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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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Baroness Blake of Leeds	Whip
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Lord Cryer	Whip
Baroness Gustafsson	Minister of State, Department for Business and Trade and HM Treasury
Lord Hanson of Flint	Minister of State, Home Office
Baroness Hayman of Ullock	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill	Minister of State, Department for Transport
Lord Hermer	Attorney-General
Lord Hunt of Kings Heath	Minister of State, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
Baroness Jones of Whitchurch	Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Business and Trade and Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and Whip
Lord Kennedy of Southwark	Chief Whip
Lord Khan of Burnley	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Leong	Whip
Lord Livermore	Financial Secretary, HM Treasury
Baroness Merron	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice, Whip
Baroness Sherlock	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Baroness Smith of Cluny	Advocate-General for Scotland
Baroness Smith of Malvern	Minister of State, Department for Education
Baroness Taylor of Stevenage	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Timpson	Minister of State, Ministry of Justice
Baroness Twycross	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture Media and Sport, Spokesperson, Cabinet Office, Whip
Lord Vallance of Balham	Minister of State, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Baroness Wheeler	Deputy Chief Whip

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 3 December 2024

Disability Finance Code for Entrepreneurship

[HLWS276]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: My Hon Friend the Minister for Services, Small Businesses and Exports (Gareth Thomas MP) has today made the following Statement:

Entrepreneurship is crucial for growth and innovation in our economy.

We want to encourage anyone who wants to be an entrepreneur to access the resources they need to thrive, but it's clear from research to date that significant barriers continue to hold back certain populations, including disabled entrepreneurs, and this needs to change. Eighty-four per cent of disabled founders feel they do not have equal access to the same opportunities as non-disabled founders.

One of the key issues preventing disabled entrepreneurs from starting and scaling up is a lack of access to finance. We want to work collaboratively with the private sector, financial services and the wider community to ensure we can address this. That is why we are today launching the Disability Finance Code for Entrepreneurship (DFCE), underlining the importance we are placing on boosting entrepreneurship for all as part of our plans for economic growth.

The DFCE is intended to drive engagement between the disabled entrepreneur community and the financial services sector in the United Kingdom, to build stronger relationships between disabled businesses and the financial institutions that support them. The signatories of this code will open up opportunities for disabled entrepreneurs through committing to implementing inclusive design principles, sharing evidence, supporting disabled founders and increasing activity to support disabled representation.

By building these relationships and championing diversity, equity, and inclusion, we can empower disabled entrepreneurs and boost the entrepreneurial landscape as a whole.

The Code's founding signatories include Lloyds Banking Group, NatWest, Barclays and HSBC UK, current delivery partners include UK Finance, the British Business Bank and Small Business Britain.

Food and Drink Advertising Restrictions

[HLWS275]

Baroness Merron: My Hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention

(Andrew Gwynne MP) has made the following Written Statement:

This Government is committed to creating the healthiest generation of children ever and today we are taking another step towards achieving that goal.

Further to my statement on 12 September 2024, I wish to inform the House that today the Government will lay the Advertising (Less Healthy Food Definitions and Exemptions) Regulations 2024 and an Explanatory Memorandum before Parliament. This legislation enacts the provisions set out in the Health and Care Act 2022, which amended the Communications Act 2003, for a 9pm watershed on the advertising of less healthy food or drink on television (TV) and a 24-hour restriction on paid-for advertising of these products online. Alongside laying the Regulations, the Government is publishing a response to the technical consultation held between September and October 2024 on how the advertising restrictions apply to Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) services, which deliver TV and advertising live over the internet. The consultation response confirms that IPTV services regulated by Ofcom will be subject to the broadcast restrictions (9pm watershed), in the same way as other Ofcom-regulated TV and on-demand programme services, and we have clarified this in the final Regulations. The Government is also publishing guidance for industry on the food or drink categories in scope of the advertising restrictions to support their preparation for implementation.

Following previous policy consultations and the Government's response on 12 September 2024 to the consultation on the draft secondary legislation, the legislation and guidance published today provide businesses with further certainty in terms of the products, businesses and services in scope of the restrictions as well as practical guidance on their application, so that they can continue to prepare ahead of the restrictions coming into force on 1 October 2025. We will continue to engage with stakeholders during this period.

This delivers on our Manifesto commitment to implement the junk food advertising restrictions without further delay and in doing so we expect to remove 7.2 billion calories from UK children's diets per year and reduce the number of children living with obesity by 20,000.

Obesity is the second biggest preventable cause of cancer and costs the UK health service more than £11 billion each year. By taking preventative action now, the Government will begin fixing the foundations of good health and protecting the next generation so that it can become the healthiest ever.

The Government's response to the IPTV consultation and guidance on food or drink products in scope of the restrictions will be published on GOV.UK shortly.

Treasury Sanctions Designation: Northern Ireland-related Terrorism

[HLWS277]

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

On 3 December 2024, HM Treasury announced a sanctions designation under the Counter Terrorism (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This regime is used to target those involved in terrorist financing on UK soil. This action is the first use of HM Treasury's sanctions power targeting an individual suspected of involvement in Northern Ireland-related terrorism.

The designation imposes an asset freeze on an individual suspected of being involved in terrorist activity

by facilitating terrorism and associating with members of the New Irish Republican Army ('New IRA'). He is further suspected of providing or assisting others in providing financial services or making available funds or economic resources for the New IRA.

This action demonstrates this government's commitment to protecting the peaceful consensus of the people of Northern Ireland and to upholding the principles of the Good Friday Agreement in support of the UK's wider efforts to protect national security for all citizens and prevent terrorism.

The specific designation is:

Brian Sheridan – suspected New IRA financier who has control over Brisher Limited.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 3 December 2024

10 Downing Street: Art Works

Asked by **Baroness Hodgson of Abinger**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Twycross on 23 September (HL1035), whether a portrait of the Queen Elizabeth I was removed from 10 Downing Street, and if so, whether they considered the public sector equality duty. [HL2664]

Baroness Twycross: The portrait of Queen Elizabeth I was temporarily removed as part of a refresh of GAC artworks across 10 and 11 Downing Street for our 125th Anniversary on 5 December 2024. The portrait will be reinstalled in 11 Downing Street on Friday 22 November as part of the Chancellor's display of works 'of or by women'.

