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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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

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<b>Lord Collins of Highbury</b>	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Whip
<b>Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on Trent</b>	Spokesperson for NI Office, Scotland Office and Wales Office, Whip
<b>Baroness Blake of Leeds</b>	Whip
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<b>Lord Hanson of Flint</b>	Minister of State, Home Office
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<b>Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill</b>	Minister of State, Department for Transport
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<b>Lord Hunt of Kings Heath</b>	Minister of State, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
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<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
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# Written Statements

Wednesday, 4 December 2024

## eVisas

[HLWS279]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** My hon Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Migration and Citizenship (Seema Malhotra) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Home Office is developing a border and immigration system that is more digital and streamlined. eVisas - which over 6 million people have been successfully using for several years - are a key part of this transformation and will enhance people's experience and increase the immigration system's security and efficiency. We understand that the move away from physical documents represents a change and that this will be a significant adjustment for many. For this reason, eVisas have, and continue to be, rolled out incrementally and with support available to help customers use the eVisa and online services. The majority of BRP cards are due to expire on 31 December 2024 and customers are being supported to move to eVisas. We welcome feedback on how we can improve our services and continue to support customers through the roll out.

### *Benefits of eVisas*

It is important to recognise that there are significant benefits from eVisas. Creating a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account is free, straightforward and does not change or remove a customer's underlying immigration status. For example, if someone has leave to remain until September 2025 but their Biometric Residence Card (BRP) expires on 31 December 2024, their leave until September 2025 is unaffected. eVisas are secure and cannot be lost, stolen or tampered with, unlike a physical document. They can be accessed anywhere and in real time.

Using their UKVI account, customers can share relevant information about their status securely with third parties, such as employers, landlords, travel operators or private service providers. Customers will also benefit from automated access that government departments and partners, including the Department for Work & Pensions, the NHS, Border Force and carriers will securely have to their immigration status, streamlining processes and access to key services.

An eVisa is like an electronic version of a BRP and is used to view and prove status for example to work or to rent a home. The eVisa is created by the Home Office for each customer to reflect their accurate immigration status, in line with their physical document. The eVisa is then accessed by the customer setting up a UKVI account with their own log-in – a process which has been shown to be very straightforward in the vast majority of cases.

New statistics we are publishing today have shown that over 3.1 million people, mostly with BRPs, have successfully made the transition to eVisas from March to November this year. There are still a proportion of customers who have not yet signed up, and we would strongly encourage them to do so. We also encourage all parents or carers to create accounts for their children.

This account creation process has been more difficult for a small proportion of customers, for example where they have lost their BRP and have no other form of identity document. We have already made changes to improve the process for these customers, including creating UKVI accounts automatically for newly recognised refugees since 1<sup>st</sup> November. But we remain concerned that some of the risks of the roll out, particularly to those making the transition from BRPs and legacy documents, were not clearly identified and managed under the previous administration and have been consulting stakeholders on other issues raised by them, along with the wider concern that this change could lead to another Windrush.

For these reasons, we have been working intensively since the summer to understand the challenges being experienced, to listen and respond to the issues raised, and to adjust the roll out plans accordingly.

That is why today I am updating the House on changes we have made to the roll out to address some of the areas of concern, and on how we will continue to engage with stakeholders and communities through the transition.

### *Legacy document holders*

We have streamlined the process for legacy document holders making the transition to eVisas. The updated No Time Limit (NTL) application process was further streamlined in October, building on enhancements delivered to the old version of the form in September, and addressing concerns about the evidential burden placed on applicants. This new form that went live at the end of October also creates a UKVI account as part of the process, removing the need for NTL customers to take the additional step to create their account and access their eVisa. Any customers who continue to have to use the old process because they have no valid ID document will have an account created manually for them by caseworkers. This is a big step forward in smoothing the journey for legacy document holders.

Those holders of legacy documents (such as passports containing ink stamps or a vignette sticker) will still be able to prove their rights as they do today, where their legacy documents currently permit them to do so, including for proving the right to rent or for travel to the UK. It should be noted that stamps in expired passports have not been acceptable to prove right to work since 2014. The position for legacy document holders does not change at the end of the year, but we encourage them to transition to eVisas by making a No Time Limit (NTL) application, to access the significant benefits that eVisas bring to customers. More information on this process is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/online-immigration-status-evisa>.

### *Working with carriers*

The Home Office has developed technology to enable carriers to check immigration status automatically via systems checks. Over the course of the last 3 years, the Home Office has engaged extensively with carriers about the roll out of ETA and eVisas to travel, to ensure they are fully prepared for the coming changes. This engagement has included direct communications with carriers on an individual basis, regular carrier forums and direct training sessions for carrier staff. As we get closer to the end of the year, we have enhanced our engagement with airlines to ensure their understanding of eVisas and automated checking of status. We are training staff across the world on the options available to them to check immigration permissions, including use of direct digital checks, the online View and Prove service and the 24/7 carrier support hub which they can contact to confirm a passenger's immigration status where necessary.

We are committed to delivering an approach which enables people to demonstrate their status and access the services in the simplest and most secure way possible. We will continue engaging extensively with our stakeholders to ensure that there is a strong understanding of all changes to our border and legal migration system, and a clear messaging campaign to spread public awareness about our move to eVisas.

### *Extending use of expiring BRPs*

While we encourage all BRP holders to switch to using their eVisa via their UKVI account before their BRP expires, if a customer has not created a UKVI account by 1 January 2025 and their BRP has expired, they will be able to do so quickly and easily next year, using their expired BRP if needed.

However, we have also listened to concerns about the risk to customers who are travelling after 31 December, where their underlying status has not expired. In order to smooth the transition to eVisas, we have decided to allow carriers to accept a BRP or EUSS BRC expiring on or after 31 December 2024 as valid evidence of permission to travel until at least 31 March and this date will be kept under review. Customers travelling in the early part of the year are therefore advised to continue carrying their expired BRP, as this will add to the range of checking options already available to carriers.

While this will not affect the way that Border Force conducts its passenger checks, it will provide confidence and reassurance to travellers that they will not face unnecessary delays when proving their travel status with airlines and other carriers, and it reflects our strong desire to act on the concerns that have been raised with us and ensure a smooth transition with minimal disruption for travellers at a busy time of the year.

### *Increasing support for vulnerable people*

We have a number of support services in place to help vulnerable customers to transition to eVisas. There are several national grant funded bodies and community-based organisations spread across the UK ready to offer immediate, free and specialist support for vulnerable

individuals in their transition to an eVisa throughout the rest of 2024, and beyond. Further information about the four national grant funded organisations and the support that they can provide is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evisa-community-support-for-vulnerable-people>.

Customers can contact the Resolution Centre, which provides support via email and webchat to those creating their UKVI account, and telephone support to those using the online immigration status services. Individuals can also nominate a 'helper' and give them limited access to their account, so that they can assist with creating a UKVI account, with completing details to access an eVisa, and with submitting any immigration application. Where a person is unable to manage their own affairs due to, for example, age or disability, a 'proxy', who is authorised, can create and manage the account on behalf of the person.

