e. excluding HS2) was spent on rail infrastructure in Wales.

The table below shows the percentage in each year:

	<i>% Population of Wales</i>	<i>Wales route funded infrastructure</i>
2011/12	5.43%	3.70%
2012/13	5.39%	3.76%
2013/14	5.35%	3.79%
2014/15	5.31%	3.99%
2015/16	5.27%	4.72%
2016/17	5.25%	6.29%
2017/18	5.23%	6.46%
2018/19	5.21%	6.49%
2019/20	5.22%	5.99%
2020/21	5.21%	4.66%
2021/22	5.20%	4.74%
2022/23	5.20%	5.31%
2023/24	5.20%	5.03%

## Roads: Cameras

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of artificial intelligence cameras on roads. [HL2185]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** The Department for Transport is aware of a number of suppliers who are now offering camera technology incorporating artificial intelligence to monitor and count traffic flows, both for better optimisation of junctions and the identification of 'near-miss' incidents. We are also aware of trials of wider artificial intelligence-based systems that use data collected from CCTV cameras to improve traffic flow and tackle congestion. A number of applications of this technology have been supported by intelligent traffic systems research grants from the Department, and others from local authorities' own resources.

## Schools: Attendance

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recommendations contained in the Place2Be report *School for all: solutions for school attendance*, published in September. [HL2011]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** The government is grateful to Place2Be for their work and findings in 'School for All: Solutions for School Attendance'. Several of the recommendations that are made in the report are already being implemented by the department.

The government understands how vital mental health support is for enabling pupils to attend school and it is committed to supporting schools to embed this through a whole school and college approach. The department has provided grants for all schools and colleges to train a senior mental health lead, which over 70% of schools have now accessed. Additionally, the department is committed to delivering access to specialist mental health professionals in every school, so every young person has access to early support to address problems before they escalate. The government will also be putting in place new Young Futures hubs, which includes access to mental health support workers, and it will recruit an additional 8,500 new mental health staff to treat children and adults.

The department agrees that there should be a whole family approach to attendance from schools to build strong relationships and collaboration. The 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance, which became statutory in August 2024, encompasses a 'support first' approach, setting clear expectations that schools and local authorities should work with families to address barriers to attendance in a sensitive way. Moreover, the department recently announced an additional investment of £15 million to expand mentoring into 10 new areas over the next three years, providing further support for persistently absent pupils and their families on a one-to-one basis to help identify and address their barriers to education.

From September 2024, it also became mandatory for all schools in England to share their daily attendance data with the department. Schools, trusts and local authorities can access a data tool to identify and intervene where pupils may be at risk of becoming persistently absent. Although the department recognises the intent behind having a specific mental health absence code, there are concerns that creating an additional code is unhelpful in practice and could place a burden on schools. Recent changes to the school register codes, however, have introduced other codes that will be beneficial to children with special educational needs and disabilities or facing mental health challenges.

Additionally, tackling child poverty is at the heart of breaking down barriers to opportunity and improving the life chances for every child. This government's new Ministerial Taskforce will drive cross-government action on child poverty, starting with overseeing the

development of an ambitious Child Poverty Strategy, which will be published in spring next year and will help to tackle a key driver of severe absence.

### Science: Education

*Asked by Baroness Brown of Cambridge*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to halve the budget for the National Centre for Computing Education and remove funding for face-to-face and regional science teacher continuing professional development in all subjects except physics; and what impact this would have on social mobility, science teacher retention and UK growth. [HL1975]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** Over the last few years, the department has invested in the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) to help improve the quality of computing education. The NCCE will continue to provide support to teachers of computing, ensuring they are equipped with the specialist knowledge they require to confidently teach the subject. The independent Curriculum and Assessment Review will consider how children will acquire the key digital skills needed for life and work. The department will look at how it can support teachers to adapt to any future curriculum changes.

The Science Learning Partnerships have made important contributions over the last few years, and the department greatly values the work they have done. However, the previous government decided to focus resources more tightly, resulting in ending the funding of Science Learning Partnerships. The department expects to continue support for those teaching physics outside of their specialism. There is a range of other support for science education in schools, including materials from Oak National Academy in all three sciences, and free and commercially available continued professional development. The department remains strongly committed to supporting science education and continues to support teachers, including through generous financial incentives and fully funded Subject Knowledge Enhancement training.

