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

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# Written Statements

Monday, 9 December 2024

## Anti-Corruption Champion: Appointment

[HLWS287]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** My hon Friend the Minister of State for Security (Dan Jarvis) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

My hon Friends, the Minister of State for Europe, North America and Overseas Territories (Stephen Doughty), the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Tulip Siddiq) and I, are today pleased to announce the appointment of Baroness Hodge of Barking as the Prime Minister's new Anti-Corruption Champion.

Corruption and the illicit finance that stems from it undermine this Government's objectives at every turn, both domestically and across the world. Corruption weakens the rule of law and undermines economic growth. It fuels crime on British streets by enabling drug dealers and smuggling gangs. It inflates UK property prices. Today's appointment is another way in which this Government is proving its commitment to tackling these pernicious harms.

As Champion Baroness Hodge will have three core responsibilities:

- i) Helping the Government to drive development of a new Anti-Corruption Strategy and provide a challenge function for its delivery, once agreed.
- ii) Acting as a Government entry point on anti-corruption issues for Parliamentarians, private sector representatives and civil society.
- iii) Where required, engaging internationally to help drive progress on UK priorities.

We believe that the appointment of a Champion will be beneficial in driving forwards and supporting the anti-corruption agenda and recognise that has been a long-awaited announcement since the previous Champion stood down from his role. Baroness Hodge brings experience as a leading Parliamentary and public campaigner on anti-corruption, strong relationships with key stakeholders and background in public service to this role. We look forward to working together to deliver an ambitious government-wide agenda to tackle the devastating impacts of corruption and the illicit finance that stems from it, both at home and overseas.

## Avian Influenza Outbreak Response

[HLWS286]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Avian influenza ('bird flu') is once again threatening both wild and kept birds across Great Britain with two strains of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) (H5N1 and H5N5) now circulating in our wild bird population.

Defra recognises the unprecedented outbreaks of avian influenza in recent years have been an incredibly difficult

time for bird keepers who are on the frontline of this terrible disease and in particular that the poultry and egg sectors have been under serious pressure. Practising good biosecurity at all times remains vital to protect flocks across the country from avian influenza and all bird keepers are being urged to remain vigilant and take action to protect their birds.

In response to the cases of HPAI this winter Defra and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have stood up their well-established outbreak structures to control and eradicate disease, restore normal trade, and assist local communities' recovery. Defra and APHA's approach to avian influenza considers the latest scientific and ornithological evidence and veterinary advice, and is set out in the [Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](#) supported by the [Mitigation Strategy for Avian Influenza in Wild Birds in England and Wales](#). Current policy reflects our experience of responding to past outbreaks of exotic animal disease and is in line with international standards of best practice for disease control.

Government action on animal disease control is led by APHA, who carry out routine surveillance of disease risks in the UK and globally, to help the Government anticipate future threats to animal health. To support this work, in Great Britain members of the public are encouraged to report findings of dead wild birds using the [online reporting service](#) or by calling the Defra helpline (03459 335577).

The latest cases of HPAI have followed recent detections through APHA wild bird surveillance programme of HPAI H5N1 and HPAI H5N5 in wild birds in the area surrounding the infected premises. Reporting dead wild birds helps Defra and APHA understand the risk of avian influenza and other diseases to different species groups of wild birds, the risk posed to poultry and other captive birds, and the risk of overspill into mammals. The risk of incursion of HPAI H5 in wild birds in Great Britain is currently assessed as high (event occurs very often). The risk of poultry exposure has also increased and is now assessed as low (event is rare but does occur) where good biosecurity is consistently applied at all times, but medium (event occurs regularly) where there is suboptimal or poor biosecurity.

Upholding high biosecurity standards is paramount to food production and food safety, for human and animal health, protecting biodiversity and to support our economy and trade. The UK has robust disease control measures in place to prevent disease outbreaks spreading, and a strong track record of controlling and eliminating outbreaks. Animal disease outbreaks cause animals to suffer, damage businesses and cost the UK taxpayer significant sums of money. Together the Government and animal keepers must do everything we can to keep disease out and protect animal health and welfare.

Supporting bird keepers, the public and conservation bodies to prepare and respond to the threat of avian influenza continues to be one of Defra's priorities. Government is clear that all farmers, producers and animal keepers should implement strong biosecurity

measures and report suspected disease immediately. Defra and APHA will continue to work closely with industry to ensure good flock management and husbandry practices are implemented on all farms regardless of size or scale. Whilst also working closely with the UK Health Security Agency and the Health and Safety Executive with regard to the protection of human health from this zoonotic pathogen.

Whilst there have been no cases of HPAI confirmed in Wales or Scotland during this outbreak, following the case in poultry in England, in line with WOH rules, Great Britain is no longer free from HPAI. There have been no cases of avian influenza in Northern Ireland, and Northern Ireland retain their self-declared zonal freedom from HPAI. However, there are some restrictions on exports of affected commodities to third countries from the UK. To facilitate trade, it remains Defra's objective to achieve WOH HPAI freedom across the UK at the earliest opportunity.

In addition, while vaccination of poultry and other captive birds against avian influenza, excluding those in licensed zoos in England, is not currently permitted and will not be a viable option for the 2024/2025 season, Defra continue to invest in avian influenza research and the UK is committed to exploring opportunities for preventive vaccination for poultry and other captive birds.

With regard to vaccination to protect public health, whilst avian influenza is primarily a disease of birds, the UK Government has agreed a contract for more than five million doses of human H5 influenza vaccine to boost the country's resilience in the event of a possible H5 influenza pandemic. This purchase has been made as part of long-established plans to boost the UK's access to vaccines for a wider range of pathogens of pandemic potential. However, it is only if an avian influenza virus were to start spreading among humans, of which there is no evidence at this stage, that the human H5 influenza vaccine would be used. This procurement will strengthen the UK's preparedness for a H5 influenza originated pandemic by ensuring that vaccines are immediately available, while a pandemic specific vaccine is made ready. The UK Government already has an advance purchase agreement for pandemic vaccines if or when they are needed, that would be tailored to combat the specific pandemic influenza strain identified at the time.