We recognise that some customers may need further assistance with IT-related aspects of creating a UKVI account. Assisted Digital (in-country only) is a free service provided by UKVI to support digitally excluded customers in creating a UKVI account. More information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/assisted-digital-help-online-applications>.

### *Printed documents*

Successful visa applicants receive written confirmation by email or letter that they have been granted permission, which they can keep for their personal records. Where this document cannot be used as evidence of their status these printed documents can be used when interacting with the Home Office should any subsequent issues be encountered with their eVisa. Customers may also wish to print out their eVisa profile page if they would like a physical version for their own records.

We have been recording immigration status information digitally since the turn of the century, and if someone encounters an issue with their eVisa we can search those records to find their information and confirm their status. BRP holders are also able to retain their expired BRPs for their own records, and legacy document holders who make the switch to an eVisa will also still have their physical documents as evidence of their immigration status.

Customers can continue to use the online Right to Work and Rent services, which have been used by millions of people for over two years to prove their rights. This includes using an expired BRP to access these services, provided the person has valid immigration status.

### *Technical issues*

We have designed our digital services to be highly resilient, rigorously tested, and deployed across multiple data centres. Services are proactively monitored for failures, which will highlight any potential problems to allow support teams to resolve them as quickly as possible where they occur. We recognise a small number of customers have experienced issues with their eVisas,

which we are working hard to address. This includes a customer's status not being visible or showing incorrectly.

We encourage any users experiencing issues to contact the Home Office to enable these to be investigated and resolved. Where necessary, the Resolution Centre can enable individuals' status to be verified through alternative means. Customers can contact the Resolution Centre using an online webchat service or by phone.

#### *Windrush*

We are conscious of the lessons learnt from Wendy Williams extensive review into the Windrush scandal. This government is committed to ensuring that all customers, including the most vulnerable, are properly supported as we transform our immigration system. We understand that individuals may have concerns about proving their status in the absence of a physical document.

Many Windrush individuals had an immigration status that was automatically conferred on them by an Act of Parliament, so in some cases they had no physical proof. The transition to eVisas is in part designed to address that situation by ensuring that everyone with a right to stay in the UK has an eVisa which provides secure and permanent evidence of their status, as well as giving them access to online services which enable them to share evidence of their immigration status with third parties, such as an employer or a landlord.

We hope that these announcements demonstrate how seriously this Government takes the need to ensure that everyone has a smooth transition to eVisas, and that any potential problems are anticipated in advance as far as we are able, or dealt with as quickly and smoothly as possible where not. Above all, we recognise the concerns that people have raised with us, and the issues that have needed to be resolved, and we are both taking action to address them, and committing to maintain an ongoing dialogue with all customers and stakeholders to continue that process in the weeks to come.

A copy of the eVisa partner pack will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

## **SEND Capital Funding**

[HLWS278]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** My Honourable Friend, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Minister for Early Education (Stephen Morgan), has made the following Statement:

Today I am announcing £740 million of capital investment in 2025-26, to support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or who require alternative provision (AP). This is alongside the previously announced additional high needs revenue funding, which will increase by almost £1 billion in 2025-26, compared to 2024-25.

This new funding can be used to adapt classrooms to be more accessible for children with SEND, to create specialist facilities within mainstream schools that can deliver more intensive support adapted to suit the pupils' needs, and create special schools places for pupils with the most complex needs.

Today's funding announcement is part of the broader £6.7bn capital settlement for 2025-26 so we can deliver this government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity and give every child the best start in life. Ensuring schools have the high-quality and sustainable buildings they need is a key part of that.

Allocations of this funding to local authorities are expected to be published by the end of March.

We have also confirmed that we will not enter into any more Safety Valve agreements for councils in financial deficits, pending wider reform of the whole system to prioritise early intervention, properly supporting councils to bring their finances under control. Over time, over 30 local authorities have been supported to manage their high needs budgets through the Safety Valve programme. We will continue to work with LAs with Safety Valve agreements to deliver their plans.

# Written Answers

Wednesday, 4 December 2024

## Africa: Education

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what advice and support they are providing to the African Union's Agenda 2063 programme in the field of education. [HL2793]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** Improving education in Africa is a priority for the UK, and we provide support across a range of programmes. Whilst the UK does not provide direct financial support to the Africa Union (AU) Agenda 2063 programme in the field of education, we are a champion of AU efforts in this area. We participated in the Foundational Learning Conference, hosted by the African Union in Addis Ababa in September 2024, and will attend the Africa Education Conference, to be hosted in Mauritania in December 2024, as part of the AU's focus on education this year.

## Africa: Women

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are providing to the African Union to increase the participation of women in positions of political leadership across the continent. [HL2795]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The UK supports the African Union's efforts to increase women's participation in political processes in Africa through their Conflict and Governance Programme. Through the programme, we support women's participation in election monitoring missions, transitional justice initiatives and the implementation of National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security. The programme also provides direct support to 'FemWise,' the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation. This helps to underpin the inclusion of, and leadership from, women in political processes across Africa.

## Agriculture: Inheritance Tax

Asked by *Lord Kempson*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consultation process they undertook before announcing the recent reforms to agricultural property relief and business property relief for inheritance tax. [HL2706]

**Lord Livermore:** The Government takes into account all representations made ahead of the Budget, and meets with stakeholders on a regular basis.

The Government published information about the reforms to agricultural property relief and business property relief at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-property-relief-and-business-property-relief-reforms](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-property-relief-and-business-property-relief-reforms).

Almost three-quarters of estates claiming agricultural property relief (or those claiming agricultural property relief and business property relief together) each year are expected to be unaffected by these reforms.

Asked by *Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the National Farmers Union prior to or since the changes to inheritance tax announced in the Autumn Budget in relation to family farms. [HL2712]

**Lord Livermore:** The Government takes into account all representations made ahead of the Budget, and meets with stakeholders on a regular basis.

The Government published information about the reforms to agricultural property relief and business property relief at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-property-relief-and-business-property-relief-reforms](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-property-relief-and-business-property-relief-reforms).

Almost three-quarters of estates claiming agricultural property relief (or those claiming agricultural property relief and business property relief together) each year are expected to be unaffected by these reforms.

Asked by *Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many family farms in Northern Ireland will be affected by the changes to inheritance tax announced in the Autumn Budget. [HL2713]

**Lord Livermore:** Information on how many estates in Northern Ireland will be affected by the changes is not centrally held.

The Government has published information about the reforms to agricultural property relief and business property relief at [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/what-are-the-changes-to-agricultural-property-relief\(opens\\_in\\_a\\_new\\_tab\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/what-are-the-changes-to-agricultural-property-relief(opens_in_a_new_tab)).

In accordance with standard practice, a tax information and impact note will be published alongside the draft legislation before the relevant Finance Bill.

Asked by *The Earl of Effingham*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support farmers whose mental health has been affected by the planned changes to inheritance tax rules for agricultural land and businesses. [HL2789]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** We hear the concerns that have been raised around the changes to inheritance tax rules.

This Government will give mental health the same focus as physical health, which is why we are recruiting 8,500 new mental health support workers.

Changes to APR are designed to be fair and sustainable in the long term, and they will not affect most farmers.