### Self-assessment

*Asked by Lord Moylan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the rate at which His Majesty's Revenue and Customs are currently processing income tax returns compared to previous years, and what steps they are taking to improve the processing of income tax returns in advance of submissions in January. [HL2042]

**Lord Livermore:** By the end of January 2024, over 11.5m tax returns had been submitted for the 2022/23 financial year. Around 97 percent of returns received were online and the majority were processed automatically.

HMRC carries out additional processing work on a small percentage of tax returns. This includes checks,

addressing amends made by customers and manually working through returns which are made on paper. This year HMRC is on track to meet targets for processing paper Self-Assessment returns which is consistent with previous years.

To ensure taxpayers get support to meet their obligations for filing 23/24 returns, HMRC has recently recruited and trained additional customer service advisors.

### Slavery: Retail Trade

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent BBC documentary, "Slavery on the High Street", which highlighted the plight of victims forced into modern slavery in a Cambridgeshire McDonald's restaurant and in a London bakery supplying leading supermarkets, and how those exploiting them pocketed their wages. [HL2046]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** This government is deeply concerned about the rise in forced labour cases in the UK.

We are committed to tackling modern slavery, ensuring that victims are provided with the support they need to begin rebuilding their lives and that those responsible are prosecuted and brought to justice.

It is crucial that businesses play their part in addressing modern slavery risks within their operations and supply chains. Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 established a requirement for businesses to report on how they are tackling modern slavery in their organisation and supply chains. It is more important than ever for businesses to step up and take responsibility for conditions in their operations and supply chains. I expect businesses in the UK to be world leaders in this regard.

The Home Office is currently working with a wide group of stakeholders from business, academia and civil society to update the Section 54 statutory guidance. This will further support businesses to produce high quality statements, which are underpinned by effective measures to prevent and effectively respond to instances of modern slavery in supply chains.

### Soil: Environment Protection

*Asked by The Earl of Caithness*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether, as part of their rapid review of the Environmental Improvement Plan, they will consider combining all soil health measures into a Soil Health Action Plan for England. [HL1976]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Healthy functioning soil is at the heart of restoring natural systems and underpins our plans for environmental improvement. The Government is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of all commitments made by the last government to ensure they align with our new priorities and a decision

regarding any future soil strategy or action plan will be made in due course.

Central to this is our rapid review of the Environmental Improvement Plan. We will develop a new, statutory plan to protect and restore our natural environment with delivery information to help meet each of our ambitious Environment Act targets. It will focus on cleaning up our waterways, reducing waste across the economy, planting millions more trees, improving air quality and halting the decline in species by 2030.

### Solar Power

*Asked by Lord Fuller*

To ask His Majesty's Government for how many hectares, and in which locations, are applications currently being considered for large-scale solar farms under the 'nationally significant infrastructure project' regime; and what aggregate assessment they have made of the consequent effect on national food security and other competing land uses. [HL2055]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The application details for live planning cases are available from the Planning Inspectorate's website. There are currently two live Nationally Significant Infrastructure solar cases:

West Burton: 886 hectares on the Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire border.

Heckington Fen: 524 hectares, in North Kesteven, Lincolnshire.

An Environmental Statement forms part of an application for development consent and includes a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment, including on land use and any impacts resulting from the cumulation of effects with other projects.

These impacts are considered during the planning enquiry and weighed up in the planning balance when the Secretary of State makes his decision.

### Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Collins of Highbury on 31 July (HL154), why they have not appointed a Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief; and whether they will set out a timetable for doing so. [HL2164]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The Government will continue to champion freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all abroad. No one should live in fear because of what they do or do not believe in. Envoy roles will be decided upon in due course. We cannot comment on timelines for individual appointments. In the meantime, we continue to use the strength of our global diplomatic network, including dedicated staff within the FCDO, to promote and protect FoRB around the world.

### Sugar Beet: Neonicotinoids

*Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of compliance by sugar beet growers with the restrictions on the re-use of thiamethoxam within a period of 46 months on the same field. [HL2034]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** All pesticide use in the UK is subject to the Health and Safety Executive's overarching programme of enforcement and compliance. This includes extensive monitoring and intelligence-led enforcement activities to ensure that the supply and use of pesticides complies with legal requirements.