Avian influenza risk levels are regularly reviewed and our response adapted accordingly. We publish our risk assessments online and share the evolving picture directly with our expert stakeholder groups. It is too early to predict the outlook for future seasons and risk levels may increase further this winter, associated with the migratory pattern of waterfowl and environmental conditions becoming more favourable for virus survival. Practicing good biosecurity at all times protects the health and welfare of kept birds and for commercial keepers will help protect their business from HPAI and other diseases. The need for Avian Influenza Prevention Zones (AIPZ) mandating enhanced biosecurity will be kept under review.

All bird keepers must register their poultry and other captive birds, even if only kept as pets (with the exception of certain psittacines and passerines). Registered keepers will receive regular updates and guidance to help protect their birds from avian influenza. Having a good register also saves taxpayer resources when infection is found, because we already know where birds are kept. In addition, anyone can subscribe to APHA's free animal disease alerts service for the latest information on updated risk levels, guidance and new cases in Great Britain regardless of whether they keep birds. Further information on the latest situation and what can be done prevent avian influenza and stop it spreading and how to spot and report suspicion in kept or wild birds or mammals can be found in Defra's guidance at [gov.uk/birdflu](http://gov.uk/birdflu).

## Business Growth Service

[HLWS285]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Business and Trade (Jonathan Reynolds MP) has today made the following statement:

Small businesses are the beating heart of our high streets and our communities and are essential to our economic success. There are 5.5 million small businesses in the UK (99.8% of all businesses), accounting for 16.6 million jobs and £2.8 trillion annual turnover. Small businesses exported £107.9 billion of goods in 2023. They are also fundamental to regional development and our ability to secure growth and good jobs.

That is why I am delighted to announce that my department will launch the Business Growth Service in 2025. The Business Growth Service will make it simpler for businesses across the UK to get the help they need to grow and thrive in today's economy and into the future.

Inspired by successful international examples, the Business Growth Service will simplify a fragmented array of SME support under a single, trusted banner to give firms an easy path to the help they need.

This government was elected on a promise to restore economic stability and deliver the change people need in their local communities. Working in partnership with local and devolved governments across the UK, and partners such as the Growth Hubs network, Innovate UK, and the British Business Bank, the Business Growth Service will provide direct support and introduce SMEs to other relevant services and providers they need to grow.

The Business Growth Service will work with the Government's international network to support and advise companies on how to grow overseas.

My aim is for the service to be up and running in the first half of 2025.

There is a wide range of support available for businesses across the UK, but all too often Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are faced with barriers when they try to access it. The Business Growth Service will remove these barriers, providing businesses with the

help and support they need to unlock their potential for future growth.

In the coming months, my department will be consulting widely with businesses, representative bodies, experts, the devolved governments and local government in the design, development and implementation of the Business Growth Service.

I will update Parliament on progress again in due course.

### **Hydrogen to Power Business Model: Consultation Response**

[HLWS284]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** My hon. Friend the Minister for Industry (Sarah Jones MP) made the following Statement today:

I am tabling this statement to inform members of the publication of the Hydrogen to Power - market intervention Consultation Response on 9th December 2024. This response commits to delivering a Hydrogen to Power Business Model to support the accelerated deployment of Hydrogen to Power as low carbon long duration flexible electricity generating capacity.

Making Britain a clean energy superpower by 2030 is one of the Prime Minister's five missions. Unabated gas currently provides the majority of flexibility in Great Britain and so the deployment of Hydrogen to Power – the conversion of low carbon hydrogen to produce low carbon electricity – will play an important part in displacing unabated gas generation from the power system, to support the Clean Power Mission, and the government's legally binding target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

Low carbon hydrogen can make our energy system more flexible, resilient, and independent. When connected

with large-scale storage, hydrogen to power can provide electricity to cover longer periods of lower renewable output, whilst also creating a decarbonisation pathway for unabated gas power plants. The Hydrogen to Power Business Model will de-risk investment in Hydrogen to Power by mitigating the deployment barriers we identified, through a Dispatchable Power Agreement -- style business model, helping to support the unlocking of investment in Hydrogen to Power and improving the pipeline of projects.

The response document commits to:

- Delivering a Hydrogen to Power Business Model based on a Dispatchable Power Agreement -style mechanism to support the deployment of Hydrogen to Power.
- Publishing a Hydrogen to Power Business Model market engagement document in 2025 outlining further detail on the proposed design of the Hydrogen to Power Business Model and plans for launching the first allocation round.
- Establishing a Hydrogen to Power industry expert working group. This will provide a key forum for Hydrogen to Power Business Model design and strategic policy considerations.
- Enabling Hydrogen to Power to participate in the Capacity Market as soon as practical.

This publication is an important step towards supporting the deployment of Hydrogen to Power, a key low carbon flexible technology, and therefore facilitating a clean power system. It will build on the positive stakeholder feedback received through the consultation and provide industry with clarity on government's position on the technology and the next steps for implementing the market intervention.

## Written Answers

Monday, 9 December 2024

### Agriculture: Inheritance Tax

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Holbeach**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of changes to agricultural and business property relief for inheritance tax on investment by farmers and growers in new technologies and automated machinery. [HL2945]

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

The Government expects that these reforms will result in up to 520 estates claiming APR in 2026-27 being affected. This means almost three-quarters of estates claiming agricultural property relief (including those claiming agricultural property relief and business property relief together) each year are expected to be unaffected by these reforms.

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

Through the Farming Innovation Programme the Government has committed over £127 million towards research and development funding to farmers, growers and foresters who want to develop and use new, innovative methods and technologies. The Government is also supporting farmers in adopting new productivity improving technologies directly on their farms through the Farming Investment Fund. Since 2021, Defra has paid over £99 million in grant funding to farmers to buy and install modern equipment.

### Armed Forces Commissioner

Asked by **Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether service personnel undertaking a leave of absence will be subject to the provisions of the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill. [HL2838]

Asked by **Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether members of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and their families will be subject to the provisions of the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill when serving (1) in the United Kingdom, (2) in Gibraltar, or (3) elsewhere in the world. [HL2839]

Asked by **Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether UK service personnel and their families will be subject to

the provisions of the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill when serving in Gibraltar. [HL2840]

Asked by **Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the provisions of the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill will apply equally to both (1) regular, and (2) reserve personnel, and their families. [HL2841]

Asked by **Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the provisions of the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill will require amendments to the Reserve Forces Act 1996 in addition to the Armed Forces Act 2006. [HL2842]

Asked by **Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton**

To ask His Majesty's Government under what circumstances they anticipate the provisions of the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill will be extended to the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. [HL2843]

**Lord Coaker:** All Serving personnel, defined in the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill as any individual subject to Service law, whether in the UK or overseas, will be entitled to raise a general welfare matter or a Service Complaint with the Commissioner.