Defra has a range of initiatives aimed at supporting farmer's mental health and wellbeing more generally and we will continue to work with a range of farming charities to ensure that changes in policy are delivered effectively. We have provided £500,000 of funding to deliver projects through specialist organisations to support farmer's mental health and wellbeing. We will continue to look for opportunities to support farmers and will host a roundtable in December with expert organisations to understand the issues causing mental ill-health in farming communities. Defra's Farming & Countryside Programme blog also has information relating to external wellbeing services available specifically to farmers and rural communities.

We understand that farmers face numerous challenges which can affect their wellbeing. Recently, we have continued funding support for TB affected farmers and their families through the Farming Community Network, which will provide a national, free-to-access business and pastoral advice service. We will also pay out £60 million through the Farming Recovery Fund to support farmers affected by the unprecedented extreme wet weather last winter.

### Armed Forces: Private Education

*Asked by Baroness Goldie*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the recruitment and retention of Armed Forces personnel from the decision to charge VAT on private school fees. [HL2742]

**Lord Coaker:** The Ministry of Defence and Ministers recognise the significant sacrifices that our military families make in serving our nation. We continue to support Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) as the means of mitigating the disruption to Service children's education caused by Service commitments involving frequent moves of the family home and recognise its importance for the Service personnel who utilise it.

To protect the integrity of the allowance the Secretary of State for Defence directed that the cap on the current rates be lifted, and CEA rates recalculated, in recognition of the likely increase in school fees that will occur in January 2025 with the introduction of VAT on private school fees. This re-rating exercise will complete at the end of November, with new rates effective from 1 December 2024 for claimants in time for the start of the spring term on 1 January 2025.

Protecting the integrity of CEA highlights our wider commitment to putting people at the heart of Defence. This principle drives the Government's focus on improving Armed Forces recruitment and retention, enabling Defence to continue to attract and retain the best possible talent.

### Asthma: Health Services

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what action they are taking to support consistent implementation of the recently published asthma guidelines from the British Thoracic Society, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network; and how they will monitor progress on that implementation. [HL3002]

**Baroness Merron:** NHS England welcomes the publication of the asthma guidance and the clear national framework it provides. It has just been published, and we are closely studying its recommendations.

There is a wide range of work taking place across NHS England to support the implementation of the recommendations of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. In relation to access to diagnosis, NHS England has published commissioning standards, which are available on the NHS.UK website, in an online only format, and worked with a range of partners to create a package for systems containing the information and support required to help increase the number of people receiving early and accurate diagnosis for respiratory disease, including those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

### Autism and Learning Disabilities

*Asked by Baroness Grey-Thompson*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to enable (1) people with learning difficulties, (2) autistic people, including those who are currently on a hospital detention or a community treatment order under the Mental Health Act 1983, (3) individuals with lived experience of hospital detention under the Mental Health Act 1983, and (4) organisations representing those groups, to engage with them on the provisions of the Mental Health Bill. [HL2830]

**Baroness Merron:** The reforms delivered by the Mental Health Bill reflect the recommendations made by the Independent Review into the Mental Health Act, which engaged widely with stakeholders, including people with lived experience of a learning disability or autism under the Mental Health Act 1983. There was extensive consultation following this, to develop the draft bill, most notably on the Government's White Paper, *Reforming the Mental Health Act*. Since the initial draft bill, we have taken on board several recommendations from the pre-legislative scrutiny committee, which heard from a range of stakeholders and organisations representing service users, patients, and professionals.

Regarding the learning disability and autism specific measures, we recognise that strong community support must be in place to improve care and reduce reliance on

mental health hospitals. We will engage with expert stakeholders to inform implementation planning, including in respect of the development of strong community services.

We will engage further with the relevant stakeholders on the development of the Code of Practice, the statutory guidance which informs practice under the Mental Health Bill.

## Children and Young People Cancer Taskforce

Asked by *Baroness Randerson*

To ask His Majesty's Government why work on the Children and Young People Cancer Taskforce was paused in July; what plans they have to take the evidence received by the taskforce up to that point into account in future work; and when they plan to make a final decision on the future of the taskforce, or any successor body. [HL2998]

**Baroness Merron:** The Children and Young People Cancer Taskforce was paused in June 2024 so that ministers could assess the work of the taskforce so far, and determine how it fitted into the Government's priorities for the Department.

However, the work carried out to date on the taskforce was incredibly valuable and remains important to the Department's work. We are committed to progressing work in this area and we will set out more details on next steps for the taskforce in due course.

## Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: Health Services

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve access to diagnosis, timely follow-up after hospital discharge, and treatment recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence for people living with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. [HL3004]

**Baroness Merron:** There is a wide range of work taking place across NHS England to support the implementation of the recommendations of National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. In relation to access to diagnosis, NHS England has published commissioning standards, which are available on the NHS.UK website in an online only format, and worked with a range of partners to create a package for systems containing the information and support required to help increase the number of people receiving early and accurate diagnosis for respiratory disease, including those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

NHS England has incentivised diagnosis within the Quality Outcomes Framework, which includes respiratory indicators in relation to the diagnosis of asthma and

COPD. Community Diagnostic Centres are being established to deliver additional, digitally connected, diagnostic capacity in England, providing patients with a coordinated set of diagnostic tests in the community, in as few visits as possible, enabling an accurate and fast diagnosis on a range of clinical pathways, including for people with chronic respiratory disease.

To support patients with a timely follow-up after hospital discharge, a discharge bundle for COPD is included within the *Guidance on best practice tariffs* for 2023 to 2025, a copy of which is attached. This includes a review of medication, the provision of a self-management plan, including an emergency drug pack where appropriate, smoking cessation support, assessment for pulmonary rehabilitation, and ensuring appropriate follow up arrangements are in place prior to discharge.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Best Practice Tariffs [23-25NHSPS\_Annex-DpC-Best-practice-tariffs.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-27/HL3004>

## Civil Proceedings and Coroners: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Baroness Hoey*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many outstanding pre-1998 legacy cases in the form of civil suits and re-opened inquests are in train at present; and what have been (1) the costs involved in settlements or damages paid in such cases in each of the past five complete years and (2) the legal costs, both incurred by the Northern Ireland Office and paid out to claimants' and victims' lawyers. [HL2914]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** There are over a thousand ongoing legacy civil claims against the Northern Ireland Office and other state agencies.

Damages paid by the Northern Ireland Office in such cases must remain confidential as per the terms of the settlements, and the Northern Ireland Office does not hold information on the settlement of legacy civil claims faced by other Government departments.

The Northern Ireland Office's spend on legal costs is included within our Annual Report and Accounts, although we do not differentiate between legal costs we incur and costs we pay to claimants' lawyers:

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/650825884cd3c3000d68cb7d/E02862920\\_NIO\\_Annual\\_Report\\_\\_Accounts\\_2022-23\\_Web\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/650825884cd3c3000d68cb7d/E02862920_NIO_Annual_Report__Accounts_2022-23_Web_Accessible.pdf)

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## Civil Servants

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Civil Service capacity needed to provide robust evaluation of Government policies; and how they will address any identified gaps. [HL2721]

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide training on evaluation techniques and methodologies to Civil Servants; and to what extent this training will take into account practices from outside Government. [HL2722]

**Baroness Twycross:** In 2021, the National Audit Office published a [report](#) on evaluating government spending. The report highlighted several challenges regarding the Civil Service's capacity to evaluate government policies, including a skills gap in evaluation.