Agriculture: Inheritance Tax

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Norwich**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the Budget's changes to agricultural property relief from inheritance tax on the mental health of farming families who own small farms. [HL2674]

Lord Livermore: At the Budget, the Government took a number of decisions on tax, welfare, and spending to restore economic stability, fix the public finances, and support public services. The Government has done so in a way that makes the tax system fairer and more sustainable.

At the Budget, the Government set out that, from 6 April 2026, in addition to existing nil-rate bands and exemptions, the 100% rate of relief will continue for the first £1 million of combined agricultural and business assets, and the rate of relief will be 50% thereafter.

Almost three-quarters of estates each year claiming agricultural property relief, including those that also claim business property relief, are expected to be unaffected.

The Government is committed to supporting farmers and agricultural workers in accessing the support that they need as they undertake the vital work of producing food and looking after the environment. For example, through its Farming and Countryside Programme, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) already works with a range of farming charities, including the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution and the Yellow Wellies charity, which have highlighted mental health challenges for farming communities.

Alexei Zimin

Asked by **Lord Marlesford**

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Serbia about the death of the UK resident Alexei Zimin, and whether any UK police will support the investigation into his death. [HL2759]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: Subsequent to the answer to question 14475, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) have been in contact with the Serbian authorities and provided consular support to Alexei Zimin's family following his death in Belgrade. It is for the Serbian authorities to decide whether to conduct investigations following deaths in Serbia. UK police do not have jurisdiction to investigate deaths overseas unless invited to by the relevant overseas authority.

Antimicrobials: Drug Resistance

Asked by **Lord Reid of Cardowan**

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made on the implementation of the five-year national action plan on antimicrobial resistance (AMR); and what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of their strategies to mitigate AMR through AMR funding and research. [HL2678]

Baroness Merron: The Department, through the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR), commissioned an evaluation of the first anti-microbial resistance (AMR) national action plan (NAP), Tackling anti-microbial resistance 2019-2024. Interim findings from the evaluation were published in September 2024 and a summary report will be published when available. The research is being undertaken by the NIHR Policy Innovation and Evaluation Policy Research Unit and builds on a similar evaluation of the 2013-18 AMR Strategy.

The Department is also planning an evaluation of the new NAP, covering the period 2024 to 2029, which will aim to identify opportunities for improvement of implementation on AMR policy, provide robust evidence of the effectiveness of the 2024-29 NAP, and inform future AMR policy development and implementation.

The governance structure for the 2024 to 2029 UK AMR NAP monitors delivery of the NAP's commitments and targets and manages programme risks. Delivery organisations are required to provide programme assurance updates biannually to ensure delivery is kept on track and that progress is being made. This data will also be used to produce an annual report that will provide an in-depth update on the progress made towards programme delivery.

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to integrate work to increase public awareness and understanding of antimicrobial resistance and responsible antimicrobial use into the 2024 to 2029 five-year action plan for antimicrobial resistance. [HL2809]

Baroness Merron: The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) assisted in the development of an antimicrobial resistance (AMR) public awareness target in the 2024 to 2029 National Action Plan (NAP). The target states that 'by 2029, we aim to increase UK public and healthcare professionals' knowledge on AMR by 10%, using 2018 and 2019 baselines, respectively'.

The UKHSA will continue to survey the public across the five-year NAP to identify any fluctuations in knowledge from the 2019 baseline. Knowledge on antibiotic use and AMR is lowest amongst 18 to 34-year-olds, therefore we aim to:

- carry out a cumulative public learning campaign aimed at these age groups;
- educate health care professionals to support consultations;
- engage with the national curriculum review to influence the addition of AMR into the national curriculum; and
- continue to develop and update e-Bug resources, increasing accessibility to a wider audience, for example community groups, after school clubs, and home learning.

Arms Trade: Taiwan

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure continued support for military and dual-use technology exports to Taiwan, including through the maintenance of existing export licences. [HL2652]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: The UK operates one of the most transparent export licensing systems in the world. There is a long record of the UK granting licences for exports of controlled goods to Taiwan, on a case-by-case basis, where those applications are consistent with the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria.

The Department for Business and Trade provides advice and support to prospective exporters of controlled goods where there is a reasonable expectation of securing licenses, but the support will vary with an individual case's circumstances.

Asthma: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: Health Services

Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to rebalance geographic disparities in access to care and treatment for individuals suffering from (1) chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and (2) asthma. [HL2937]

Baroness Merron: Core20PLUS5 is a national NHS England approach to inform action to reduce healthcare inequalities at both a national and system level. The approach provides a vehicle for targeted interventions to detect and treat those diseases, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which are major contributors to inequalities in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy.

The focus for action on respiratory health is to increase vaccination uptake in people with COPD to avoid exacerbations leading to emergency treatment in hospital and inpatient care.

Core20PLUS5 for children and young people includes asthma as one of its priority areas. The primary focus is to address over reliance on reliever medications and decrease the number of asthma attacks.

The Core20PLUS5 approach has been mobilised across the National Health Service using a variety of methods to deliver change examples of this work for COPD.

Childcare and Pre-school Education: Fees and Charges

Asked by **Baroness Goudie**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will take steps to protect working parents eligible for free early education and childcare from charging for consumables by some nurseries. [HL2495]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: The department is taking steps to protect parents from unfair charging practices by some nurseries, as we announced last month, as part of our wider effort to ensure that parents can access and afford the hours they are entitled to. More information about the announcement can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/school-based-nurseries-plan-kicks-off-with-15-million-funding>.

The department is currently looking at updating the early years statutory guidance as part of its regular review, in order to ensure that the guidance around charging is both clear and fair for local authorities, early years providers and parents and that the hours are accessible and affordable for all families that need them.

The department will be seeking to engage with providers, local authorities and other relevant stakeholder groups, including those representing parents, to discuss its proposed updates to the statutory guidance for local authorities and to seek feedback on how the guidance can be improved.