The Commissioner may investigate general service welfare matters that arise in connection with the ongoing service of persons subject to service law and which may materially affect the welfare of those persons or relevant family members. Provided a matter falls into this scope, it is at the Commissioner's discretion what they investigate, and this would likely be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Members of the Reserve Forces and personnel undertaking a leave of absence will be entitled to raise a matter with the Commissioner, provided the Commissioner considers that the matter falls within the scope outlined above.

The Bill includes permissive extent clauses to allow the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies to choose if they want to extend this legislation into their own statute books.

No amendments are anticipated to the Reserve Forces Act 1996.

### Army: Pay

Asked by **Lord Lucas**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of remuneration recently offered to recruit a chief technology officer for the army by comparison to roles of equivalent seniority and experience in the private sector, and what assessment they have made of the implications for the security of the UK. [HL2996]

**Lord Coaker:** Over the past twelve months, the British Army has undertaken civil service recruitment for two

Chief Technology Officers. Both roles were advertised with salaries aligned with centrally approved remuneration frameworks, set by the Cabinet Office. This includes applicable allowances for the Digital, Data, and Technology (DDaT) profession, which remain under constant review.

### Bevis Marks Synagogue

*Asked by Lord Triesman*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to protect the Grade 1-listed Bevis Marks Synagogue, given the potential impact upon the Synagogue of the planning application to build a tower block less than 30 metres away. [HL2950]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** This application is currently being considered by the City of London Corporation. Following requests to call in the application, a holding Direction restricting the grant of permission was issued by this Department on 19 November, to allow those requests to be considered. A decision on whether to call in the application will be made in due course. The issuing of a Holding Direction should not be taken as an indication as to whether an application will be called in or not. It would not be appropriate to comment further at this time.

### Broadcasting and Newspaper Press: Standards

*Asked by Lord Watson of Wyre Forest*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the remarks by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport at the RTS London Convention in September that media organisations telling the truth is not just a right but a duty, what steps they intend to take to ensure that broadcasters and newspapers uphold this standard, and what sanctions are being considered in cases where they fail to do so. [HL2952]

**Baroness Twycross:** The government is committed to a free and independent media. Having a free and fair press that is completely independent of the Government, is important to ensure the public have access to accurate and trustworthy information from a range of different sources. We are clear, however, that with this freedom comes responsibility, which the media must take seriously. An independent self-regulatory regime is important to ensure the press adheres to clear and high standards, and offers individuals a means of redress where these are not met. These regulators enforce codes of conduct which provide guidelines on a range of areas, including discrimination, accuracy, privacy, and harassment. If they find that a newspaper has broken the code of conduct, they can order corrections. IPSO can also order critical adjudications and Impress can levy fines.

Ofcom is the UK's regulator for broadcasting and by law carries out its duties independently of the Government. Ofcom's Broadcasting Code contains rules

to ensure that broadcast news is reported with due accuracy and presented with due impartiality. It is for Ofcom, as the independent regulator, to determine whether there has been a breach of their rules and whether to apply sanctions.

### Carbon Emissions

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the savings in emissions of million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO<sub>2e</sub>) by (1) 2030, and (2) 2035, from the net zero-related policies they have introduced since being elected. [HL3072]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Government will lay a report before Parliament next year, setting out its plans for meeting UK emissions targets up to the end of carbon budget 6 in 2037 - this will set out the forecast emissions savings associated with specific policies and proposals.

### Carbon Emissions and Exhaust Emissions

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their target level for million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO<sub>2e</sub>) for each year from 2025 to 2035 for (1) terrestrial emissions, (2) terrestrial emissions plus emissions from international aviation and shipping, and (3) the categories of emissions in (1) and (2) plus import emissions. [HL3070]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** UK's current and next carbon budgets are set on a territorial basis as follows:

- Carbon Budget 4 (2023-2027) limits UK net territorial greenhouse gas emissions to 1,950 MtCO<sub>2e</sub> over the period.
- Carbon Budget 5 (2028-2032) limits UK net territorial greenhouse gas emissions to 1,725 MtCO<sub>2e</sub> over the period.
- Carbon Budget 6 (2033-2037) includes emissions from international aviation and shipping and is set at 965 MtCO<sub>2e</sub> over the period.

The Carbon Budget levels have been set in line with advice from the independent Climate Change Committee.

### Carbon Emissions: Trees

*Asked by Lord Framlingham*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to establish the level of (1) the demand for carbon dioxide of the UK's tree cover, and (2) the amount of carbon dioxide available to it. [HL3073]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The UK government is not currently undertaking any estimates of the demand for atmospheric carbon dioxide for the UK's trees. However statistics published on behalf of the government by Forest Research estimate that the amount of carbon stored in UK

forests is currently the equivalent of approximately 16 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

The current global carbon dioxide concentration is measured to be around 420 parts per million (0.042%), higher than at any time over at least the last 2 million years.

### Care Workers: Migrant Workers

*Asked by Lord Oates*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Work Rights Centre report *The forgotten third: Migrant care workers' views on improving conditions in England's adult social care sector*, published on 12 November, what consideration they have given to introducing special status or bridging visas to prevent the exploitation of migrant care workers at risk of losing their immigration status. [HL2853]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** Exploitation of migrant care workers is completely unacceptable. Where exploitation does occur, we will take robust action.

Home Office and Department for Health and Social Care officials are working closely together, and with the Directors of Adult Social Services to support care workers who have been displaced as a result of sponsor licence revocations. An important part of this work includes finding the workers a suitable sponsor who can offer them long term secure employment. Care providers acting as sponsors for migrants in England must be registered with the Care Quality Commission.

The Government will continue to keep under review what further action may be necessary to tackle exploitation, including removing non-compliant employers' ability to bring overseas workers to the UK.

