

Session 2024-25
No. 59



Friday
6 December 2024

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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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

Friday, 6 December 2024

Domestic Murder Sentencing Reforms

[HLWS283]

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede: My right honourable friend the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP) has today made the following statement:

"This Government has set out its ambition to halve violence against women and girls in a decade. Today, I am announcing that the Law Commission has accepted my request to undertake a review of the law of homicide and the sentencing framework for murder. In addition, I intend to bring forward legislation to implement two outstanding recommendations in the independent Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review undertaken by Clare Wade KC, which was published last year.

Law Commission review

The law of homicide was last subject to a thorough review by the Law Commission in the early 2000s. At that time the Government decided not to implement the majority of the recommended changes. In the almost 20 years since then, the problems identified in that review have remained largely unchanged, and as society and the law has moved on, new issues have emerged. These include the interactions between the law on homicide and joint enterprise and the extent to which the law reflects a modern understanding of the effects of domestic abuse. Following the Nottingham attacks last year, the families of the victims have also called for homicide law reform, particularly with regard to how diminished responsibility should be reflected in the classification of homicide offences.

Our current sentencing framework for murder was first introduced over 20 years ago, and multiple, piecemeal amendments have been made to it since then. Recent concerns particularly relate to gendered disparities for murders committed in a domestic context. These concerns include the inadequate reflection of prior abuse in minimum terms for abusive men who kill their female victims, and disproportionately long tariffs for women who kill their male abusers.

I have asked the Law Commission to undertake a project to consider these issues, revisiting and building upon their report in the early 2000s. The Law Commission will review the law relating to homicide offences, including full and partial defences to those offences, and this time also the sentencing framework for murder.

The Law Commission has already started work on a project reviewing the defences to homicide for victims of domestic abuse who kill their abuser. That project will continue under the umbrella of this full review of homicide law, allowing the Law Commission to consider the issue holistically, moving beyond defences to consider

the homicide offences themselves and sentencing for this group of defendants.

The Law Commission expects to begin work on this review in early 2025, at which point they will publish a detailed timeline for the project. The Terms of Reference and more information on the review can be found on the Law Commission's website.

The separate, independent Sentencing Review, chaired by the Rt Hon David Gauke, is due to submit its findings to me by Spring 2025. The Law Commission review will take account of any relevant recommendations made in the Sentencing Review.

Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review recommendations

We anticipate that the Law Commission review will take several years to complete, and the Government will then need to consider the recommendations and bring forward any necessary legislation. This is the right course of action for such a complex area of law, but it is not a quick one.

I therefore intend to take more immediate action in the short-term by implementing two of the outstanding recommendations made in the Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review undertaken by Clare Wade KC. In opposition we welcomed this Review and its approach of updating the sentencing framework for murder to reflect the seriousness of domestic homicides, while recognising that care must be taken to ensure that any reforms do not unduly punish cases that involve abused women killing their abuser. We did however call for more to be done, including implementation of more of the recommendations as well as wholesale reform of the sentencing framework for murder.

Therefore, alongside the Law Commission review, I intend to bring forward legislation to implement two of the outstanding recommendations from the Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review. These measures are statutory aggravating factors for murders involving strangulation and those connected with the end of a relationship.

In recent years strangulation has been recognised as a method of exerting power and control, particularly in the context of domestic abuse where female victims are assaulted by physically stronger males. Nearly a third of the murder cases analysed by Clare Wade KC as part of her review involved strangulation, all of which involved a male perpetrator and female victim. In over a third of cases, the murder occurred at the end, or perceived end, of the relationship, and in the majority of cases this appeared to be the catalyst for the killing. In all of these cases the perpetrator was male. A murder involving resentment or jealousy by the perpetrator at the end of a relationship is a significant feature of cases involving controlling or coercive behaviour, the final controlling act of an abusive partner.