If parents believe they are experiencing unfair consumable charges, they should raise this with their local authority, who will be able to offer the appropriate support and next steps on clarifying appropriate charging with providers.

Children and Young People: Carers

Asked by Lord Young of Cookham

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to list young carers separately in daily school attendance reporting in order to assess the impact of caring on school attendance. [HL2686]

Asked by Lord Young of Cookham

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding of the Carers Trust report *Caring and classes: the education gap for young carers*, published in September, that almost a quarter of young carers said there is "no support at all" for young carers in their school, college or university. [HL2687]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: The department appreciates the ongoing efforts of the Carers Trust in supporting carers of all ages across the UK. Their recent report, 'Caring and Classes: The Education Gap for Young Carers', examines the support available to young and young adult carers in educational settings and we have noted its findings.

This government is committed to breaking down the barriers of opportunity for all young people, including young carers who provide a critical role caring for their loved ones and are all too often hidden from view.

Young carers were added to the school census in the 2022/23 academic year. This change has raised awareness and their profile and, for the first time, provided hard data on both the numbers of young carers and their education, including data cited by the Carers Trust. The last annual spring census collection had 72% of schools recording zero young carers, which is an improvement on 2023 where it was 79%.

As this is a new data collection, the department expects the quality of the data returns to improve over time as the collection becomes established. All schools, except nurseries, must send this information as part of the spring school census, though the recording and handling of the information is at the school's discretion. We will continue to monitor the quality of data on young carers that is collected via the school register, for consideration to include in the daily data collection in the future.

Ofsted has committed to developing and consulting upon a revised schools' inspection framework for September 2025. This will support the new school report

card, which will also be in place from that time. A consultation on the framework and report card is scheduled to launch early in the new year. The department and Ofsted are engaging closely to take this forward and will consider how schools are to be assessed in future in terms of their contribution to inclusion, bearing in mind the government's mission to ensure that all children, including young carers, can achieve and thrive at school.

The Children's Social Care National Framework, which was issued in December 2023, is statutory guidance for local authorities. It provides clarity on the outcomes that leaders and practitioners should achieve when supporting children, young people and families, including in the identification and assessment of support for young carers. Safeguarding partners, and other relevant agencies including education, should read and engage with the National Framework as they have an important role in supportive positive outcomes and improving access to opportunities.

China: Uyghurs

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the publication on 10 November of the story of the Uyghur refugee Hasan Imam in *The New York Times*, what assessment they have made of the risk that Uyghurs in the UK may be subjected to transnational repression by the government of China. [HL2597]

Lord Hanson of Flint: Security is the first duty of this Government.

This Government is completely committed to responding to foreign interference, including those actions which amount to transnational repression. Home Office officials work closely with operational partners, the FCDO and other departments to review the threat picture and determine how best to respond.

We continually assess potential threats in the UK, and take protection of individuals' rights, freedoms, and safety in the UK very seriously. Any attempt by any foreign power to intimidate, harass or harm individuals in the UK will not be tolerated and will be thoroughly investigated.

Anyone who thinks they might be a victim should report incidents or suspicious activity to the Police.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: Health Services

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the availability of, and access to, pulmonary rehabilitation services within NHS England. [HL2936]

Baroness Merron: A national programme of work is underway to support systems with improving access to pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) for the eligible population,

to increase capacity of provision to reduce waiting lists, and to improve the quality and consistency of rehabilitation programmes through accreditation. In December 2023, commissioning standards for PR services were published by NHS England, setting out key areas for the appropriate provision of PR services. The standards are aimed at integrated care board commissioners. Guidance on developing and growing the PR workforce was published in March 2024.

Data is not currently available at a national level that provides an accurate assessment of the level of eligible need for PR, and the degree to which this is being met. NHS England is working in partnership with experts in the field to explore ways to assess eligible need. This is part of the work to provide systems with the data and the information they need to best meet the needs of their populations, which continues to be a key priority.

National Respiratory Audit Programme data shows that the number of people completing PR in 2023/24 exceeded pre-pandemic levels, those between 2019 and 2020, an important milestone in post-pandemic service recovery.

Civil Servants: Recruitment

Asked by Baroness Stedman-Scott

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their policy on positive action, affirmative action, and positive discrimination, in relation to protected characteristics in Civil Service recruitment. [HL2771]

Baroness Twycross: Decisions on recruitment are delegated to departments. They are responsible for ensuring their policies are compliant with the Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles and any other relevant legislation such as, in this instance, the Equality Act 2010.

Civil Service: Translation Services

Asked by Lord Gilbert of Panteg

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce spending by the civil service on translation into foreign languages, and what guidance has been given on this. [HL2738]

Baroness Twycross: Individual departments are responsible for determining their own requirements for language services and ensuring these deliver good value for money for the taxpayer and a good service.

No specific guidance is issued by the Cabinet Office on this topic. However, the Crown Commercial Service does provide a route to market for language services, including innovative and cost-effective solutions. These include options such as Telephone Interpreting, Video Remote Interpreting (VRI/VRS), and advanced technological solutions such as machine translation, all aimed at providing the public sector with solutions that may support improved services delivery and reduce costs.

Climate Change

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the status in UK law of the Paris Agreement objective of limiting the global average temperature increase to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. [HL2700]

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath: The Climate Change Act made the UK the first country to introduce a legally binding, long-term emissions reduction target. This sets our commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050 in law. As advised by the UK's Committee on Climate Change in June 2019 and December 2020, this target aligns with the published pathways from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for meeting the Paris Agreement's long-term temperature goal of 1.5°C.

Clinical Psychologists: Vacancies

Asked by Lord Turnberg

To ask His Majesty's Government what efforts they are making to address the shortage of clinical psychologists in mental health trusts. [HL3024]

Asked by Lord Turnberg

To ask His Majesty's Government what efforts they are making to reduce waiting list times for cognitive behavioural therapy services for people with anxiety and depression by recruiting more clinical psychologists. [HL3025]

Baroness Merron: The National Health Service is expanding access to NHS Talking Therapies for adults with common mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression, with a commitment to increase the number of people completing courses of treatment by 384,000 and increase the number of sessions, between 2024/25 and 2028/29.