All UK sugar beet is grown under commercial contracting arrangements which provide a basis for the stewardship programme which has been part of the conditions attached to emergency authorisations for the thiamethoxam product Cruiser SB use granted in the past. As part of this stewardship programme, all growers are advised of the requirements for use of seeds treated with Cruiser SB.

*Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether sugar beet growers are able to comply with the conditions of emergency use of neonicotinoids having regard to the limited acreage of individual farms, in particular, with reference to the statement, that (1) "Only a specific list of crops, none of which flower before harvest, are permitted to be planted in the same field as treated sugar beet within 32 months", and (2) "no further use of thiamethoxam seed treatments on the same field within 46 months". [HL2035]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Farmers are free to decide whether they wish to grow sugar beet in a given year. Those farmers who opted to grow sugar beet with Cruiser SB when emergency authorisations have been granted in the past will have considered how to accommodate the restrictions on succeeding crops in their crop rotation plans. The restrictions were considered to be consistent with typical arable crop rotation patterns.

### Sugar Beet: Pest Control

*Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of methods of pest control, other than pesticides, on sugar beet crops as practised in the EU. [HL2033]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** There are a range of measures other than pesticides that can help control aphids, which transmit plant viruses to sugar beet. These include early sowing; good hygiene to remove aphid sources; integrated pest management measures such as companion cropping, use of attractants and repellents; and virus-resistant crop varieties. Previous assessments indicated that these measures had not yet reached the



point at which they could replace the need for all pesticides.

### Suicide: Gambling

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what cross-departmental work they are undertaking to address gambling-related suicide. [HL2146]

**Baroness Merron:** The Government is committed to strengthening protections to ensure that people can continue to enjoy gambling without the risks that can ensue from harmful gambling. The *Suicide Prevention Strategy for England 2023-2028*, published September 2023, sets out a commitment to address common risk factors linked to suicide, including gambling, by providing early intervention and tailored support. The Department of Health and Social Care is continuing to work across Government to progress this.

Along with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, we are committed to reviewing the best available evidence from a wide range of sources and working with all stakeholders in order to support the industry and ensure there are robust protections in place to protect those at risk.

In addition, the Gambling Commission has strengthened the requirement on gambling operators to inform the commission about deaths by suicide among customers. The licensee must notify the commission, as soon as reasonably practicable, if it knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a person who has gambled with it has died by suicide, whether or not such suicide is known or suspected to be associated with gambling.

### Suicide: Travellers

*Asked by Baroness Whitaker*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Merron on 25 October (HL1778 and HL1779), how the Suicide Prevention Strategy envisages improving the suicide rate of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities over its five-year period. [HL2189]

**Baroness Merron:** The purpose of the strategy was to set a direction for suicide prevention for all organisations to consider (national and local government, researchers and VCSE sectors). The ambitions outlined in the Suicide Prevention Strategy of September 2023 cover five years and include research on and better understanding of national trends and suicide rates in particular groups, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.

A qualitative research project exploring the lived experiences of Roma people in England and Wales, including priorities, needs and access to services, will shortly be starting. This project is led by the Qualitative Research Team, within the Centre for Equalities and Inclusion at the Office for National Statistics, delivered in

partnership with Migration Yorkshire, Roma Support Group and the University of Sheffield, and in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Care, Department for Education and Cabinet Office.

This project will provide insights into how Roma communities' needs change over their lifetime and identify barriers to accessing services, including for maternal and mental health. Depending on the findings, this research may give us insight into the factors contributing to suicide risk within Roma communities and enable us to develop more targeted prevention strategies that resonate with the Roma community's unique experiences and challenges, address the unique needs of the young Roma population in England and anticipate how migration and settlement patterns may influence their future healthcare requirements.

More broadly, our Inclusion Health initiative aims to support the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities and other inclusion health groups. This program is specifically designed to address the unique needs of socially excluded groups.

### Supported Housing

*Asked by Lord Bailey of Paddington*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect to launch a consultation on the proposed national supported housing standards and licensing regulations under the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, and whether they will consider producing interim guidance in the meantime to ensure sufficient supply of supported accommodation. [HL2049]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The Government is committed to consulting on the implementation of measures in the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023. We will provide an update on our next steps in relation to the implementation of measures in the Act shortly.

The Department will shortly be publishing research on the supply and demand for supported housing. The Department will consider the findings of this research as it formulates future government policy on supported housing supply.