While it is for the judge to determine the appropriate weight to be given to the aggravating factors in each case, we expect that these measures, along with the

recommendations implemented by the previous Government, will have a significant impact on the custodial terms given to the perpetrators in these cases. I intend to lay a Statutory Instrument to implement these measures, and subject to consultation with the Sentencing Council and parliamentary timings, I anticipate that the legislation will come into force next year. These changes will extend and apply to England and Wales.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the families and organisations who have campaigned for change in relation to the issues that the Law Commission review will consider. These include the Joanna Simpson Foundation, Killed Women, and the families of the victims of the Nottingham attacks."

Written Answers

Friday, 6 December 2024

Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates: Registration

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they are funding or part-funding the General Medical Council's defence against the legal challenge to the registration of anaesthetist and physician associates; and if so, why. [HL2960]

Baroness Merron: The Government is funding the General Medical Council (GMC) to undertake the work required to introduce regulation for Anaesthesia Associates (AAs) and Physician Associates (PAs), to avoid doctors paying for this through their registrant fees.

A longstanding principle underpinning the introduction of statutory regulation for new professions is that all related-costs, including legal challenges to that work, should be funded by the Government, to avoid other professions cross-subsidising the work involved.

Once regulation of AAs and PAs becomes self-funding, the Government will cease funding the GMC.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Communication

Asked by **Lord Watson of Wyre Forest**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve communications between the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and external stakeholders. [HL2731]

Baroness Twycross: DCMS recognises the importance of building and maintaining external relationships for the public benefit and is always looking at ways to improve its communications. DCMS works hard to ensure it has strong and varied relationships in all areas of the country and across all relevant sectors. This includes the delivery of regular regional stakeholder events, receptions and roundtables to present the government's plans for change and to engage stakeholders in policy design and delivery and also has regular communications with stakeholders virtually.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Productivity

Asked by **Lord Watson of Wyre Forest**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve the efficiency and productivity of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. [HL2730]

Baroness Twycross: In this Parliament, DCMS will continue to prioritise operational efficiency and productivity, with plans to onboard the government's shared corporate services model in 2026 and investing in new technology to improve interoperability with other government departments.

DCMS will continue to identify other ways to increase efficiency and productivity, reviewing the opportunity to use technology and digital solutions to streamline internal processes.

Drugs: Costs

Asked by **Baroness Rawlings**

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to include information about the full cost of medications during prescription collections. [HL3043]

Baroness Merron: There are currently no plans to introduce measures that detail the actual cost of medicines, for instance by displaying this on the medicine label, to patients collecting their National Health Service prescriptions.

Economics: Education

Asked by **Lord Swire**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage the study of economics. [HL2772]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: Qualifications in economics are available for schools to offer at GCSE and A level. Schools are free to decide which qualifications they will offer in each subject they teach. As part of their duty to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, schools are expected to offer a range of subject options to help meet the aspirations of all pupils.

The government has established an independent Curriculum and Assessment Review, covering ages 5 to 18, chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE. It will seek to refresh the curriculum to ensure it is cutting edge, fit for purpose and meeting the needs of children and young people to support their future life and work.

The terms of reference for the independent Curriculum and Assessment Review is attached and can also be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d196b7d107658faec7e3db/Curriculum_and_assessment_review_-_aims_terms_of_reference_and_working_principles.pdf.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL2772 attachment [Curriculum and assessment review - terms of reference.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-21/HL2772>

Electronic Cigarettes: Children

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, or plan to have, with the vaping industry on curbing underage vaping. [HL3035]

Baroness Merron: It is of great concern that approximately 25% of children aged between 11 and 15 years old have tried vaping. Evidence suggests vaping products are regularly promoted in a way that appeals to children, despite the risks of nicotine addiction.

That is why we announced strong measures in the Tobacco and Vapes Bill to ban the advertisement and sponsorship of all vapes and nicotine products. It will also stop vapes from being deliberately targeted at children, providing new powers to limit flavours and packaging, and changing how and where they are displayed in shops.

The Department ran a public consultation in October 2023 which received responses from the vaping industry. The consultation informed the development of the current Tobacco and Vapes Bill. The bill contains a statutory duty to consult on the use of regulation-making powers related to vaping and other measures. We will consult with the vaping industry at the appropriate time.