Decisions about recruitment are matters for individual NHS trusts. NHS trusts manage their recruitment at a local level, ensuring they have the right number of staff in place, with the right skill mix, to deliver safe and effective care.

However, we know that the NHS has been facing workforce shortages for a number of years and, while there has been growth in the mental health workforce over recent years, more is needed. That is why, as part of our mission to build an NHS that is fit for the future and is there when people need it, we will recruit an additional 8,500 mental health workers to reduce waiting times and provide faster treatment. We recognise that bringing in the staff needed will take time. We are working with NHS England on options to deliver this expansion of the mental health workforce.

Coal: Wales

Asked by *Lord Wigley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken in co-operation with the Welsh Government to ensure the availability of funding for the safeguarding of coal-tips in Wales. [HL2957]

Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent: At the Budget, the UK Government allocated £25 million of funding in 2025/6 for essential work being undertaken by the Welsh Government to keep disused coal tips maintained and safe.

This is a clear demonstration of how the Government is committed to resetting the relationship with the Welsh Government based on trust and mutual respect.

As well as this, the Mining Remediation Authority continues to provide coal tip expert advice and undertake inspections on behalf of the Welsh Government on a cost recovery basis.

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership: Taiwan

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support Taiwan's application to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and to encourage other member states to endorse its bid; and whether they are seeking to expedite Taiwan's CPTPP application and to ensure that it is considered independently of, or prior to, the application of China. [HL2655]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: Discussion among CPTPP Members is progressing on how to take forward accession applications. The UK and other CPTPP members have reaffirmed on several instances that the CPTPP is open to Accession Requests by economies that can satisfy the "Auckland Principles", namely being able to meet the agreement's high standards, having a track record of compliance with trade commitments, and commanding consensus of the Parties. It is right that we work within the principles of the group to achieve a consensus decision, rather than providing our own individual narrative on the applications of specific economies.

Courts: EU Law

Asked by *Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government why they have not yet implemented section 6 of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 as regards UK courts following EU-derived case law, and whether they intend to give effect to this provision soon. [HL2667]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: The Government has decided to pause the commencement of section 6 of the

Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (REUL Act) to allow time to consider this within the wider context of our work to grow the economy and reset relations with the EU and Devolved Governments. Pausing the commencement of Section 6 gives businesses greater stability, and the Government remains free to reform inherited EU law in the best interests of our businesses and economy. While we do not currently intend to commence section 6, it remains open to us to do so at a later date.

Cultural Heritage: Tax Allowances

Asked by *Lord Mann*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many landowners claim annually through the tax-exempt heritage assets scheme; and how much they claim each year. [HL2670]

Lord Livermore: Conditional exemption from Inheritance Tax is available for transfers during lifetime or on death of land of outstanding scenic, historic, or scientific interest, buildings of outstanding historic or architectural interest and land protecting the setting of an outstanding building together with objects and collections of national, artistic, historic or scientific interest.

Information on how many landowners claim annually through the tax-exempt heritage assets scheme, and how much they claim each year, is not centrally collated. However, HMRC publishes annual official statistics on Inheritance Tax liabilities at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/inheritance-tax-liabilities-statistics>. Table 12.2 has information on the number of estates claiming reliefs and exemptions.

Diagnosis

Asked by *Lord Kamall*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish the follow-up report to the independent review by Professor Sir Mike Richards, Diagnostics: Recovery and Renewal, published in November 2020; and if so, when. [HL2832]

Baroness Merron: There are no current plans to produce or publish a follow-up report to the independent review by Professor Sir Mike Richards, Diagnostics: Recovery and Renewal. The Department will publish a ten-year plan for the National Health Service in spring 2025.

East-West Council

Asked by *Lord Empey*

To ask His Majesty's Government further to Written Answer from Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent on 26 November (HL2612), what budget has been allocated to the East-West Council; who was invited to attend its first meeting and who actually attended in March. [HL2976]

Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent: The inaugural meeting of the East-West Council took place in Dover House, London in March 2024 and was chaired by the then Secretary of State for Levelling Up and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations.

It was attended by the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Minister of State for Northern Ireland and the Cabinet Office, and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Levelling Up. It was also attended by the Northern Ireland First Minister, deputy First Minister, Minister for the Economy and Communities Minister. As with all intergovernmental bodies, the East-West Council will be resourced appropriately.

Emergency Services Network

Asked by Lord Hogan-Howe

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the current status of the Emergency Services Network replacement project for Airwave. [HL2665]

Lord Hanson of Flint: The Home Office has been in the process of two major procurements for ESN. The Mobile Services contract was awarded to BT/EE by direct award in July 2024 and the second contract is nearing finalisation and expected to be ready by the end of this year. Details will be published on the government commercial disclosure portal Contracts Finder. Airwave will be shut down only when it is safe to do so.

Asked by Lord Hogan-Howe

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their latest assessment of costs for the Emergency Services Network replacement service for Airwave; when the first police force will receive a functioning radio system; and when the roll out to all forces will be completed. [HL2666]

Lord Hanson of Flint: In its 2021 Business Case the Programme estimated the total cost of providing critical emergency services communications between 2015/16 and 2036/37 to be £11.3bn. This is the combined cost of running the current system Airwave while developing ESN. A revised Programme Business Case setting out a new timetable and costs is expected early next year. This will reflect an extension of the evaluation period from FY2036/37 to FY2043/44 and extended run period for legacy Airwave systems by approximately three years. We plan for the network to be live for first users in early 2027 and are targeting full transition by end of 2029.

Falkland Islands: Salmon

Asked by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs has had with the Falkland Islands Government and Legislative Assembly regarding the potential introduction of salmon farms to that territory. [HL2704]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: Whilst the Falkland Islands Legislative Assembly have not raised this issue specifically with Ministers, the natural resources of the Falkland Islands belong to the people of the Territory and their right to develop their natural resources is an integral part of the Falkland Islanders' right of self-determination. FCDO Ministers and officials regularly meet with the Legislative Assembly and Falkland Islands Government to discuss issues of importance to the Falkland Islands, including most recently meetings with me and Minister of State Stephen Doughty on 21 and 19 November respectively, in the margins of the Joint Ministerial Council.