It is the responsibility of individual government departments and professions to ensure that they have the capacity and capability to evaluate their policies and programmes, and to address any capability gaps they may have.

To support departments, the Cabinet Office is taking steps to improve the skills of analysts and policy officials across the Civil Service. For example, the Evaluation Task Force has created the Evaluation Academy to address a cross-government skills gap and build evaluation capacity in the analytical profession. The Evaluation Academy comprises 10 modules including process, impact and value-for-money evaluation that are aligned to the Magenta Book, the government's guidance on evaluation. The Academy has been run for two consecutive years and has already led to more than 2,000 civil servants receiving training on evaluation topics and methods. The Evaluation Task Force has also provided advice on evaluation methods for 382 government programmes worth a total value of £202 billion.

Additionally, the Government Skills Campus project is building and rolling out a new Civil Service wide digital platform which will log the skills of all civil servants, including evaluation skills. This will create a Civil

Service-wide skills dataset allowing for even more data-driven workforce planning and targeted action on capability gaps. Roll out begins in 2025.

## Dental Health: Children

*Asked by **Baroness Benjamin***

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to establish a supervised toothbrushing scheme and what estimate they have made of the number of children that would be covered by such a scheme. [HL2875]

**Baroness Merron:** We are committed to introducing a national supervised toothbrushing scheme, targeted at three- to five-year-olds living in the 20% most deprived areas of England. Supervised toothbrushing schemes are implemented on a setting-based approach, rather than an individual children approach. The number of children participating in schemes will be determined by rates of local participation.

*Asked by **Baroness Benjamin***

To ask His Majesty's Government how much funding they will allocate to establishing a national supervised toothbrushing scheme for children in England. [HL2876]

**Baroness Merron:** The Department is currently considering allocations of funding following the Budget on 30 October. We will also set out further details on a national supervised toothbrushing scheme at the earliest opportunity.

## Dental Services

*Asked by **Baroness Benjamin***

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the viability of dental practices of the increase in employer National Insurance contributions set out at Autumn Budget 2024. [HL2877]

**Baroness Merron:** The employer National Insurance rise will be implemented in April 2025, and the Department will set out further details on the allocation of funding for next year in due course.

## Diabetes: Health Services

*Asked by **Lord Kamall***

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the report from the charity Breakthrough T1D, Access for all: The impact of technology on the lives of people with type 1 diabetes, published in October, which concluded that respondents from lower socio-economic groups, and those over the age of 65, were least likely to be aware of new technologies such as hybrid closed loop systems, what plans they have to raise awareness of the latest technologies available to type 1 diabetes patients of all ages and socio-economic groups across England. [HL2833]

**Baroness Merron:** NHS England's Diabetes Programme uses a range of communication channels, including mainstream and social media, to share information about the latest technologies that are available for people with Type 1 diabetes. NHS England works closely with its partners, including Breakthrough T1D, Diabetes UK and the Association of British Clinical Diabetologists Technology Network to amplify key messages.

A new decision support tool has been designed to support people to understand what diabetes treatment technologies are available on the National Health Service, supporting discussions between someone living with type 1 diabetes and their healthcare professional about the technology they are eligible for and supports shared decision-making about the person's care in managing type 1 diabetes.

Furthermore, nationally commissioned self-management resources have been put in place, including DigiBete, designed for children and young people aged between zero and 25 years old with type 1 diabetes in ten languages and MyType1 Diabetes, which is available to all adults living with type 1 diabetes.

As part of NHS England's focus on improving equity of access to diabetes technology, diabetes care is one of the five clinical areas of focus for integrated care boards to achieve system change and improve care within the Core20Plus5 for children and young people. Core20PLUS5 is a national NHS England approach to support the reduction of health inequalities at both national and system level. The approach defines a target population cohort and identifies five focus clinical areas requiring accelerated improvement. The aim of this work is to increase access to real-time continuous glucose monitors and insulin pumps for people in the most deprived 20% of the national population and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

### **Drax Power Station**

*Asked by Lord Birt*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to provide bridging support to Drax in advance of a contractually binding commitment from Drax to introduce carbon capture and storage. [HL2813]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** A consultation was held under the previous administration on whether a transitional, or 'bridging', support should be provided for large-scale biomass generators when their current subsidies end. No decision has been taken on proposed support. Any decision will be subject to robust analysis and the Government is considering a range of factors to inform its decision.

### **Drinking Water: Fluoride**

*Asked by Lord Turnberg*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to expand the fluoridation of drinking water supplies to improve children's dental health. [HL3023]

**Baroness Merron:** A public consultation on the proposal to expand community water fluoridation in the North East of England finished on 31 July 2024. We are currently considering the responses to this consultation, and a decision on whether to expand the scheme will be announced in due course.

### **Driving under Influence**

*Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to lower the blood alcohol content limit for driving. [HL2695]

**Lord Henty of Richmond Hill:** This Government takes road safety seriously, and we are committed to reducing the numbers of those killed and injured on our roads. We are currently considering policy options in this area.

Since the general election, the Department has also begun work on a new Road Safety Strategy, the first in over a decade. The Department will share more details in due course.

### **Education: ICT**

*Asked by Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many education technology (EdTech) service providers the Information Commissioner's Office has audited in the last five years; and whether they will publish the names of the organisations and any findings. [HL2699]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** The ICO have audited 10 EdTech service providers, have confirmed plans to audit a further seven, and will be requesting further information from other providers to support their audit findings. Common findings and examples are anonymised and will be published after all audits with service providers are completed. Publication decisions on individual audit findings attributed to named service providers is decided on a case-by-case basis, generally with their consent.

### **Electric Cables**

*Asked by Lord Offord of Garvel*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to consult local communities who will be most impacted by the mass construction of pylons used to support their clean energy by 2030 target. [HL2932]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** In England and Wales, the Planning Act 2008 requires developers to demonstrate that they have consulted adequately with communities before they submit applications for consent. Developers are also required to show they have fairly considered alternatives to their proposals in their applications. In

Scotland, the Scottish Government's good practice guidance sets out the expectations and requirements for consultation.

The Government is committed to ensuring that communities who live near new clean energy infrastructure also benefit from it and are currently considering how to most effectively deliver this. This includes developing guidance on community benefits for electricity transmission network infrastructure, which we will publish in due course.

### **Employers' Contributions: Care Homes and Health Services**

*Asked by Lord Kamall*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they produced an impact assessment on the effects of the rise in employer National Insurance contributions on care homes, primary care providers and hospices prior to the Autumn Budget. [HL2916]

*Asked by Lord Kamall*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish before 2025 an impact assessment of the effects of the rise in employer National Insurance contributions under the Autumn Budget on care homes, primary care providers and hospices. [HL2917]

**Baroness Merron:** We have taken necessary decisions to fix the foundations in the public finances at the Autumn Budget, and this enabled the Spending Review settlement of a £22.6 billion increase in resource spending for the Department from 2023/24 outturn to 2025/26. The employer National Insurance rise will be implemented in April 2025, and the Department will set out further details on the allocation of funding for next year at the earliest opportunity.