Employment

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase employment levels. [HL2947]

Baroness Sherlock: The Government has set a long-term ambition to achieve an 80% employment rate and is committed to reducing economic inactivity. To support this ambition, the Get Britain Working White Paper was published on 26 November. Backed by £240 million investment, the White Paper sets out fundamental reforms to employment support to help people get into and on in work.

The reforms included a new national jobs and career service, a youth guarantee and plans for joining up employment, health and skills support to meet the needs of local communities. Through this new approach everyone will have the opportunity to secure rewarding and fulfilling work.

Employment: Equality and Health

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they plan to commence the independent review into the role of employers in creating and maintaining healthy and inclusive workplaces. [HL3013]

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the independent review into the role of employers in

creating and maintaining healthy and inclusive workplaces will be chaired by a disabled person; whether their appointment process will be subject to the Nolan principles; and what proportion of the review panel will be disabled. [HL3014]

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government what methods they plan to employ to engage with disabled people and people with long-term health conditions and their representative organisations in developing the independent review into the role of employers in creating and maintaining healthy and inclusive workplaces. [HL3015]

Asked by *Lord Shinkwin*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the independent review into the role of employers in creating and maintaining healthy and inclusive workplaces will have proper regard to the proposals in the Disability Employment Charter. [HL3016]

Baroness Sherlock: We are shortly going to launch "Keep Britain Working", an independent review into the role of UK employers in reducing health-related inactivity and to promote healthy and inclusive workplaces, led by the former Chair of John Lewis, Sir Charlie Mayfield. Sir Charlie Mayfield is recognised and respected in the business community and is ideally placed to engage with employers, businesses, disabled people and their representative organisations.

In appointing Sir Charlie Mayfield as the Lead Reviewer, we have taken due regard to the Nolan principles, and the Terms of Engagement for this review will commit the chair to conducting their appointment by these principles.

We will work closely with the lead reviewer to ensure appropriate stakeholders are engaged as the review progresses. We are looking to engage a broad range of stakeholders across the country, including employers, employees across various sectors, clinical practitioners, and lived experience. An expert panel will be established following the results of the discovery phase, and will be supported by a diverse range of external stakeholders.

The review will give appropriate consideration to proposals from all stakeholders, including the Disability Employment Charter.

We want to work alongside employers, disabled people, and people with long-term health conditions to understand this problem, and do our part to support them. We will work to strengthen these relationships and trust, and welcome any insights that are shared through this review.

In addition to this independent review, the department is working to establish a disability panel to consult disabled people as part of our wider efforts to ensure that the views and voices of disabled people are put at the heart of the design and delivery of our reforms. Once established, the panel will be engaged on the independent review.

English Language: Education

Asked by *Lord Gilbert of Panteg*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve English language proficiency amongst those with English as a second language. [HL2740]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: Schools are allocated funding through the English as an additional language factor in the national funding formula which they can draw on to support pupils. This directs funding to schools (worth £590 per eligible primary pupil and £1,585 per eligible secondary pupil) based on the number of pupils on roll who are classed as having a first language other than English and who have started in the state-funded education system in England in the last three years. Schools are responsible for ensuring that all pupils can access the full curriculum and have flexibility in how they spend their overall budgets to put appropriate support provision in place. No recent assessment has been made of the adequacy of this approach for pupils with a first language other than English. However, the government will keep the matter under review.

In addition, the government supports adults aged 19 and over in England who are non-native speakers to access English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision, funded through the adult skills fund (ASF). Currently, approximately 60% of the ASF is devolved to nine Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and delegated to the Mayor of London acting through the Greater London Authority. These authorities are responsible for the provision of adult education and allocation of the ASF in their local areas. The Education and Skills Funding Agency is responsible for the remaining ASF in non-devolved areas where colleges and training providers have the freedom and flexibility to determine how they use their ASF to meet the needs of their communities.