Flood Control: Land Drainage

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Hayman of Ullock on 28 October (HL Deb col 1009) and 20 November (HL Deb col 259), what are the cumulative effects and regulatory burdens they have identified in relation to flood prevention measures such as sustainable drainage systems. [HL2846]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: There are many requirements that developers must comply with when designing and building new developments. For example, developers must provide funding for schools, hospitals, and other local infrastructure projects among other things.

The cumulative impact of these requirements could render some developments unviable for developers, if unchecked. The Government must be mindful of these concerns at this time, during one of the most acute housing crises in living memory.

The Government is considering how to achieve our ambitions on sustainable drainage while being mindful of the impact on developers and to ensure that we are achieving environmental protections whilst also deliver much-needed housing.

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Hayman of Ullock on 20 November (HL Deb col 257), when they plan to introduce mandatory sustainable drains for new developments as required under Schedule 3 of the Water and Flood Management Act 2010. [HL2847]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: This Government is strongly committed to requiring standardised SuDS (sustainable drainage systems) in new developments.

We must see SuDS in more developments; to designs that cope with changing climatic conditions as well as delivering wider water infrastructure benefits and helping to improve water quality. It is also important to ensure that appropriate adoption and maintenance arrangements are in place.

We believe that these outcomes can be achieved through either improving the current planning led

approach using powers now available or commencing Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

A final decision on the way forward will be made in the coming months.

Football

Asked by Lord Watson of Wyre Forest

To ask His Majesty's Government on which dates since July ministers from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport have met with representatives from (1) Fédération Internationale de Football Association, (2) Union of European Football Associations, (3) Premier League, (4) English Football League, and (5) National League North and South. [HL2685]

Baroness Twycross: Ministers and officials have meetings with a variety of organisations in the public and private sectors. Ministers have met with all these bodies and details of ministerial meetings are published on a quarterly basis.

Gambling: Excise Duties

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the current remote gaming duty levels on economic growth. [HL2767]

Lord Livermore: At Autumn Budget 2024 the Government announced its intention to publish a consultation next year on proposals to bring remote gambling (meaning gambling offered over the internet, telephone, TV, and radio) under a single tax, rather than taxing it through the current three-tax structure.

This consultation will consider the impacts of reforming gambling duties. Alongside any changes that are announced, the Government will publish a Tax Information and Impact Note, including an economic impact assessment, to detail the expected impacts.

Gender Recognition

Asked by Baroness Jenkin of Kennington

To ask His Majesty's Government, with reference to the Department for Health and Social Care's publication of the updated Notification of Child Death Form, whether they have adopted self-identification for under-18s; and if so, how this aligns with their response to the Cass Review. [HL1880]

Baroness Merron: The Notification of Child Death Form, part of the National Child Mortality Database, continues to capture the sex of the child for anyone under 18 years old, in line with sex being a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Although questions relating to gender identity already existed within one part of the National Child Mortality Database collection, specifically for suicide and self-

harm, the change in October expanded these questions to all deaths. This was to capture the language used by young people and their families to improve system learning and to support the prevention of future deaths.

Health Professions: Degrees

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage the uptake of antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) principles into undergraduate education across medical, nursing, veterinary and allied health professional degrees; and what steps they will take to engage with academic institutions to ensure future prescribers are equipped to advocate and implement AMS practices effectively. [HL2807]

Baroness Merron: The NHS England antimicrobial resistance prescribing workstream has collaborated with the Workforce Training and Education directorate to co-produce, with stakeholders from university schools of pharmacy, an indicative curriculum and competency framework for antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial stewardship, as a part of the new initial education and training programme for United Kingdom pharmacists who will graduate with independent prescribing rights from 2025/26. The prescribing workstream has plans to make contact with the General Medical Council and Nursing and Midwifery Council during 2025/26 to establish how antimicrobial stewardship is taught and examined in undergraduate medical and nursing courses in England, and to support improvement as required.

The UK Health Security Agency has recently updated the antimicrobial prescribing and stewardship competency framework, which is applicable for health students and prescribing courses. The goal of the antimicrobial prescribing and stewardship competency framework is to improve the quality of antimicrobial treatment and stewardship, and therefore reduce the risks of inadequate, inappropriate, and adverse effects of antimicrobial treatment.

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) visits the vet schools annually to provide training to undergraduate students on antibiotic stewardship and the responsible use of medicines. The VMD also works with the Vet Schools Council, who are keen to promote antimicrobial research, and raises veterinary student awareness of the importance of the appropriate prescribing of antibiotics. As an example of this, they recently produced a white paper highlighting the importance of collecting and using farm level antibiotic use data to support responsible use of antibiotics.

Independent Water Commission

Asked by Baroness Boycott

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Hayman of Ullock on 30 October that "the commission will bring in expertise from a wide range of areas, including the environment, public

health, investors, consumers, engineering and economics" (HL Deb col 1139), how they plan to appoint members to the new independent water commission; whether there will be a public appointments process; and whether members will have to declare any financial interests they have with the water sector, and their amount. [HL2880]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: On 23 October, the Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Welsh Government, launched an Independent Commission on the water sector regulatory system, to fundamentally transform how our water system works and clean up our rivers, lakes and seas for good.

The review will include broad stakeholder engagement. In particular, the Chair, Sir Jon Cunliffe, will invite views from an Advisory Group of nominated experts, covering areas including the environment, public health, consumers, investors, engineering and economics.

The Advisory Group to the Water Commission will not be ministerial appointments. They will be specific individuals selected by Sir Jon Cunliffe to seek views from and feed in their expertise into the commission. Further details of who will be included in the advisory group will be announced in due course. Thorough due diligence and conflicts of interest checks will be carried out on all candidates.