### Charities: Employers' Contributions

*Asked by Lord Randall of Uxbridge*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the increase in employers' National Insurance contributions on charities; and what discussions they have had with charities regarding this increase. [HL2856]

**Baroness Twycross:** At the recent Budget, the government took a number of difficult but necessary decisions on tax, welfare, and spending to fix the foundations of the public finances, fund public services, and restore economic stability.

DCMS Ministers have met with representatives from the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector to discuss this issue and are aware of their concerns about the impacts of the increase to employer National Insurance Contributions (NICs). The government recognises the need to protect the smallest businesses and charities, which is why we have more than doubled the Employment Allowance to £10,500. This means that more than half of businesses (including charities) with

NICs liabilities will either gain or see no change next year.

We are also expanding eligibility of the Employment Allowance by removing the £100,000 eligibility threshold, to simplify and reform employer NICs so that all eligible employers now benefit. Businesses and charities will still be able to claim employer NICs reliefs including those for under 21s and under 25 apprentices, where eligible.

Within the tax system, we provide support to charities through a range of reliefs and exemptions, including reliefs for charitable giving. More than £6 billion in charitable reliefs was provided to charities, Community Amateur Sports Clubs and their donors in 2023 to 2024. The biggest individual reliefs provided are Gift Aid at £1.6 billion and business rates relief at nearly £2.4 billion.

### Climate Change

*Asked by Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether it is still their position that, as set out in the Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, published in October 2021, a global temperature increase of more than 1.5 degrees Celsius means that "we could lose control of our climate for good". [HL3069]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Government's position is consistent with evidence from the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change assessments, which state that every increment of warming increases the impacts and risks of climate change, including the likelihood of triggering climate tipping points, especially above 1.5 degrees Celsius. We are already seeing the impacts of climate change globally and domestically and further warming will worsen this. This is why the Government committed to an ambitious 1.5C-aligned emissions reduction target at COP29 last month and is encouraging other countries to do the same.

### Dartmoor Prison: Radon Gas

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the cost of tackling radon gas levels at HMP Dartmoor. [HL3075]

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester*

To ask His Majesty's Government when HMP Dartmoor will return to its full operational capacity following the detection of radon gas. [HL3076]

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Gloucester*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of prisoners affected by (1) elevated radon gas readings at HMP Dartmoor, and (2) the subsequent closure of that prison in July. [HL3077]



**Lord Timpson:** All prisoners were decanted fully from HMP Dartmoor by July 2024 following the operational decision to close the prison temporarily. Following the temporary closure, we have been working with specialist radon experts to investigate and assess options to reduce levels of radon sufficiently to allow us to re-open the prison safely.

The health and safety of prisoners and staff continues to be a top priority, and while this process is ongoing, we are unable to provide an estimated timeline for the return of Dartmoor to its full operational capacity. We continue to work with Health and Safety experts to further our understanding of the impact that exposure levels could have on individual prisoners and staff.

The cost of the work involved would depend upon which is the most appropriate option. If it is concluded that it is feasible and cost effective to return the prison to use, we will complete a full assessment, considering all options for the site.

### Death: Children

*Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to Written answer by Baroness Merron on 28 November (HL1675), why on page 9 of the Child Death Reporting Form, under the heading "Domain B", there is a column to be completed asking for the gender of the mother, if this does not need to be specified. [HL3081]

**Baroness Merron:** The Child Death Notification Form and the Child Death Reporting Form are part of the National Child Mortality Database. These continue to capture the sex of the child for under 18-year-olds, in line with sex being a protected characteristic under the 2010 Equality Act.

The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) has a statutory obligation to notify the National Child Mortality Database within 48 hours of a child's death, and they do so through A Child Death Notification Form. There is no reference to the mother's gender in this form.

Following this, the Child Death Reporting Form and relevant supplementary reporting forms are sent out by the CDOP to every professional who has had contact with the child during life, or who has been involved in the investigation after death, to gather information when a child dies. In the Child Death Reporting Form, there is space for the professional to provide information on the gender of the mother. This is not a mandatory requirement to supply this information. This question has existed on the reporting form since at least 2010, and pre-dates the National Child Mortality Database.

### Dental Services: Contracts

*Asked by Baroness Benjamin*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to set a firm deadline for rolling out a new NHS dental contract, and if so, when this deadline will be. [HL2874]

**Baroness Merron:** To rebuild dentistry in the long term and increase access to National Health Service dental care, we will reform the dental contract, with a shift to focus on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists.

There are no perfect payment systems, and careful consideration needs to be given to any potential changes to the complex dental system so that we deliver a system better for patients and the profession.

### Domestic Abuse

*Asked by Baroness Gohir*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the prevalence of transnational marriage abandonment cases since 2016. [HL2824]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** Since 31 January 2024 those who find themselves a victim of domestic abuse in the form of transnational marriage abandonment (TMA) can apply for entry clearance (Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE)) under Appendix Victim of Domestic Abuse to the Immigration Rules.

Data on the number of applications under the TMA route is published each quarter on gov.uk under the category 'Settlement VDA LTE': [Visas and Citizenship data: Q2 2024](#). The data shows there were 9 cases in Q1 and 19 in Q2.

Prior to this, cases of TMA were not distinguishable in published statistics. Moving forward, the prevalence of TMA cases can be monitored over time.

### East Midlands Railway: Trains

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect bi-mode hydrogen trains to enter service on East Midlands Railway. [HL2942]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** East Midlands Railway's (EMR's) new Aurora bi-mode trains (electric and diesel) are currently being built by Hitachi at its Newton Aycliffe factory in County Durham. The first three trains are doing test runs on the East Coast and Midland Main Lines. EMR currently expect that the trains will start to be introduced on intercity services in 2025 with the full fleet of trains coming into service during 2025 and 2026.