In non-devolved skills areas, individuals aged 19 and over, including refugees, those granted humanitarian protection and asylum seekers, can be fully funded or co-funded to study ESOL depending on their employment status and salary, and provided they meet the residency criteria set out in the ASF Funding and Performance Management Rules.

Farmers: Inheritance Tax

Asked by *The Earl of Effingham*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made an assessment of the expected impact of their changes to inheritance tax rules on farmers' mental health. [HL2787]

Asked by *The Earl of Effingham*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have conducted an impact assessment of the impact of inheritance tax changes on the predicted number of

tenant farmers in the UK for the period 2024–2030; and if so, when they intend to publish it. [HL2790]

Lord Livermore: 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.

The reforms are expected to result in up to 520 estates claiming agricultural property relief in 2026-27 paying more inheritance tax. Almost three-quarters of estates claiming agricultural property relief, including those that also claim for business property relief, will not pay any more tax as a result of the changes in 2026-27, based on the latest available data.

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

The Government is committed to supporting farmers and agricultural workers in accessing the support that they need to protect their mental health 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. Defra provides £500,000 of funding to help farming welfare charities support farmers.

Football

Asked by *Lord Watson of Wyre Forest*

To ask His Majesty's Government what definition they use for a football fan. [HL2684]

Baroness Twycross: The Government does not see itself as the arbitrator of who counts as a football fan and instead it is something that fans and clubs themselves are in the best position to discern. The makeup of a fan base will differ from club to club and this diversity is what makes football so special. This is why the Government has designed the legislation so that it allows for a bespoke approach to fan engagement, shaped by the Regulator's guidance and oversight.

Health Services: Asylum

Asked by *Lord Empey*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether asylum seekers who arrive in the United Kingdom through official channels or illegally are eligible to receive all NHS services; and if so, what is the level of uptake of these services. [HL2893]

Baroness Merron: The National Health Service is a residency-based system, which means that people who do not live here on a lawful, settled basis must contribute to

the cost of their care. However, some of the most vulnerable people arriving in the United Kingdom, including refugees and asylum seekers, do not pay for NHS treatment.

There are varying entitlements to secondary healthcare services across England and the devolved administrations. Specific examples can be found in the NHS entitlements: migrant health guide on the GOV.UK website, in an online only format. We do not hold information on the level of uptake of these services.

Immigration: Training

*Asked by **Baroness Thomas of Winchester***

To ask His Majesty's Government how long the initial training is for the new round of immigration officer recruits; and whether there is any mentoring by experienced officers. [HL2780]

Lord Hanson of Flint: All new Entrants to Immigration Enforcement attend a two-day induction. Immigration officers then complete an initial training course lasting 7 weeks. This is a blended programme, consisting of classroom and practical training. If officers pass the course it is followed by a period of 12 months mentoring with an experienced officer, before being deemed fully operationally competent.

Listed Buildings: Insurance

*Asked by **Lord Mackinlay of Richborough***

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to investigate the openness, efficiency and functioning of the insurance market relating to listed properties. [HL2926]

Lord Livermore: The Government is committed to supporting the successful protection of our heritage for the benefit of present and future generations.

The UK's home insurance market is competitive, with many providers offering a variety of insurance products. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the independent regulator of financial services, has a statutory objective to promote competition in the interests of consumers. FCA rules also require firms to offer products that deliver fair value to consumers. The FCA monitors firms to ensure they comply with its rules and has powers to take action if necessary.

As standard home insurance may not offer adequate cover for all listed buildings, the Government encourages consumers to shop around for the most suitable cover at the best price. It may be helpful to consult an insurance broker, who will be able to help search the market for specialist providers.

Listed Buildings: VAT

*Asked by **Lord Mackinlay of Richborough***

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce VAT on work to maintain and repair listed properties. [HL2928]

Lord Livermore: The Government has no plans to reduce the VAT charged on work to maintain and repair listed properties.

VAT is a broad-based tax on consumption and the 20 per cent standard rate applies to most goods and services. VAT is the UK's second largest tax forecast to raise £171 billion in 2024/25. Taxation is a vital source of revenue that helps to fund vital public services.