Long Covid

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to classify long Covid as an industrial injury, following the recommendations of the report COVID-19 and Occupational Impacts, published by the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council in November 2022; and if so, when. [HL2808]

Baroness Sherlock: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is advised by the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC), an independent scientific body, on changes to the list of occupational diseases for which Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) can be paid. IIAC's advice is limited to entitlement to benefits under the Industrial Injuries Scheme and does not cover the classification of 'an industrial injury' more widely.

In November 2022, IIAC published a Command Paper which recommended five severe post-COVID-19 complications should bring entitlement to IIDB for certain health and social care workers. In November 2024, IIAC published a further command paper which concluded that the 2022 recommendation should be extended to cover certain transport workers.

The department is carrying out a detailed assessment of the recommendations in both reports and will respond in due course.

In its most recent command paper, IIAC concluded that there is currently insufficient evidence available to recommend prescription for further complications

following COVID-19 infection, or for further occupations. IIAC will continue to keep the situation under review and monitor the evidence and available data.

Ministers: Official Cars

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Twycross on 25 November (HL2426), how many of the ministerial cars referred to in each of 2023 and 2024 are (1) electric vehicles, and (2) hybrid vehicles. [HL2999]

Baroness Twycross: The number of Government Car Service Vehicles which were Electric and Hybrid on 11th November in the following years was:

- 1) 2023: 36 battery electric and 53 hybrid.
- 2) 2024: 36 battery electric and 64 hybrid.

New Businesses

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reduction in the number of new businesses opening in the UK. [HL2682]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: Start-ups play a crucial role in fostering competition, inducing innovation and supporting the emergence of brand new sectors. The number of UK business births has fallen by 6%, to around 316,000 in 2023.

ONS UK Business Demography 2023, published 18 November 2024.

Count Of Births of New Enterprises For 2018 to 2023, by year

2018	348,630
2019	363,825
2020	333,020
2021	363,995
2022	336,925
2023	316,025

The Government is committed to hardwiring the voice of small business into everything we do. Our Small Business Strategy next year will set out our vision for all small businesses from tackling the scourge of late payments, tailored Business Support Advice, Access to finance, and Local Growth Hubs Networks, providing a strong business environment to drive economic growth in the UK.

Offenders: Charities

Asked by Baroness Porter of Fulwood

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how the capacity of charitable organisations working with people in prisons, or

helping former prisoners readjust upon release, could be scaled. [HL2854]

Asked by Baroness Porter of Fulwood

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to identify, and learn from, examples of best practice among charitable organisations that work with people in prisons, or help former prisoners readjust upon release. [HL2855]

Lord Timpson: Voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations already play an enormous role in the vital work of preparing prisoners for release, and of helping them to adapt on their return to the community. 76% of current Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) contracts – support to help people in custody or on probation to reduce their risk of re-offending – are led by VCSEs.

In addition, the CRS General Grant Scheme provides funding exclusively to third-sector services that promote rehabilitation and desistance, as well as those providing support to people with shared protected characteristics or shared experiences. To date, 32 grants have been awarded.

His Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS) also works with a wide range of charitable organisations to deliver prison education. These include the Shannon Trust, National Literacy Trust, Prisoners Education Trust, The Clink and St Giles. Many have been funded to develop their work through HMPPS grants or contracts.

To inform the development of a new generation of CRS contracts, national engagement events have been held throughout the design phase. These events have been well attended by third-sector organisations and have ensured that the providers' voice is fully taken into account in designing the new specification. Resources have been dedicated to ensuring a role for third sector organisations in the new generation of contracts.

We are keen to evaluate activities, wherever possible, to learn from best practice, and we encourage charity providers themselves to evaluate their work. The ability to demonstrate good outcomes can help to support further bids for funding.

Many suppliers of Prison Education Services, of which there are over 400, are charitable organisations. Best practice is shared regularly with Heads of Education, Skills and Work in HMPPS, and information is regularly distributed from potential providers to all prison sites.

Office for National Statistics: Standards

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the degree of accuracy of the data from the Office for National Statistics on economic inactivity. [HL2737]

Lord Livermore: Recent data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is subject to significant uncertainty. LFS response rates fell from 49.3% in Q3 2013 [1] to 12.7% in

Q3 2023 [2], which have led to a number of concerns about the quality of data based on the LFS.

As set out in its November 2024 Labour Market Overview [3], despite coherence challenges between LFS estimates and other data sources, the LFS continues to be the sole source of data for unemployment, economic inactivity and the self-employed. There are also a range of breakdowns that are only possible from LFS data.

The ONS is undertaking work to address these quality issues through improvements to its data collection and methodology [4]. The ONS is also continuing to develop the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS) as the long-term solution for collecting labour market data [5].

While planned improvements are underway, LFS estimates remain volatile and will continue to be badged as 'official statistics in development' until further review. The ONS advise caution when interpreting changes in headline LFS rates and recommend using them as part of its suite of labour market indicators [6].

[1] [Labour Force Survey performance and quality monitoring report: October to December 2023 - Office for National Statistics](#)

[2] [Labour Force Survey performance and quality monitoring report: July to September 2024 - Office for National Statistics](#)

[3] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/november2024>

[4] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/methodologies/labourforcesurveyplannedimprovementsanditsreintroduction>

[5] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/labourmarkettransformationupdateonprogressandplans/july2024>

[6] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/november2024>

Old Oak Common Station: Construction

Asked by Lord Murphy of Torfaen

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Network Rail regarding their plans for Old Oak Common, including on the length of disruption to Great Western Railway services, and what estimate they have made of the cost of the project. [HL2671]

Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill: The new station at Old Oak Common will create an interchange between HS2 and national rail services. I continue to work with HS2 Ltd, Network Rail and all train operators to minimise disruption to passengers on the Great Western Main Line,

both during the construction of the station and during its operation.

Asked by Lord Murphy of Torfaen

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Welsh Government on (1) Network Rail's planned works at Old Oak Common, and (2) the current performance of the Great Western Railway. [HL2672]

Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill: The Wales Rail Board meets regularly and facilitates the UK and Welsh governments to discuss matters of mutual interest. The Board discusses performance of the Great Western Main Line and plans to manage rail services during construction of the new station at Old Oak Common. I continue to work with HS2 Ltd, Network Rail and train operators to minimise disruption to passengers on the Great Western Main Line, both during the construction of the station and its operation.