### **Government: Research**

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to update the Government Social Research Publication Protocol, which was last revised in 2022. [HL2720]

**Lord Livermore:** The Government Social Research (GSR) publication protocol is reviewed on a regular basis and changes are made as required.

The protocol was developed by the GSR in collaboration with the Government Analysis Function and the Office for Statistics Regulation. The guidance is consistent with the Code of Practice for Statistics which is statutory. The protocol is reviewed each time it is recirculated, which happens on change of administration or roughly annually, with small or more significant changes made as needed.

### **Health Services**

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Merron on 12 November (HL2220), what is the timescale for delivery of the proposed reforms to the patient care pathways; what conditions and pathways are in scope for these changes; in what settings this care will be delivered; who will be responsible for ensuring that these changes will be at lower cost; and how will progress be monitored and reported. [HL2638]

**Baroness Merron:** As part of the Government's commitment to returning to the 18-week constitutional standard from Referral to Treatment, work is underway and planned throughout 2025/26 to reform patient care pathways to ensure patients are seen in the settings which deliver better patient experience for lower cost.

This pathway reform will look at end-to-end pathways across primary, community and secondary care, and include diagnostics. NHS England is initially prioritising pathways in cardiology, respiratory, ear-nose-throat, gastroenterology and urology due to challenging demand, and is looking at opportunities to improve efficiency across other pathways, including through the use of diagnostic first pathways, integration across settings workforce development. There are ongoing reform efforts underway to address challenges identified in other specialities too. For example, in gynaecology, women's health hubs are bringing together healthcare professionals and existing services to provide integrated women's health services in the community to improve health outcomes for women, whilst reducing healthcare inequalities.

NHS England is leading national efforts to support pathway re-design, to take the best of clinically led innovation and practice across the country. Progress will be monitored and reported via the Oversight and Assessment Framework through which trusts report to integrated care boards; these are in turn shared with NHS England regional teams and filter into national reporting.

### **Health Services and Social Services: Employers' Contributions**

*Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential impact of the proposed changes to employer national insurance contributions on health and social care providers. [HL2711]

**Baroness Merron:** We have taken necessary decisions to fix the foundations in the public finances at Autumn Budget, and this enabled the Spending Review settlement of a £22.6 billion increase in resource spending for the Department from 2023/24 outturn to 2025/26. The employer National Insurance rise will be implemented in April 2025, and the Department will set out further details on the allocation of funding for next year at the earliest

opportunity, including through NHS Planning Guidance, and the usual consultations.

### Health Services: Women

*Asked by Baroness Barran*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to retain the policy set out in the Women's Health Strategy for England, published by the Department of Health and Social Care on 30 August 2022, to ensure that there is appropriate use of sex-specific language in health communications and guidance that relate to women's individual health issues and biological needs. [HL1918]

**Baroness Merron:** The Government understands the need for health information to be as clear as possible and to use language that appropriately reflects sex, as defined as a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010. The Government expects the National Health Service to deliver health services in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, having appropriate regard to protected characteristics as defined in the Act where relevant.

### Heating: Regulation

*Asked by Lord Whitty*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they anticipate that Ofgem, under its new powers in the Energy Act 2023, will produce regulations for heat networks and district heating. [HL2733]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Government is launching the heat network market framework in January 2026 which will introduce an authorisation regime for suppliers and operators.

Ofgem have just launched a consultation on authorisation conditions, the rules and regulations heat network suppliers must adhere to. Ofgem aim for these to be in place in time for regulatory commencement.

The consumer advocacy and support functions carried out by the Energy Ombudsman, Citizens Advice and Consumer Scotland will launch ahead of regulation in April 2025.

### Hydroelectric Power: Wales

*Asked by Lord Wigley*

To ask His Majesty's Government further to the Written Answer by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath on 19 November (HL2484), when they expect to announce the finalised terms for bids for new pump storage electricity generation projects, and when they expect final decisions on such bids to be made. [HL2953]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** Finalised terms for applications to the Long Duration Electricity Storage (LDES) investment support scheme, which could include applications from Pumped Storage Hydro (PSH) projects,

will be set out in a Technical Decision Document to be published in the first quarter of 2025.

Ofgem is the delivery body for the LDES investment support scheme and has informed Government that it intends to open the scheme to a first round of applications in the second quarter of 2025 and is working with the aim of making decisions on initial applications in early 2026.

### International Criminal Court

*Asked by Lord Watson of Wyre Forest*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with member states of the International Criminal Court about balancing the UK's obligations under the Rome Statute, with its diplomatic relationships with non-signatory states including Israel. [HL2799]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** We respect the independence of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is the primary international institution for investigating and prosecuting the most serious crimes of international concern. The Government regularly engages with other States Parties to the Rome Statute on our obligations to the Court. It is for all ICC States Parties to consider how to meet their obligations under the Rome Statute.

### Iraq: Age of Consent

*Asked by Lord Stevens of Birmingham*

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Iraq about legislative proposals by some Shia parties to effectively legalise sex with nine-year-old girls. [HL3020]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The UK is analysing the proposed amendments to Iraq's Personal Status Law and its implications for women and children's rights, which we note have not yet been passed through the House of Representatives. As we continue to privately engage with a range of Iraqi interlocutors to discuss this, including the Government of Iraq, we are emphasising the importance of any amendments' compatibility with Iraq's international obligations.

### Iraq: Forced Marriage

*Asked by Lord Swire*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with the government of Iraq about the proposed legislation to reduce the age of child marriage. [HL2773]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The UK is analysing the proposed amendments to Iraq's Personal Status Law and its implications for women and children's rights. As we privately engage with a range of Iraqi interlocutors to discuss this, we are emphasising the importance of any

amendments' compatibility with Iraq's international obligations.

We would condemn any legislative change that would violate international norms, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

### **Iraq: Women's Rights**

*Asked by Lord Swire*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with the government of Iraq about women's rights. [HL2774]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** Countering rollback and promoting the rights of women and girls is a key focus of our programming and policy work in Iraq. The UK centres its women, peace and security work within a context-sensitive and 'do no harm' approach. We continue to engage with and convene local women's rights organisations and activists. We engage regularly with the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government on these topics, in particular advocating for legislation to further protect women.