### Electronic Warfare: Cybersecurity

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what resources and infrastructure they are investing in to defend against cyber warfare, with particular reference to artificial intelligence. [HL2860]

**Baroness Twycross:** Last week, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster delivered a speech to the NATO Cyber Defence Conference in which he set out the

Government's commitment to strengthening cyber resilience. We continue to work closely with allies to expose cyber attackers from across the world, whether that's through public attributions, calling out hostile actors, or through sanctions. And we are constantly looking at where we can bolster our own digital defences here in the UK. In the King's Speech, we announced that the Government would bring forward a Cyber Security and Resilience Bill, which will strengthen the UK's cyber defences, and, working with industry, help make the UK the safest place to live and work online.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster also announced a new Laboratory for AI Security Research at the University of Oxford (LASR), backed by £8.2 million of funding from the government's Integrated Security Fund. The lab will bring together experts from government, industry and academia to seize the national security and economic opportunities of secure AI, underlining our commitment to stay one step ahead in this new AI arms race.

## Energy Performance Certificates

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that energy performance certificates are inaccurate. [HL2863]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Government recognises challenges with energy performance certificates (EPCs) and is consulting on proposals for improvements to the EPC system, including on how to make them more accurate and reliable.

As part of this, the Government is overhauling the methodology underpinning EPCs with the Home Energy Model. An initial consultation on the Home Energy Model closed in March 2024, which will be followed by a technical consultation on a revised EPC methodology in due course.

## Energy: Prices

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the energy price cap increase on pensioners. [HL2862]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Government is working closely with Ofgem to ensure consumers are put first. My Hon. Friend the Minister for Energy Consumers meets regularly with energy suppliers to outline the Government's expectations of the standard of service that should be provided to their customers. The impact of the energy crisis is still being felt by people across the country, and the Government, Ofgem and energy suppliers are working together closely to help vulnerable households this winter.

In November Energy UK, in collaboration with the Government, published a Winter 2024 Commitment for this winter which promises £500m of industry support to

billpayers this winter. It also outlines how fifteen energy suppliers representing almost the entire market will continue to provide a range of financial support tailored to the needs of their customers.

Together with our Warm Home Discount, households who are struggling to pay their energy bills this winter will receive £1 billion of support.

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the increase in energy bills on the most vulnerable households; and what steps they will take to mitigate the effects this winter. [HL2924]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** In November Energy UK, in collaboration with the Government, published a Winter 2024 Commitment for this winter which promises £500m of industry support to billpayers this winter. It also outlines how fifteen energy suppliers representing almost the entire market will continue to provide a range of financial support tailored to the needs of their customers. Together with our Warm Home Discount, eligible households who are struggling to pay their energy bills this winter will receive £1 billion of support.

We will continue to provide substantial funding to Local Authorities to support those most in need. At the Autumn Budget 2024, the Government announced that £1 billion, including Barnett impact, will be invested to extend the Household Support Fund (HSF) in England by a full year until 31 March 2026, and to maintain Discretionary Housing Payments in England and Wales.

## Football Governance Bill (HL)

*Asked by Baroness Finn*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Cabinet Office on 15 November (HC11589), what involvement the Prime Minister has had with the policy development of the Football Governance Bill, or whether he has recused himself in the light of the value of the hospitality he has received from football clubs since becoming Prime Minister. [HL2903]

**Baroness Twycross:** The Football Governance Bill, and policy decision making in this area, is led by the Ministers in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

## Fujitsu: Contracts

*Asked by Lord Beamish*

To ask His Majesty's Government which Government Departments have contracts with Fujitsu and what is the value of each contract. [HL2491]

*Asked by Lord Beamish*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have signed new contracts or renewed existing contracts with Fujitsu this year. [HL2492]

**Baroness Twycross:** Details of central government contracts where the contract value is above £12,000 are published on Contracts Finder: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>. In addition to extensions available under Fujitsu's existing contracts, Contracts Finder provides details of five services provided by Fujitsu, that have been extended through direct awards since January. These service extensions ensured continuity of public services, whilst competitive procurements are being set up, as appropriate.

Cabinet Office has reviewed cases for supplier service extensions in line with the commercial spend controls process in order to ensure continuity of public services.

In January 2024, Fujitsu said it would withdraw from bidding for contracts for new work with new Government customers until the Post Office Horizon inquiry concludes – it would only bid for work with existing Government customers where it already has a contract with them, or where there is an agreed need for Fujitsu's skills and capabilities.

Fujitsu's bid approach is detailed in [this letter](#), deposited in Parliament. For more details, please see [here](#).

## Government Departments: Equality

*Asked by Baroness Finn*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether Ministers approved the renaming the "Cross-Government Women's Network" as the "Cross-Government Gender Network"; whether a public sector equality duty assessment was undertaken on the change; and how much diversity network time is now allocated to the Cross-Government Gender Network. [HL2899]

**Baroness Twycross:** The Cross Government Gender Network is a Civil Service wide forum made up of staff networks working towards advancing gender equality and parity in the Civil Service and across arms-length bodies. The change in name from the Cross-Government Women's Network took place in 2020, under the previous administration. It does not represent any change in Government policy or activity and a public sector equality duty (PSED) assessment was not undertaken by the previous administration.

There are currently no centrally set time allocation limits for cross Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion networks.

## Heat Pumps

*Asked by Lord Offord of Garvel*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase the rate of installation of heat pumps. [HL2933]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Government recently announced £30 million of additional budget for the Boiler Upgrade Scheme for 2024-2025 in response to increased

uptake of the scheme. It was also confirmed that the scheme budget for 2025-2026 will be almost doubled to £295 million, so that more families can benefit from £7,500 off the cost of a heat pump.

In addition, we are reforming air source heat pump permitted development rights in England, investing in UK manufacturing through the Heat Pump Investment Accelerator programme and introducing a reformed Clean Heat Market Mechanism next April, making heat pumps an even more attractive choice for households.

## Herzi Halevi

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they invited Chief of the General Staff of the Israel Defence Forces Herzi Halevi to visit the UK this month, and, if so, for what reason; and which senior UK officials he met. [HL2961]

**Lord Coaker:** As part of the concerted UK effort, along with allies and partners, to reach a peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflicts in Lebanon and Gaza, the Chief of the Defence Staff hosted his counterparts from Israel and other international partners on Monday 25 November.

The Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Military Strategy and Operations) and the FCDO Director for the Middle East and North Africa both attended the meeting.

The Attorney General, the Rt Hon Lord Hermer KC, also held his own respective meeting with Lieutenant General Halevi.