Policy

Asked by Baroness Freeman of Steventon

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that when policy evaluations are commissioned the methods and outcomes are pre-registered, and that the results will be published in a timely manner. [HL2663]

Baroness Twycross: All Government evaluations should be pre-registered on the Evaluation Task Force Evaluation Registry, including methods and expected publication timelines. Registering evaluations has been mandatory for Government Departments since April 2024.

Further information on the Evaluation Registry is available online on the 'Guidance on using the Evaluation Registry' webpage. The Evaluation Registry is due to be launched to the public in the coming months.

Prison Service

Asked by Lord Farmer

To ask His Majesty's Government what band of seniority (1) family services leads and (2) family engagement leads typically occupy in prisons; and what assessment they have made of how this compares with education and employment leads. [HL2897]

Lord Timpson: The Head of Reducing Re-offending (HoRR) – typically at Band 7 or 8 in His Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS) – is responsible for family services, together with other areas such as housing, finance/benefit/debt, faith, health/drug strategy and offending behaviour.

Unlike the HoRR role, there is no requirement at present to employ a Family Engagement Lead. In prisons where a member of HMPPS staff undertakes this role, it is

normally in the range Band 3–5. These are predominately non-operational roles.

A Head of Education Skills & Work in an establishment is typically at Band 7. This is a functional management job, with responsibility for setting the strategic direction for all of education, skills and work within the prison.

Prisons Employment Leads, at Band 6, oversee Employment Hubs in prisons and support prisoners with employability, matching them to jobs in advance of their release.

Public Bodies

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the current terms of reference of the (1) Children's Commissioner, (2) Victims' Commissioner and (3) Care Quality Commission. [HL2659]

Baroness Twycross: The Office for the Children's Commission does not have a terms of reference. Instead there is a framework agreement with the Department for Education, which can be found here: [DfE framework agreement](#) [Children's Commissioner for England].

The [Children Act 2004](#) created the role for a Children's Commissioner in England with the primary function of promoting and protecting the rights of children in England, ensuring that the views of the most vulnerable children are heard. The role was established following a recommendation in the Inquiry into Victoria Climbié's death in 2000.

The intention of the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) was to strengthen the remit, independence, and powers of the Commissioner. The Commissioner was given additional powers to effectively carry out the role.

These pieces of legislation set out the powers and responsibilities of the Children's Commissioner for England.

The Victims' Commissioner is appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice in accordance with the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. The functions of the role are set out in legislation and are to promote the interests of victims and witnesses, encourage good practice in the treatment of victims and witnesses, and to keep under review the operation of the Code of Practice for Victims ("the Victims' Code). The Victims' Commissioner is also required to make an annual report on the performance of their functions to the Justice Secretary, Attorney General and the Home Secretary and give advice to a Minister of the Crown or to the Treasury when required to do so, amongst other functions and duties.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and social care in England. It operates within the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations, including the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, which sets out the fundamental

standards that providers of health and social care are expected to meet.

The CQC among its other functions, inspects, assess and monitors providers, giving them a rating of either outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate, to encourage continuous improvement. It has enforcement powers, to ensure the quality of care does not fall below the expected levels of standards.

Public Expenditure: Wales

Asked by Lord Wigley

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have received from the Welsh Government regarding revising the Barnett formula. [HL2956]

Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent: The Secretary of State for Wales regularly meets with the First Minister to discuss a variety of issues. There are ongoing discussions with the Welsh Government on their Fiscal Framework, and we remain committed to working in partnership with the Welsh Government to ensure the smooth delivery of their funding settlement.

The Welsh Government's budget is growing in real terms in 2025-26 and is the largest settlement in real terms since the dawn of devolution at £21 billion. The Welsh Government receive over 20% more funding per person than equivalent UK Government spending in the rest of the UK.

Public Sector: Borrowing

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce borrowing. [HL2777]

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

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

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

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

Renewable Energy: Taiwan

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support UK firms participating in renewable energy projects in Taiwan to enhance energy resilience in that country. [HL2653]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: In November 2023, the British Representative in Taipei and the Taipei Representative in the UK signed an Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP) Arrangement setting out the UK and Taiwan's priorities for the future cooperation, including an energy and net zero pillar. The Government regularly promotes international business opportunities to UK firms and has previously supported business delegations to Taiwan. UK Export Finance, the Government's credit agency, has also provided over £900million of financing to Taiwanese offshore wind projects, supporting Taiwan's energy transition and UK businesses.

Travellers: Statistics

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Collins of Highbury on 4 November (HL1791), what plans they have to separate the categories of "Gypsy" and "Irish Traveller" in statistics in Government departments; and whether they plan to modify the Census to reflect this. [HL2732]

Baroness Twycross: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

Please see the letter attached from the National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority.

The Baroness Whitaker

House of Lords

London

SW1A 0PW

27 November 2024

Dear Baroness Whitaker,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking, further to the Written Answer by Lord Collins of Highbury on 4 November (HL1791), what plans we have to separate the categories of "Gypsy" and "Irish Traveller" in statistics in Government departments; and whether we plan to modify the Census to reflect this (HL2732).

1. What plans we have to separate the categories of "Gypsy" and "Irish Traveller" in statistics in Government departments:

A category for 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' was added to the Census ethnic group question for the first time in 2011. Space constraints on the census questionnaire meant that separate categories for each group could not be included in the 2011 Census. Consultations with users of Census data revealed that although some users would prefer separate tick boxes, the majority of users of Census information considered the combined tick-box to be satisfactory. Other categories in the question also cover several ethnic groups, for example 'African' and 'Indian'. Given the space constraints of the census questionnaire, the ethnic group question has always required a selection of categories that are few enough to be practical yet

detailed enough to be useful for measuring real world racial inequalities.