### **Leasehold: Reform**

*Asked by Lord Bailey of Paddington*

To ask His Majesty's Government when the draft Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Bill will be published for pre-legislative scrutiny. [HL2688]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** I refer the noble Lord to the [Written Ministerial Statement](#) made on Thursday 21 November 2024, which sets out government's intentions to publish draft legislation on leasehold and commonhold reform in the second half of next year so that it may be subject to broad consultation and additional parliamentary scrutiny.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Leasehold and Commonhold reform [Written statements - Leasehold and Commonhold reform.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-20/HL2688>

### **Legislation: Impact Assessments**

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the late submission of regulatory impact assessments for legislative proposals. [HL2719]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** Since the General Election, the Cabinet Office, with the support of the Department for Business & Trade, has written to

departments to remind them of their responsibility to consider in their legislative plans the general requirement to make regulatory impact assessments available when bringing forward relevant legislation to Parliament. The Department for Business & Trade provides training and advice to officials across government to support their departments' compliance with this and the wider requirements of the *Guide to Making Legislation* and *Better Regulation Framework Guidance*. The government supports the Regulatory Policy Committee in holding departments to account for their compliance with the framework; this includes publishing statements of lateness when regulatory provisions reach Parliament without a regulatory impact assessment or opinion from the committee where they require one.

### **Local Government: Translation Services**

*Asked by Lord Gilbert of Panteg*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support local authorities to reduce spending on translation into foreign languages, and whether they have issued any guidance to local authorities on this. [HL2739]

*Asked by Lord Gilbert of Panteg*

To ask His Majesty's Government what action they are taking to improve integration in communities by supporting English language proficiency. [HL2741]

**Lord Khan of Burnley:** As independent bodies who take their own decisions, local authorities are responsible for assessing the need and value for money in delivering any translation services for their residents.

Government recognises that the ability to speak English is key to helping people integrate into life in the UK, as well as supporting people to access education, employment and other opportunities.

We continue to support English language provision in various ways, including through providing £11.5 million for English language courses and employment support for up to 12,500 Ukrainians across the UK through the 'STEP Ukraine' programme. Other cohorts supported with similar English Language provision include Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) and Afghans arriving in the UK through HMG-led relocation schemes.

More generally, the Department for Education supports adults aged 19+ in England who do not have English as a first language to access English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision, via the Adult Skills Fund.

### **Maternity Services: Surveys**

*Asked by Baroness Manzoor*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings in the Care Quality Commission's 2024 Maternity Survey; and what plans they have to address those areas where the survey

reported an increase in poor maternity experiences. [HL3042]

**Baroness Merron:** The Care Quality Commission's 2024 Maternity Survey indicates that women's experiences of maternity services have mostly either remained similar to 2023, or have shown small levels of decline. Whilst there have been improvements to some areas of maternity and neonatal care provision, such as mental health support during pregnancy, we recognise that the survey shows that women are not always receiving the standard of care they should expect.

NHS England's three-year delivery plan for maternity and neonatal services continues to make progress in delivering important improvements for services. For example, all women who have given birth now receive a six-to-eight-week postnatal check-up, and Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services now have full population coverage to support women with, or at risk of, mental health issues, with a range of treatments including support clinics, talking therapies, and pre-conception advice.

The Government recognises the need to go further to ensure that women get the maternity care they deserve, and will use the results of this survey to help inform its next steps on improving maternity and neonatal care.

### NHS: Innovation

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the finding in the NHS report The Innovation Ecosystem Programme – how the UK can lead the way globally in health gains and life sciences powered growth, published on 28 November, that NHS staff "feel they do not have the capacity or the support to test, adopt and scale innovation"; and what steps they intend to take in response. [HL3045]

**Baroness Merron:** The Department welcomes the publication of the Innovation Ecosystem Programme (IEP) report, and is encouraged to see the National Health Service continue to engage in how it can better utilise life sciences innovation.

The Department agrees with the fundamental thesis of the IEP, that innovation will be foundational to delivering an NHS fit for the future, and the United Kingdom's £108 billion life sciences sector can be an engine for driving both this reform and economic growth. The Department also recognises that there are currently hurdles and barriers to the swift adoption and spread of innovation, and we must work to reduce and remove these.

Research demonstrates that NHS staff who are research and innovation active are more satisfied in their roles, and provide higher quality patient care. There will be further consideration of how the Government and NHS England can support the workforce to engage actively in testing, adopting, and scaling innovation in the upcoming 10-Year Health Plan and Life Sciences Sector Plan, both of which we plan to publish in the spring.

### NHS: Muslims

*Asked by Lord Godson*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the publication of the National NHS Muslim Network's New Muslim guidance in August to "help new Muslims navigate through the early stages of their journey", whether it is their policy to produce similar documents for all faiths. [HL2701]

**Baroness Merron:** This document is owned by the NHS Muslim Network, which is one of several staff networks which have formed within the National Health Service. Other staff networks include the Jewish Staff Network and the Care Experienced Staff Network.

Staff networks make materials for their members with no input from NHS England or the Department, and the networks determine policies useful for their network members.

### Non-crime Hate Incidents

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many non-criminal hate incidents have been recorded but not pursued by police since 2014. [HL2714]

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether non-criminal hate incidents are disclosed on prospective employees' criminal records; and if so, what assessment they have made of the implications for the careers of individuals affected. [HL2715]

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask His Majesty's Government how much police time since 2014 has been spent recording and investigating non-criminal hate incidents, and how this compares with the amount of time spent investigating crimes involving (1) rape, (2) burglary and (3) Islamist terrorism. [HL2716]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Home Office does not centrally hold or collate information on the number of non-crime hate incidents recorded by police forces.

Non-crime hate incidents would not appear on a basic or standard Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

### Ofsted

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the current terms of reference of Ofsted. [HL2692]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** Ofsted's overall functions and remit are set out in a range of legislation, including the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which is available here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/part/8>. The

Act establishes Ofsted as a non-ministerial government department.

Ofsted publishes a number of documents relevant to its work and responsibilities, including its corporate governance arrangements, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsteds-corporate-governance-framework/ofsteds-corporate-governance-framework>. An annual report on its work is attached and also available here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/655f2551c39e5a001392e4ca/31587\\_Ofsted\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2022-23\\_WEB.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/655f2551c39e5a001392e4ca/31587_Ofsted_Annual_Report_2022-23_WEB.pdf).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Ofsted Annual Report 2022/23 [HL2692 attachment - Ofsted Annual Report.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-20/HL2692>

## Police: Firearms

*Asked by Lord Hogan-Howe*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the rate of recruitment and resignation of police firearms officers has remained stable over the past five years. [HL2705]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Home Office collects and publishes information annually on the number of armed police officers in the Police use of firearms statistics. The latest available data is for the year ending 31 March 2024 and can be accessed at Gov.UK.

There were a total of 6,473 armed officers as at 31 March 2024, a decrease of 3% (-178) compared with 31 March 2023 (6,651).

Of the 6,473 armed officers, 5,861 were operationally deployable armed officers (91%). This proportion was the same as the year ending 31 March 2023, and 2 percentage points lower than in the year ending 31 March 2022 (93%).

As at 31 March 2024, there were 3% fewer (-177) operationally deployable armed officers than in the year ending 31 March 2023. 'Operationally deployable' excludes officers who were absent due to sickness (long or short-term) or on restricted duties.

A 5-year armed officer uplift programme, with the aim to train and equip 1,000 extra firearm officers was announced on 1 April 2016 (separate from the recent recruitment of an additional 20,000 officers). Following the programme, the number of operationally deployable armed officers increased from 5,639 on 31 March 2016, to a peak of 6,621 on 31 March 2019 (Figure 4).