Discussions recognised Israel's right to security, as well as including the UK calls for an immediate ceasefire in both Lebanon and Gaza, the need for greater humanitarian access into Gaza, the release of all hostages, and the requirement for all parties to comply with international humanitarian law.

We continue to work with international partners to encourage de-escalation and promote long-term peace and security in the Middle East.

## Incapacity Benefit

*Asked by Lord Birt*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of why the cost of incapacity-related benefit claims in the UK is rising faster than in other comparable countries. [HL2814]

**Baroness Sherlock:** The Department keeps abreast of the findings of research and analysis that covers different countries, for example that produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. However, as a result of the time it takes to obtain and process data from different countries, the most recent trends will not necessarily be reflected in these sources. Once the latest

data is available this will feed into policy development as appropriate.

### Internet: Safety

*Asked by Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the position set out in Ofcom's consultation on protecting children from harms online, published in May, that there is "currently limited independent evidence on the capability of current age assurance methods to correctly distinguish between child users of different ages to a highly effective standard, without disproportionately affecting children's rights", and that its focus is therefore currently on "establishing recommended protections for all children under the age of 18, rather than tailoring those protections for children in different age groups", in the light of (1) the findings of the benchmarking of facial age estimation by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which concluded that this approach is effective at ascertaining the ages of people under 18; and (2) the audits by the Age Check Certification Scheme of 11 age estimation providers. [HL2818]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** It is for Ofcom to recommend the types of age assurance that it considers to be highly effective for services to meet their duties under the Online Safety Act. Ofcom must ensure guidance is legally robust and based on sufficient evidence to ensure it withstands challenge.

Age assurance methods are developing rapidly and there are a growing range of tools to support children to have a safe and age-appropriate experience online. We welcome research that contributes to the evidence base which may help Ofcom expand the list of recommended technologies in future iterations of the guidance.

### Intimate Image Abuse: Prison Sentences

*Asked by Baroness Owen of Alderley Edge*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many people have been convicted of sharing intimate images and given a custodial sentence. [HL2763]

**Lord Timpson:** The Ministry of Justice publishes data on offenders sentenced to immediate custody for offences relating to sharing intimate images, at criminal courts in England and Wales, in the Outcomes by Offences data tool, which can be downloaded from the Criminal Justice Statistics landing page here: [Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly: June 2024](#).

This can be accessed by navigating to the '2. Sentence Outcomes' tab and using the following HO offence codes;

- 08815 - Sharing or threatening to share intimate photograph or film.
- 17508 - Share photograph or film of person in intimate state without consent.

Offences relating to sharing intimate images came into force in January 2024 and up to end of June 2024, 3 offenders were sentenced to immediate custody.

### Manchester Airport: Railways

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to ensure that a direct train service between Sheffield and Manchester Airport is reinstated, and according to what timeframe. [HL2943]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** I wrote to the Noble Lord in July, explaining this service was withdrawn in December 2022 as part of the Manchester Task Force's proposals to address the challenges of Manchester's constrained capacity. We remain committed to improved rail connectivity in growing the Northern and national economy.

### Natural History: GCSE

*Asked by Baroness Freeman of Steventon*

To ask His Majesty's Government what are their plans for the new natural history GCSE. [HL2819]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** All young people should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum with a range of qualification routes and choices. The government is considering the next steps for a natural history GCSE.

High and rising school standards are at the heart of this government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity and give every child the best life chances. The government has established an independent Curriculum and Assessment Review, chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE, an expert in education policy, including curriculum and social inequality. The review, which covers ages 5 to 18, will ensure that the curriculum appropriately balances ambition, excellence, relevance, flexibility and inclusivity for all children and young people. The review group will publish an interim report early in 2025 setting out their initial findings and confirming the key areas for further work. The final report with recommendations will be published in autumn 2025.

### Nuclear Weapons

*Asked by Lord Banner*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the analysis of the implications of a nuclear attack, including a limited attack, on the United Kingdom set out in the Strath Report in 1955 has since been updated by a committee or body of equivalent standing; and if not, what consideration they have given to commissioning an update of that analysis in the light of current geopolitical circumstances. [HL2869]

**Baroness Twycross:** The United Kingdom has well-developed contingency plans to respond to a wide range of eventualities, including nuclear attacks. The plans and

supporting arrangements have been developed, refined and tested over many years.

The scale of these capabilities is driven by classified planning assumptions derived from the United Kingdom's National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA), which is a classified assessment of the most serious risks that could cause a national emergency in the UK. An external publication, the National Risk Register, which excludes some security-related risks, was last published in 2023, but is based on the NSRA.

GOV.UK/prepare, the Government's website for resilience and emergency planning, is designed to help people plan for potential hazards and equip themselves with the necessary knowledge and resources to respond effectively.

### Official Residences: Art Works

*Asked by Lord Kempson*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Twycross of 4 November (HL1812), whether they will place in the Library of the House a list of each artwork or portrait that has been (1) removed from, and (2) added to the Downing Street estate, including Number 9, Number 10, Number 11, Number 12 and the two official residences, since 5 July, including any Government Art Collection reference number, according to records held by the Government Art Collection. [HL2834]

**Baroness Twycross:** I refer the Noble Lord to the answer of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office, Minister Gould, 31 October 2024, Official Report, PQ 8943.

### Overseas Students: Hong Kong

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of university scholarships or bursaries available to prospective students on British National (Overseas) visas to help them afford international fees for tuition. [HL2803]

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following a letter from Baroness Smith of Malvern to Hong Kong Watch on 3 October, in which it was suggested that Hong Kong British National (Overseas) students who cannot afford international university fees could appeal to have their fees waived, what assessment they have made of the number of international students that have successfully waived their fees, in whole or part, due to financial shortcoming. [HL2804]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** Higher education (HE) institutions in England are autonomous bodies and it is for them to assess whether applications for fees which do not meet the criteria for automatic home fee status should be

reduced or waived in line with individual circumstances. The department has not made an assessment on the number of international students that have successfully had their fees waived.

There are a range of resources and support for international students looking for scholarships, which can be found on the UK Council for International Student Affairs website and the British Council's Study UK page.