Evidence suggests that businesses only partially pass on any savings from lower VAT rates. In some cases, reliefs do not represent good value for money, as there is no guarantee that savings will be passed on to consumers.

To preserve heritage, restorative work carried out on listed buildings previously benefited from a zero rate of VAT. However, this relief was abolished in 2012, as it was primarily used to carry out extension work unnecessary for heritage purposes. Withdrawing this relief simplified VAT rules and also removed the scope for error when categorising construction work as either alteration or repair.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport administer the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. This provides grants towards VAT paid on repairs and maintenance to the nation's listed places of worship.

The Government keeps all tax policy under review, and any decisions on tax policy will be announced at fiscal events in the context of the overall public finances.

Local Government: Pension Funds

*Asked by **Baroness Neville-Rolfe***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the proposed eight consolidated Local Government Pension Scheme megafunds, announced in the Chancellor's Mansion House speech, will be able to invest overseas; and what assessment they have made of the impact of the proposals on UK infrastructure. [HL2850]

*Asked by **Baroness Neville-Rolfe***

To ask His Majesty's Government what criteria will be used to decide how 86 Local Government Pension Scheme funds will be consolidated, as announced in the Chancellor's Mansion House speech; and how the interests of pensioners will be protected when doing so. [HL2851]

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage: On 14 November, we published a consultation on proposals to strengthen Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) pooling arrangements, including by mandating pooling of all LGPS assets and minimum standards for LGPS asset pools, in line with international best practice. The consultation does not include proposals to consolidate or merge LGPS funds. LGPS administering authorities would remain responsible for setting a high-level investment strategy, with the implementation of that strategy delegated to their asset pool.

The government believes that completing the consolidation of LGPS assets will enable delivery of the

full benefits of scale and support UK growth, including through greater capacity and expertise to invest in alternative asset classes such as UK infrastructure. LGPS members' pensions and benefits are not affected by the proposals as they are protected and guaranteed in statute and are not affected by the performance of investments.

Migrants: Household Support Fund

Asked by Lord German

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Household Support Fund can be used to assist individuals with a 'no recourse to public funds' condition. [HL2908]

Baroness Sherlock: The guidance for the current Household Support Fund (HSF) scheme, running from 1 October 2024 until 31 March 2025, was published on Gov.uk and can be found here: [1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025: Household Support Fund guidance for county councils and unitary authorities in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). The guidance clarifies the circumstances in which funding from the HSF can be used to provide support to those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).

It is for Local Authorities (LAs) to determine what support they can lawfully provide to a person with NRPF based upon an individual assessment of their status, circumstances, and support needs. When carrying out this assessment, LAs will wish to consider their discretionary powers and statutory duties.

This includes providing basic safety net support if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question.

National Citizen Service Trust: Finance

Asked by Lord Watson of Wyre Forest

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will place in the Library of the House a copy of the correspondence between the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the National Citizen Service Trust, regarding their decision to remove funding for the service; and if not, what are their reasons for withholding such information. [HL2800]

Baroness Twycross: The Secretary of State met with the Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the National Citizen Service Trust to communicate the decision verbally prior to the announcement to the House.

Park Homes

Asked by Lord Booth

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to (1) review, and (2) revise, legislation relating to mobile and park homes. [HL2786]

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage: I refer the noble Lord to the answer given to Question [UIN 1177](#) on 31 July 2024.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

[UIN 1177 \[UIN1177.pdf\]](#)

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-22/HL2786>

Peers: Correspondence

Asked by Lord Balfe

To ask His Majesty's Government when they intend to reply to the letter from Lord Balfe to the Treasury sent on 18 September. [HL2806]

Baroness Gustafsson: I apologise to the Noble Lord for the delay in responding to his letter of 18 September. A reply has now been sent.