Since 31 March 2019, the number of operationally deployable armed officers has decreased by 760 (to 5,861 on 31 March 2024). This is the fifth consecutive year that the number has decreased. The number of operationally deployable armed officers is 4% (222) higher than before the armed officer uplift programme (31 March 2016).

## Private Rented Housing: Sales

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of buy-to-let properties that have been sold in the last 12 months, and how this compares with the previous 12 months. [HL2782]

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of buy-to-let mortgages that have been issued in the last 12 months, and how this compares with the previous 12 months. [HL2783]

**Lord Livermore:** According to UK Finance's latest quarterly Buy-to-Let statistical release (published 22 October), in Q2 2024 there were 51,459 new buy-to-let loans advanced in the UK, worth £8.9 billion. This was up 26% by number (27.7% by value) compared with the same quarter in the previous year.

There is a wide variety of data and statistics about the mortgage market in the UK available from the Bank of England [1], the Financial Conduct Authority [2] and UK Finance [3].

[1]<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/statistics>

[2]<https://www.fca.org.uk/data>

[3]<https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/data-and-research/data>

## Pupils: Personal Records

*Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask His Majesty's Government under which pieces of legislation schools are required to collect and submit identifiable pupil data to the Department for Education. [HL2697]

*Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask His Majesty's Government which specific items of personal data pupils and parents may object to being collected in the school census, and by what process they may do so. [HL2698]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** Education is a devolved matter, and the response outlines the information for England only.

The provision of information about individual pupils to the department is a statutory requirement on schools in England under section 537A of the Education Act 1996. Under those powers, the 'Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013', as amended, detail the specific identifiable pupil data that must be returned. The Regulations can be found at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/2094/made>. Together this provides the legislative basis for the school census.

Whilst it is not possible for a parent/guardian or an individual child to opt out of the school census collection, information on (1) ethnicity, (2) first language and (3) whether a child is the child of someone in the Armed

Services, must always be as declared by the parent/guardian or the pupil where a pupil is deemed mature enough to have capacity to consent to sharing their personal data with others. When collecting the data items listed above from the parent/guardian or pupil, schools should ensure that they are made aware of their right to decline to provide these data items. Where they exercise this right, the information will be recorded on the school system as 'refused' and will not be transferred to the department as part of the school census.

### Railway Network

Asked by *Lord Grocott*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to re-open any of the railway lines closed during the Beeching cuts for either passengers or freight. [HL2747]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** Following the Chancellor's announcement in July 2024, the Restoring Your Railway (RYR) programme is being brought to a close. RYR-originated projects already in delivery will continue to be delivered but projects not yet in delivery are subject to the Department's capital spending portfolio review. The Transport Secretary announced this review of the previous government's transport plans to ensure that our transport infrastructure portfolio drives economic growth and delivers value for money for taxpayers. Beyond the RYR programme, we believe it is for local transport authorities to consider whether particular transport projects are the best way to meet local needs and, if so, whether they wish to give them high priority from local budgets in the first instance.

### Rented Housing: Standards

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government how the Decent Homes Standard is monitored and implemented. [HL2784]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** It is imperative that homes are decent, safe and warm. The Decent Homes Standard plays a key role in setting a minimum quality standard that all social homes should meet. The government is extending the Decent Homes Standard to apply to the private rented sector for the first time through the Renters' Rights Bill.

In the social rented sector, landlords are held accountable for meeting the standard by the Regulator of Social Housing. Once applied in the private rented sector, local authorities will be responsible for enforcing the Decent Homes Standard.

Compliance with the Decent Homes Standard is monitored primarily through the English Housing Survey, which reports annually. The government also reviews a wider range of self-reported monitoring data provided by social housing providers.

The government will launch a consultation on an updated Decent Homes Standard next year.

### Renters' Rights Bill

Asked by *Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have carried out an impact assessment for the Renters' Rights Bill on the supply of properties in the private rented sector. [HL2781]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The Government published its Impact Assessment for the Renters' Rights Bill on 22 November 2024, following scrutiny from the Regulatory Policy Committee. The Impact Assessment received a 'green' rating, indicating it is 'fit for purpose'. The Impact Assessment is available at the following [link](#).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Renters Rights Bill [Renters Rights Bill.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-21/HL2781>

### Respiratory System: Diseases

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of financial incentives in improving access to respiratory care and treatment. [HL3003]

**Baroness Merron:** There is a wide range of work taking place across NHS England to support the implementation of the recommendations of National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. In relation to access to diagnosis, NHS England has published commissioning standards, which are available on the NHS.UK website in an online only format, and worked with a range of partners to create a package for systems containing the information and support required to help increase the number of people receiving early and accurate diagnosis for respiratory disease, including those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

NHS England has incentivised diagnosis within the Quality Outcomes Framework, which includes respiratory indicators in relation to the diagnosis of asthma and COPD. Community Diagnostic Centres are being established to deliver additional, digitally connected, diagnostic capacity in England, providing patients with a coordinated set of diagnostic tests in the community, in as few visits as possible, enabling an accurate and fast diagnosis on a range of clinical pathways, including for people with chronic respiratory disease.

To support patients with a timely follow-up after hospital discharge, a discharge bundle for COPD is included within the *Guidance on best practice tariffs* for 2023 to 2025, a copy of which is attached. This includes a review of medication, the provision of a self-management plan, including an emergency drug pack where



appropriate, smoking cessation support, assessment for pulmonary rehabilitation, and ensuring appropriate follow up arrangements are in place prior to discharge.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Guidance on best practice tariffs [23-25NHSPS\_Annex-DpC-Best-practice-tariffs PDF.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-27/HL3003>

## Secondary Education

*Asked by Lord Godson*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conclusions of The symbolic violence of setting: A Bourdieusian analysis of mixed methods data on secondary students' views about setting, published in 2018, that setting children by ability in schools is (1) "symbolic violence", and (2) "incompatible with social justice approaches to education"; and whether they took these views into consideration when appointing the article's co-author Professor Becky Francis as Chair of the Curriculum and Assessment Review. [HL2702]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** The independent Curriculum and Assessment Review and its recommendations will be driven by evidence and a commitment to high standards for all young people, irrespective of background. Professor Francis OBE was appointed due to her professional expertise including as Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation.

## Social Services: Labour Turnover and Recruitment

*Asked by Baroness Barran*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to commit to specific targets and a timeframe for growing the social care workforce; and if so, when. [HL2872]

**Baroness Merron:** The Government recognises the scale of the reforms needed to make the adult social care sector attractive, to support sustainable workforce growth and improve the retention of the domestic workforce. We want it to be regarded as a profession, and for the people who work in care to be respected as professionals.

## Solar Power: Land Use

*Asked by Lord Offord of Garvel*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether it is their policy not to invest in solar farm installation on high quality agricultural land. [HL2931]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Government has made clear in planning guidance that, wherever possible, solar developers should utilise brownfield sites. All

projects are subject to rigorous planning examination, in which any impact on agricultural production is considered.