Many HE institutions in the UK offer a range of bursaries and scholarships to international students and the department encourages students to contact their institution to find out what support may be available. We have not carried out an assessment of the number of university scholarships or bursaries available to prospective students on British National (Overseas) visas.

### Pension Funds

*Asked by Lord Birt*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have learned any lessons from the investment strategies of successful major pension funds in other countries, including Canada, by analysing (1) what proportion of their funds were invested domestically; (2) which of the geographies in which they invested produced the highest annualised five-year net returns; and (3) what proportion of their funds were invested in infrastructure and real assets. [HL2815]

**Baroness Sherlock:** Phase One of the Pensions Investment Review closely considered international evidence from the Australian and Canadian pension systems. Evidence was particularly considered around the benefits of scale, asset allocations and consolidation. This was published in the Pension Investment Review and supplementary analytical document, available here: [Pensions Investment Review: interim report, consultations and evidence - GOV.UK](#)

The analysis found:

1) 46% of Canadian pension assets and 55% of Australian pension assets are invested domestically, across all asset types.

2) Information is not available on the exact geographies of all investments across all asset classes, nor the returns these have earned at geographical level.

3) Canada allocates 11% of its assets to infrastructure and 13% to property. In Australia, it is estimated around 8% of its pension funds are invested in infrastructure and 7% in property.

4) Australian pension schemes invest around 3 times more in infrastructure and 10 times more in private equity.

### Planning

*Asked by Lord Mackinlay of Richborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect to respond to the consultation on proposed reforms to

England's National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system. [HL2925]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** I refer the Noble Lord to the answer given to Question UIN 7852 on 14 October 2024.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UIN 7852 [UIN7852.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-26/HL2925>

## Police

*Asked by Lord Grocott*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many police officers recruited in (1) 2010, (2) 2011, (3) 2012, and (4) 2013, are still in service. [HL2831]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Home Office collects and publishes data annually on the size and composition of the police workforce in the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin which can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales>.

Information on the length of service of police officers in post and the length of service of police officer leavers, can be found in Tables JL5 and JL6 respectively of the data tables accompanying the statistical release.

Table 1, below, shows the length of service of police officers in post, as at 31 March 2024.

*Table 1: Length of service of police officers in post, headcount basis, as at 31 March 2024, England and Wales (excluding British Transport Police)*

<i>Length of service group</i>	<i>Police officers (headcount)</i>
Less than 5 years	53,108
5 years to less than 10 years	25,626
10 years to less than 15 years	12,315
15 years to less than 20 years	23,492
20 years to less than 25 years	24,271
25 years to less than 30 years	10,116
30 years or over	841
Total	149,769

The Home Office does not publish more granular breakdowns of length of service.

Additional information on the number of new recruits to the police service each year, as well as information on leavers and the length of service of those leavers, is also available in the statistical publication linked above.

## Private Sector: Economic Situation

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Confederation of British Industry's growth indicator, published on 2 December, which forecasts a decline in private sector growth. [HL3119]

**Lord Livermore:** The Government monitors a wide range of indicators linked to economic growth. Multiple surveys and indicators are released by different data providers every month. Many of these are volatile and can move materially from month to month. Long-term growth forecasts are those published by the Government's official forecaster, the Office for Budget Responsibility.

The government has set out how it will deliver a decade of national renewal through its growth mission. We are taking ambitious action to support growth, including through planning reforms, a modern Industrial Strategy and the development of a 10-year infrastructure strategy.

## Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022

*Asked by Lord Vaizey of Didcot*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect to implement the final provisions of the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022, specifically sections 61 to 65, 67, and 70 to 74. [HL2864]

*Asked by Lord Vaizey of Didcot*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the reason for the delay in implementing the remaining provisions of the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022; and what steps they are taking to address this. [HL2865]

*Asked by Lord Vaizey of Didcot*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the delay in implementing the provisions of the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022 on (1) mobile connectivity, (2) data poverty, and (3) regional digital inclusion; and what plans they have to mitigate those effects. [HL2866]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** The Government is committed to implementing all remaining provisions of the Product Security and Telecommunications Act 2022 as soon as possible. These measures will help deliver the benefits of advanced digital connectivity.

Most provisions have already been implemented. Those remaining are complex and technical. The Department will bring forward a consultation on the implementation of sections 61 to 64, including transitional provisions, as soon as possible.

## Public Sector: Artificial Intelligence

Asked by **Lord Mott**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential for adoption of artificial intelligence in the public sector. [HL2848]

**Lord Vallance of Balham:** The government is committed to harnessing AI and other technologies to deliver the government's five missions and improve citizens' lives. Public sector adoption is a key part of the forthcoming AI Opportunities Action Plan. The plan will detail how we can reimagine our public services by ensuring the public sector takes advantage of the best emerging use-cases and tools.

## Religion: Abuse

Asked by **Baroness Gohir**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made regarding the prevalence and trends of spiritual abuse affecting both adults and children. [HL2827]

**Lord Khan of Burnley:** The government condemns acts of psychological, emotional, and physical abuse against adults and children, as well as acts of coercive control - including where they occur in a religious setting or context. Where a crime is suspected to have taken place it is right that this is reported to the police. The Government is committed to tackling all forms of abuse against children. There are legal powers in place to protect children; and local authorities have a legal duty to investigate where they believe that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. And the Government is redoubling efforts to keep children safe in all settings – this includes updating guidance for staff and parents regarding out-of-school settings, strengthening guidance for local authorities on their legal powers to intervene, and an upcoming Call-for-Evidence to inform long-term proposals for safeguarding reform.

## Rented Housing: Energy Performance Certificates

Asked by **Lord Mackinlay of Richborough**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the rental property market of the requirement for all rental properties to have a minimum energy performance certificate rating of 'C' by 2030. [HL2927]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Government is consulting on increasing minimum energy efficiency standards in the domestic private rented sector. The consultation will include proposals for rented homes to achieve Energy Performance Certificate C or equivalent by 2030. The consultation will be accompanied with the Department's assessment of the potential cost and benefits.