### Technology

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support and invest in the technology industry. [HL2085]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** The Government is taking action to support the UK's world-leading technology industry, which will be at the heart of our new industrial strategy. The Budget will see Research and Development spending rising to a record level of over £20 billion, with DSIT's R&D budget increasing by 8.5% in real terms. The new Regulatory Innovation Office will reduce red tape for our most innovative companies and



speed up technology development. And we are unlocking further investment in industries of the future, including from institutional investors, through the British Growth Partnership, the National Wealth Fund and the Pensions Review.

### **Undocumented Migrants: Republic of Ireland**

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Ireland about potential returns from that country of irregular migrants to the United Kingdom. [HL1990]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** Following our departure from the EU, the UK agreed to a reciprocal operational arrangement with Ireland which allows for the return and readmission of asylum seekers.

### **United Nations: International Cooperation**

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to support the United Nations Pact for the Future; and, if so, why. [HL2274]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** On 22 September, the Pact for the Future and its accompanying annexes, a Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations, was adopted by consensus in the United Nations General Assembly. In a speech to the General Assembly on 26 September, the Prime Minister emphasised the UK's support for the Pact for the Future. The Pact provides a critical opportunity for UN Member States to make real-world impact to turbocharge delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals and set a blueprint for how reinvigorated multilateralism can respond to today and tomorrow's challenges.

### **Visas: Seasonal Workers**

*Asked by Lord Elliott of Ballinamallard*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Migration Advisory Committee Review of the Seasonal Worker visa, published on 16 July, what is the status of the future of the Seasonal Workers Scheme. [HL1979]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Government is carefully considering the Migration Advisory Committee's review of the Seasonal Worker route and will announce a detailed response in due course.

On 21 October 2024, the Government underlined its commitment to the horticultural and poultry sectors by confirming that the quota of visas for Seasonal Workers would be 43,000 visas for the horticultural sector in 2025, with 2,000 visas for the poultry sector.

*Asked by Baroness O'Grady of Upper Holloway*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Hanson of Flint on 21 October (HL1287), when they will update the guidance to reflect the ability to switch to a different scheme operator if the licence of their current scheme operator is revoked. [HL2122]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** We carefully manage the visa allocation each Scheme Operator receives to ensure that it is commensurate with their scale, capabilities, and experience as a Scheme Operator.

However, when a Scheme Operator has their licence revoked, provisions are put in place to ensure that workers are able to move to alternative Scheme Operators so there is no detriment to those workers.

The Home Office has no plans to update the guidance.

### **Winchester Prison**

*Asked by Lord German*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to place HMP Winchester into special measures. [HL2024]

**Lord Timpson:** His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons invoked an Urgent Notification (UN) at HMP Winchester on 24 October after a concerning inspection. While there is no specific "special measures" process for prisons, once a site is subject to UN it is placed under enhanced supervision from senior officials within His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) until such time as we are confident that sufficient progress has been made.

The Lord Chancellor and I are determined to drive improvement at HMP Winchester and, as a first step in response to the UN, we will publish our initial action plan setting out the actions we will be taking by no later than 21 November 2024.

### **Winchester Prison: Repairs and Maintenance**

*Asked by Lord German*

To ask His Majesty's Government what repairs and maintenance they intend to carry out, and over what timeframe, at HMP Winchester following the recent inspection report of the prison. [HL2025]

**Lord Timpson:** HM Prison & Probation Service will provide HM Inspectorate of Prisons with its initial response to the Urgent Notification about HMP Winchester, and its immediate action plan, by no later than 21 November. This will be followed by a full response to the inspection report, and a detailed action plan specifying all remedial works and the timeframes for their completion.

## Young People: Mental Health

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Derby*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to introduce a national wellbeing measure for children to provide local authorities and national policymakers with data for the purpose of improving the mental health and wellbeing of young people. [HL2256]

**Baroness Merron:** The Government is committed to raising the healthiest generation of children ever, giving mental health the same attention as physical health. We are reforming the National Health Service and have

committed to providing access to specialist mental health professionals in every school, so every young person has access to early support to address problems before they escalate. The Government will also be putting in place new Young Futures hubs, including access to mental health support workers, and will recruit an additional 8,500 new mental health staff to treat children and adults.

There are no current plans to introduce a national wellbeing measure for children. The Office for National Statistics publishes a range of children's wellbeing measures. The Department maintains ongoing monitoring of the national data landscape and research on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, to support its policy making.

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