Post Offices: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the interim Chair of the Post Office regarding the maintenance of Crown branches in Northern Ireland. [HL2560]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: The Post Office interim Chair, Nigel Railton, recently-announced a transformation plan, which aims to put the Post Office on a more stable financial footing for the future, including by reducing costs, and to increase Postmaster remuneration. The details of Nigel Railton's transformation plan are being examined by my Department, and the plan is subject to Government funding and outcomes of the upcoming Spending Review. The Post Office will continue to deliver on the 11,500 minimum branch requirement and geographical access criteria set by Government.

No decisions regarding Crown, or 'Directly Managed' Branches, including those in Northern Ireland, have been taken. The Post Office has been clear however that it's their ambition to operate the network on a fully franchised basis in time as this is a more sustainable model.

Poverty: Children

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Lincoln

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to introduce legally binding, time-constrained targets to eliminate child poverty as part of the Child Poverty Strategy. [HL2796]

Baroness Sherlock: The Child Poverty Taskforce continues its urgent work to publish the Child Poverty Strategy in Spring. It will explore all available levers to drive forward short and long-term actions across government to deliver an enduring reduction in child

poverty in this parliament as part of a 10-year strategy for lasting change. The taskforce is exploring a range of metrics and will make decisions alongside the publication of the strategy in Spring 2025.

Property Management Companies: Regulation

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to regulate property management companies. [HL2798]

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage: The Government is committed to ensuring that those living in the rented and leasehold sectors are protected from abuse and poor service at the hands of unscrupulous property agents.

As set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of 21 November 2024 ([HCWS244](#)), the Government is looking again at Lord Best's 2019 report on regulating the property agent sector. As part of our response to this report, the Government will strengthen regulation of managing agents to drive up the standard of their service.

As a minimum, this should include mandatory professional qualifications which set a new basic standard that managing agents will be required to meet. We will consult on this matter next year.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

[HCWS244 \[Written statements - HCWS244.pdf\]](#)

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-22/HL2798>

Public Sector Debt

Asked by Baroness Neville-Rolfe

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to request an updated Financial Stability Report from the Financial Policy Committee which would assess the cost of servicing the UK's Government debt following the Autumn 2024 Budget. [HL2849]

Lord Livermore: At the Budget, the Government took tough decisions on tax, spending and welfare to repair the public finances and restore Britain's economic stability. The Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts borrowing to fall every year of the forecast, from 4.5% of GDP in 2024-25 to 2.1% of GDP in 2029-30. The Government has confirmed robust fiscal rules to put the public finances on a sustainable path.

The Bank of England's Financial Policy Committee (FPC) is the UK's macroprudential authority. Twice per year, the FPC publishes a Financial Stability Report (FSR) setting out its view on the stability of the UK financial system and what it is doing to remove or reduce any risks to it. The latest FSR, published on 29 November 2024, covers developments since June.

Radioisotopes

Asked by Lord Wigley

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure the availability of medical radioisotopes for the treatment of cancer patients in the UK. [HL3123]

Baroness Merron: The supply of radioisotopes has now returned to normal levels, and a Written Ministerial Statement was laid on 26 November to update Parliament. During the disruption to supply, the Department worked with industry, the devolved administrations, the National Health Service, members of the radiopharmaceutical community, and regulators to secure fair and equal access across the United Kingdom for patients, including for the treatment of cancer. Patients with the most critical needs were given priority.

Radioisotopes: Trawsfynydd Power Station

Asked by Lord Wigley

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have held with Welsh Ministers on establishing a medical radioisotope manufacturing plant at Trawsfynydd in Gwynedd. [HL2955]

Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent: The UK Government has regular discussions with the Welsh Government on a range of issues including the Welsh Government's Project ARTHUR, which is a proposal to establish a public sector laboratory for the supply of medical radioisotopes at the Trawsfynydd site in Gwynedd.

The Minister of State for Science, Research and Innovation and the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and technology met the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning on 16 October and 4 November respectively. Project ARTHUR was discussed at both meetings.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus

Asked by Lord Turnbull

To ask His Majesty's Government why there is an upper age limit of 79 years for the respiratory syncytial virus vaccination. [HL3048]

Baroness Merron: The policy for the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) programme is based on the advice of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which is an independent expert advisory committee on vaccination and immunisation. This advice is provided to the Government to inform, develop, and make policy.