## Special Educational Needs: Teachers

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Lincoln*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address teacher burnout and turnover in special education schools due to low pay and temporary contracts. [HL2709]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** There are now 468,693 full-time equivalent teachers in state-funded schools in England, but the department knows that there is more to do to ensure that there are sufficient teachers across the country in both mainstream and special schools. This is why the department has committed to recruiting 6,500 more expert teachers. The department's initiatives are aimed not only at increasing teacher recruitment in key subjects and areas, but also at ensuring teachers stay and thrive in the profession, including by improving teacher wellbeing and workload.

Fair pay is key to ensuring teaching is an attractive and respected profession, which is why this government has accepted the School Teachers' Review Body's recommendation of a 5.5% pay award for teachers and leaders in maintained schools from September. The department is providing schools with almost £1.1 billion in additional funding in the 2024/25 financial year to support schools with overall costs. This matches what the department has calculated is needed to fully fund, at a national level, the teacher pay award in 2024/25 and the support staff pay offer in the 2024/25 financial year, after accounting for the overall available headroom in schools' existing budgets.

The school teachers' pay and conditions document for 2024 sets out that an additional special educational needs (SEN) allowance must be paid to teachers in a SEN post that requires a mandatory SEN qualification and involves teaching pupils with SEN. It is for schools to determine the specific amount, but this must be between £2,679 and £5,285 per annum. The school teachers' pay and conditions document for 2024 is attached and can also be found at:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67165b0d9242eccc6c849b4b/School\\_teachers\\_pay\\_and\\_conditions\\_document\\_and\\_guidance\\_2024\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67165b0d9242eccc6c849b4b/School_teachers_pay_and_conditions_document_and_guidance_2024_.pdf).

The department has made available a range of resources to help address teacher workload and wellbeing and support schools to introduce flexible working practices. The department's improve workload and wellbeing for school staff service, developed alongside school leaders, includes a workload reduction toolkit to support schools to identify opportunities to cut excessive workload, as well as the education staff wellbeing charter, which sets out commitments from government, Ofsted, schools, and colleges to protect and promote the wellbeing of staff. Over 3,900 schools have signed up to the charter since it was launched in November 2021.

Schools are ultimately responsible for the employment and make-up of their workforce, including the number of temporary staff they employ, as they have the best understanding of their needs and what is needed to ensure every child receives the best possible education.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL2709 attachment [School teachers pay and conditions document and guidance - 2024.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-20/HL2709>

## Students: Fees and Charges

*Asked by Lord Godson*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they gave, before deciding to increase tuition fees to £9,535 from September 2025, to using the powers in Schedule 2 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 to limit the fee rise only to higher education providers that hold a high-level quality rating in order to ensure good value for money for students. [HL2703]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** The government recognises that UK higher education (HE) creates opportunity, is an engine for growth in our economy and supports local communities. In making the tough decision to increase tuition fee caps, after seven years of frozen fee caps under the previous government, the department's immediate priority is helping all providers manage the financial pressures they are facing.

However, if the department is to maintain and enhance our national and international reputation, we need a culture that accepts nothing less than high standards, and that requires continuous improvement from all providers. This requires a rigorous approach to improving quality and supporting improvement. The department expects all providers to raise the bar further on teaching standards to maintain and improve our world-leading reputation and to drive out poor practice.

Following Sir David Behan's review, the department will work closely with a re-focused Office for Students (OfS) as it develops its new approach to assessing quality. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education has already taken the crucial first step of appointing Sir David as interim Chair of the OfS to oversee this important work.

The department expects the sector to deliver the very best outcomes, both for students and for the country. The department will publish its plan for HE reform by summer 2025 and will work with the sector and the OfS to deliver the change that the country needs.

## Sue Gray

*Asked by Lord Caine*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Twycross on 15

November (HL1853), on what date Sue Gray communicated to the Cabinet Office that she would not be taking up the role of Prime Minister's Envoy to the Nations and Regions. [HL2660]

**Baroness Twycross:** Sue Gray has decided not to accept the role of Envoy to the Nations and Regions. It would not be appropriate to share details of HR matters.

## Transport: Isles of Scilly

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the adequacy of sea and air links between the Isles of Scilly and mainland Cornwall. [HL2764]

**Lord Henty of Richmond Hill:** With regards to the lifeline ferry link for the Isles of Scilly, building work is now underway on the Isles of Scilly Steamship Group's new passenger and freight vessels. These new vessels will secure a resilient lifeline connection to and from mainland Cornwall for islanders and their economy going forward.

There are a number of air links between the Isles of Scilly and mainland Cornwall. Isles of Scilly Skybus operate a year-round fixed wing service from St Mary's Airport to Lands' End Airport as well as a summer service to Newquay Airport. Penzance Helicopters also operate a year-round service between the Isles of Scilly and Penzance Heliport.

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the attitudes of the residents of the Isles of Scilly on their transport links with Cornwall. [HL2765]

**Lord Henty of Richmond Hill:** This Government wants everyone to have access to transport provision no matter where they live. That is why we value the opinions of people living on the Isles of Scilly and recognise the difficulties they face as an island community. My officials remain in regular contact with the Isles of Scilly Council and other Government departments to discuss and address these challenges.

## UN Economic Commission for Africa

*Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what advice and support they are providing to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. [HL2794]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The UK works closely with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) as part of the UN's architecture in Africa. Through the UK's Office for National Statistics, we also have a long-running programme of support to the African Centre for Statistics in UNECA which includes embedding a strategic adviser to contribute to regional

guidance and support member states on statistical modernisation.

### **Voting Rights: British Nationals Abroad**

*Asked by Lord Grocott*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many British citizens living overseas for more than 15 years became eligible to vote in the 2024 General Election following a change to the rules under the Elections Act 2022. [HL2745]

*Asked by Lord Grocott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what proportion of British citizens living overseas for more than 15 years voted in the 2024 General Election. [HL2746]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** This data is not held centrally. However, the supporting Impact Assessment to the Representation of the People (Overseas Electors etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 estimated that around 2.3 million British citizens living overseas were enfranchised by the changes to the franchise under the Elections Act 2022. [The Representation of the People \(Overseas Electors etc.\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

The representation of the people [HL2745 - The Representation of the People (Overseas Electors etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2023.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-21/HL2745>

### **Young People: Surveys**

*Asked by Baroness Wolf of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the cost to date of the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2 (LSYPE2) waves 1–9. [HL2734]

*Asked by Baroness Wolf of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether all data from waves 1-9 of the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: Cohort 2 (LSYPE2) are now available to researchers. [HL2735]

*Asked by Baroness Wolf of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many academic and other external researchers have been granted access to and are analysing Longitudinal Study of Young People in England data from (1) LSYPE2 waves 4-6, and (2) LSYPE2 waves 7-9. [HL2736]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** The total cost of the contracts for the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England 2 (LSYPE2) Waves 1 to 9 is £9,688,223.

Data from Waves 1-9 of LSYPE2 is available to researchers via the Office for National Statistics' Secure Research Service and can be accessed here: <https://ons.metadata.works/browser/dataset/1405106/0>.

Data from Waves 4 to 6 of the LSYPE2 has been shared by the department with nine academics and other external researchers. In contrast, data from Waves 7 to 9 has been shared with five academics.

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