The Census 2011 ethnicity questions were adjusted so they could be used in the 2021 censuses for England and Wales, and Northern Ireland; and the 2022 Census for Scotland. As part of this adjustment a Roma category was added in 2021. There was strong evidence of a different user need for population data on the Roma population when compared with data on the Gypsy or Irish Traveller population.

The ethnicity harmonised standard[1] we currently recommend to producers of official statistics is based on the 2011 Census questions across the UK. Development of this ethnicity standard is one of the priority topic areas for the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Harmonisation team. The broad aim of our ethnicity harmonisation workplan[2] is to improve the inclusivity of the question for minority ethnic groups. This will involve testing possible improvements and changes to the question design and response categories. To date we have undertaken a range of research including desk research, engagement with people who use or collect ethnicity survey and administrative data, and engagement with the public. We have published two reports exploring user needs for a new standard, in March 2023[3] and July 2023[4]. We are also gathering information to understand how ethnicity response options are used by participants, including reviewing data from the 'write in' responses collected across a range of data sources, and requests received for new proposed ethnic group response categories for Census 2021[5].

Qualitative research into the lived experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in England and Wales, published in 2022[6], highlighted the circumstances and needs of Gypsies and Travellers relating to a range of different areas including health, education, employment and accommodation. The findings provided insights into the culture and identity of Gypsies and Travellers, and how these are changing over time, including decision-making processes for individuals disclosing their ethnicity, for example to employers or service providers, and anticipated and experienced discrimination linked to this.

Our work to update the ethnicity harmonised standard will bring together information from all these sources to evaluate possible improvements and changes to the question design. This work will include further engagement with the public, community groups, people involved in collecting and publishing administrative data, civil society organisations and other interested parties both within and outside government.

2. Whether we plan to modify the Census to reflect this:

Decisions regarding the future of population and migration statistics, including the census, will be taken by the Government over the next two years with advice from the UK Statistics Authority. As such, it is too early to comment on specific approaches as part of a potential future census. The Future Population and Migration Statistics programme has an ongoing programme of user needs engagement and carried out a consultation in 2023,

which acknowledged the importance of collecting data on a variety of topics, including ethnicity.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1] [Ethnicity harmonised standard – Government Analysis Function](#)

[2] [Government Statistical Service \(GSS\) Harmonisation Team workplan 2024 – Government Analysis Function](#)

[3] [Review of ethnicity harmonised standard: findings from phase 1 of our research – Government Analysis Function](#)

[4] [Review of ethnicity harmonised standard: findings from phase 2 of our research – Government Analysis Function](#)

[5] [Ethnic group tick-box prioritisation report for Census 2021 in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

[6] [Gypsies' and Travellers' lived experiences, overview, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

Winter Fuel Payment

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the letter and impact assessment from the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to the House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee on 19 November, what assessment they have made of the forecast that 100,000 additional pensioners per year will move into poverty as a result of changes to the winter fuel payments. [HL2727]

Baroness Sherlock: The last Labour Government lifted more than 1 million pensioners out of poverty, and this Government remain absolutely committed to supporting pensioners and giving them the dignity and security they deserve in retirement.

The latest modelling in the department shows that compared to the numbers that would have been in poverty without the policy to means test Winter Fuel Payments, it is estimated that there will be an additional 50,000 pensioners in relative poverty after housing costs in 2024/25, 2025/26, and 2027/28, and an additional 100,000 pensioners in relative poverty after housing costs in 2026/27, 2028/29 and 2029/30. For all other measures of poverty, it is estimated that there will be an additional 50,000 pensioners in poverty each year from 2024/25 to 2029/30. It is important to note that this modelling is subject to a range of uncertainties meaning the poverty impacts are rounded to the nearest 50,000 individuals which should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

The modelling does not take into account any impacts of the measures we are taking to increase Pension Credit take-up and to ensure pensioners get the benefits to which they are entitled.

For further details on the analysis, please see: [Winter Fuel Payments eligibility change - internal modelling on pensioner poverty levels - GOV.UK](#)

We have taken immediate action to increase the take up of Pension Credit, working with charities, local authorities and through a campaign on radio, TV and print media. The Government has written to around 11.5 million pensioners about the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment and included information about claiming Pension Credit. We have also written to 120,000 pensioners on Housing Benefit who could be entitled to Pension Credit, to encourage them to claim. Our campaign has seen Pension Credit applications increase by 152%, and we will continue with this endeavour.

In the longer term, the Department will work to bring together the administration of Pension Credit and Housing Benefit, to ensure that pensioner households receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

We have also put in place extra financial support for the most vulnerable households including pensioners through the £150 Warm Home Discount to help with energy bills, the Cold Weather Payments and our extension of the Household Support Fund.

This is all underpinned by the State Pension, protected by the Triple Lock. Over 12 million pensioners will see their basic or new State Pension increase by 4.1% in April 2025, worth up to £470 a year. Based on OBR Autumn 24 forecasts, over the course of this parliament, the full yearly rate of the new State Pension will go up by around £1900. At the same time, the full yearly rate of basic State Pension is forecast to increase by around £1500.

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent the 100,000 additional pensioners moving into poverty as a result of changes to winter fuel payments. [HL2756]

Baroness Sherlock: The Government is honouring our commitment to the Triple Lock with a 4.1 per cent increase to the basic State Pension, the new State Pension, and to the standard minimum guarantee in Pension Credit. As such, according to the latest OBR projections, the full yearly rate of the new State Pension is forecast to increase by around £1,900 over the course of this parliament whilst the full yearly amount of the basic State Pension is forecast to increase by around £1,500.

We know there are low-income pensioners who aren't claiming Pension Credit, and we are urging pensioners to come forward and check their eligibility for Pension Credit to ensure as many people in need as possible have access to this support. This will passport them to receive Winter Fuel Payment alongside other benefits – hundreds of pounds that could really help them.

Low-income pensioners and others struggling with the cost of living should contact their local council to see what support may be available to them, as they may be able to receive support from the Household Support Fund, Council Tax Reduction, or through energy support programmes such as the Homes Upgrade Grant and Energy Company Obligation.

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