In the JCVI's statement summarising the advice for the RSV programme, the committee stated that an extension to the initial programme would be considered when there is more certainty about the protection provided by the vaccination in the very elderly and evidence of the real-

world impact of the programme in the 75 to 80-year-old cohort.

Following an assessment of specific individual clinical situations, a doctor such as a general practitioner or hospital consultant may choose to prescribe vaccines outside of the national programme, under clinical discretion.

Respiratory System: Diseases

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to address respiratory diseases such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in their upcoming 10-year health plan. [HL3001]

Baroness Merron: The 10-Year Health Plan will consider the changes needed to meet the three health mission goals, those being: a fairer system where everyone lives well for longer; a National Health Service that is there when people need it; and fewer lives lost to the biggest killers.

We will carefully be considering policies with input from the public, patients, health staff, and our stakeholders as we develop the plan.

Russia: Freezing of Assets

Asked by Lord Banner

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the remarks made by the then Foreign Secretary in December 2023 that there is a "legal route" to use frozen Russian state assets to finance the rebuilding of Ukraine; whether they intend to authorise such use; and if so, when. [HL2868]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: This Government is clear that Russia must be held responsible for its illegal war. That includes its obligations under international law to pay for the damage it has caused in Ukraine. Working with allies, we continue to pursue all possible lawful avenues by which Russia is made to meet those obligations. Our agreement with G7 partners to provide approximately \$50 billion in additional funding to Ukraine, repaid by the profits generated on sanctioned Russian sovereign assets, is an important step towards ensuring Russia pays. Our focus is on delivering this commitment, including the UK's £2.26 billion contribution, as soon as possible.

Schools: Admissions

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to standardise and simplify the in-year school admissions process, to ensure that newly arrived migrant and refugee children can access education promptly. [HL2753]

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support local authorities to provide sufficient school places and support services for migrant children entering the education system. [HL2754]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: All children of compulsory school age in England, including migrant children, must receive a suitable full-time education. Any parent, including parents of migrant children, can, at any time, apply for a place for their child at any school through the relevant admission authority. Where a parent is struggling to secure a school place in-year, they can contact their local authority for support.

Paragraph 3.14 of the Schools Admissions Code requires every local authority to have a Fair Access Protocol in place. This ensures that vulnerable children, including refugees and asylum seekers, and those who are having difficulty securing a school place in-year, are allocated a school place as quickly as possible, minimising the time the child is out of school.

Guidance on school applications for foreign national children is available to schools, local authorities and parents. This guidance can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-admissions-applications-from-overseas-children>.

As set out in the Kings Speech, in the Children's Wellbeing Bill, the department is planning to legislate on requiring all schools to cooperate with the local authority on school admissions and place planning matters, and to ensure admissions decisions account for the needs of communities.

Local authorities also have legal duties to ensure sufficient school places. The department provides capital funding through the Basic Need grant to support local authorities in providing additional school places. We carefully target funding at areas with need, based upon data supplied by local authorities themselves, reflecting their local knowledge of all the drivers of pupil numbers in their areas, such as birth rates, housing developments and inward and outward migration both from within the UK and overseas.

Nearly £1.5 billion of Basic Need capital allocations have been confirmed to support local authorities to create school places needed over the current and following two academic years, up to and including the academic year starting in September 2026. Local authorities' allocations are in the attachment and published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/basic-need-allocations>.

The department's Pupil Place Planning Advisor team also engages with councils on a regular basis to review their plans for creating additional places and to consider alternatives where necessary. When local authorities are experiencing difficulties, we support them to find solutions as quickly as possible. Where local authorities are failing in their duty, the government will intervene.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Basic_need_allocations_and_funding [HL2753 HL2754
Basic_need_allocations_for_2026_and_funding_for_2011_to_2026.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-21/HL2753>

St Mary's Hospital Paddington

Asked by Lord Bailey of Paddington

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of their review of the New Hospital Programme on patients of St Mary's Hospital in Paddington. [HL3031]

Baroness Merron: The new hospital scheme for the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust at St Mary's Hospital is in the scope of the review into the New Hospital Programme.

We are finalising the outcome of the review so we can be honest and upfront with everyone on when we expect the new hospitals to be delivered. As is standard practice, a Public Sector Equality Duty impact assessment will also be completed as part of this process.

My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care will set out further details on the outcome of the review, which will include a new and realistic delivery schedule for the programme, at the earliest opportunity.

Training: Environment Protection

Asked by Lord Knight of Weymouth

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to retrain the workforce to ensure that the UK has the right skills in the right areas to transition to a low-carbon economy. [HL2751]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: Skills is a devolved matter. This response outlines the information for England only.

The government is committed to the UK becoming a Clean Energy Superpower, achieving clean power by 2030 and net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The government is working to ensure that the current and future skills system in England supports workers to retrain for the low carbon economy. This includes the new growth and skills offer, which will prioritise investment that supports economic growth, increases opportunity, better meets employers' skills needs, and increases investment in skills shortage areas. The Autumn Budget 2024 announced an investment of £40 million to help deliver new foundation and shorter apprenticeships in key sectors, an additional £300 million for our further education (FE) sector, as well as £300 million of capital funding for FE condition, to support the development of the skills the country needs.

Over 40 of the occupational standards that underpin technical education in England are directly supportive of the clean energy industry. Others support insulation and energy efficiency in construction.

The government is committed to delivering the Lifelong Learning Entitlement, which will launch in the 2026/27 academic year for courses starting from January 2027. This will broaden access to high-quality, flexible education and training by providing funding for full courses as well as modules of high-value courses. Skills Bootcamps are available to support the workforce to gain new skills, including skills for the low carbon economy.

Skills England is a new national body which will bring together key partners to meet the skills needs of the next decade across all the regions and create a shared national ambition to boost England's skills. It will provide authoritative assessments of skills needs; ensure a comprehensive suite of apprenticeships, training, and technical qualifications; and work with devolved areas and regional organisations to ensure skills needs are met. Skills England will work closely with the Office for Clean Energy Jobs at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, which has been set up with a focus on developing a skilled workforce in core energy and net zero sectors. Skills England published its first report in September, highlighting the skills needed to support targets on net zero, the Clean Energy Mission and UK targets for environmental improvements.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education has designated employer representative bodies (ERBs) to lead Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) across England. Education and training providers must have regard to the LSIP when making decisions on provision that may be relevant to the skills, capabilities or expertise required now or in the future in their area.

Universities: Student Numbers

Asked by Lord Wigley

To ask His Majesty's Government how many students were undertaking undergraduate degree courses at universities in England, at the most recent date for which figures are available, whose home addresses were in (1) Wales, (2) Scotland, and (3) Northern Ireland. [HL2486]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA – now part of JISC), is responsible for collecting and publishing data about UK higher education. The latest statistics refer to the 2022/23 academic year.

Figure 9 of HESA's 'Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2022/23' reports the number of enrolments for UK providers based on student permanent address prior to study between the academic years 2018/19 and 2022/23 and is available by students' study level. Figure 9 can be accessed at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sb269/figure-9>.

It is possible to filter the figures in the table to undergraduate degrees in English universities by setting the 'Country of HE provider' drop-down menu to 'England', and the 'Level of study' drop-down menu to 'All undergraduate'.

Weather

Asked by Lord Framlingham

To ask His Majesty's Government what cloud seeding operations are permitted over the United Kingdom, and who is responsible for controlling them. [HL2905]

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath: The Government is not aware of any cloud seeding operations taking place in the UK and is not deploying such technologies and has no plans to do so. There are no UK or international laws specific to the regulation or governance of weather modification, however, there are many relevant existing legal frameworks and principles.

<https://co-create-project.eu/publication/scoping-note-on-applicable-legal-frameworks/>

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