## Resettlement: Afghanistan

Asked by **Baroness Coussins**

To ask His Majesty's Government how any Afghan former interpreters who worked with UK armed forces in Afghanistan have been relocated to the UK; how many are eligible for relocation but are awaiting security clearance before travel; and how long it is expected to take to relocate all eligible interpreters to the UK. [HL2886]

**Lord Coaker:** It is not possible to provide a breakdown of relocation figures by job role at this time.

As of 25 November 2024, we have relocated over 19,000 eligible individuals (including applicants and their families) to safety in the UK. The Government is committed to delivering on the commitments made under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme, with multiple Government Departments playing a key role to deliver this service.

## Salisbury Convention

Asked by **Baroness Finn**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the constitutional implications of the reforms in the House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill for (1) the continued validity of the Salisbury-Addison Convention, and (2) the conventions of the House of Lords in not rejecting secondary legislation. [HL2904]

**Baroness Smith of Basildon:** The conventions of the House are unaffected by the House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill. The Bill fulfills a manifesto commitment to remove the right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords. As such, the Bill clearly engages the Salisbury-Addison convention.

## Security: UK Relations with EU

Asked by **Lord Frost**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they are negotiating on a draft text for a security partnership agreement with the European Union. [HL2821]

**Baroness Twycross:** On 14 October the Foreign Secretary attended the EU Foreign Affairs Council and agreed with the then High Representative, Borrell, to advance work towards a security partnership. They also agreed that the UK and EU will establish a biannual Foreign Policy Dialogue between the UK Foreign Secretary and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs to enable strategic cooperation on the highest priority issues, with the first meeting in early 2025. In addition, they also agreed to a number of regular UK-EU strategic consultations to sit underneath this on Russia/Ukraine, the Indo-Pacific, the Western Balkans and Hybrid threats. We are exploring with the EEAS how we progress this work.

This follows the Prime Minister's meeting with Commission President von der Leyen on 2 October where the leaders agreed on the importance of the unique relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom and resolved to strengthen ambitiously our structured strategic cooperation on shared global challenges.

### Sentencing: Attendance

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made in requiring offenders to attend their sentencing. [HL2811]

**Lord Timpson:** The Government is committed to legislating to enhance court powers to require offenders to attend their sentencing hearings. This measure will be included in the Victims, Courts and Public Protection Bill which the Government intends to introduce in the first parliamentary session.

Further details will be made available as part of the Bill's introduction into Parliament.

### Suicide: Farmers

*Asked by The Earl of Effingham*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many farmers committed suicide in (1) 2022, (2) 2023, and (3) 2024 to date. [HL2788]

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

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

The Earl of Effingham  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW  
29 November 2024

Dear Lord Effingham,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking how many farmers committed suicide in (1) 2022, (2) 2023, and (3) 2024 to date (HL2788).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes annual suicide death registration statistics for England and Wales[1]; the latest available figures were published in August 2024 and covered calendar years up to 2023. Also published regularly are provisional statistics on suicide death registrations by quarter in England[2], the most recent of which were published in August 2024 and provided provisional death registrations up to Quarter 2 (April to June) 2024. The ONS holds death registrations for England and Wales only; separate figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland and are available from the National

Records of Scotland (NRS)[3] and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)[4], respectively.

The ONS' mortality statistics for England and Wales are compiled from information supplied when deaths are certified and registered as part of civil registration. Deaths caused by suicide are investigated by coroners, and due to the length of time it takes to hold an inquest, there is delay of around six to seven months between the date of death and the date of death registration. As such, deaths are presented by date of registration rather than date of occurrence. With the deaths statistics linked above and provided in Table 1, many of these will have occurred months or, in some cases, years previously.

Occupation is reported at the time of death registration by the informant. Data on occupation is coded using the Standard Occupation Classification (SOC). For deaths registered from 2023 onwards SOC 2020[5] is used for coding, for deaths registered prior to 2023 it was SOC 2010[6]. The recorded occupation likely reflects the deceased's main lifetime occupation or their occupation at the time of death.

The number of suicides by sex, country and occupation, deaths registered 2011 to 2021 can be found on the ONS website[7]. The numbers of suicides among farmers between 2022 and 2023 can be found in Table 1. Data for 2024 deaths registrations is not yet available.

Table 1: Number of suicides in farmers aged 20 to 64 years, in England and Wales combined, deaths registered between 2022 and 2023[8],[9],[10].

<i>Year of death registration</i>	<i>Number of suicides among farmers</i>
2022	55
2023	62

Farmers are identified by combining the following occupation groups: managers and proprietors in agriculture and horticulture (SOC code: 1211), farmers (SOC code: 5111), agricultural and fishing trades not elsewhere classified (SOC code: 5119), agricultural machinery drivers (SOC 2010 code: 8223), farm workers (SOC code: 9111) and fishing and other elementary agriculture occupations not elsewhere classified (SOC code: 9119).

Please note the numbers detailed here cannot be used to ascertain the risk of suicide among occupations, as relative suicide rates accounting for population size of occupation groups are not provided. Differences in numbers of deaths may merely reflect the underlying population structure as opposed to differences in risk.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/suicidesintheunitedkingdom/2023>

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/quarterlysuicid>



[edeathregistrationsinengland/2001to2023registrationsandquarter1jantomartoquarter2aprtojune2024provisionaldata](https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/standardoccupationalclassificationsoc/soc2010)

[3]

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/probable-suicides-2023/>

[4] <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/cause-death/suicide-deaths>

[5]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/standardoccupationalclassificationsoc/soc2020>

[6]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/standardoccupationalclassificationsoc/soc2010>

[7]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/adhocs/15043suicidebyoccupationenglandandwales2011to2021registrations>

[8] Figures are based on the National Statistics definition of suicide for those aged 20 to 64 years; this includes deaths from intentional self-harm and deaths caused by injury or poisoning where the intent was undetermined.

[9] The area is based on the persons usual residence as provided by the informant upon registration. Figures for England and Wales combined (area code K04000001) include death of non-residents.

[10] Figures are for deaths registered, rather than deaths occurring in each calendar year. Due to the length of time it takes to hold an inquest, the deaths presented here may have occurred months, or even years, before they were registered.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UKSA Letter [PQHL2788 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-22/HL2788>

*Asked by Lord Roborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to keep monthly data on farmer, landowner and family business owner suicides and suicide attempts. [HL2859]

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

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

The Lord Roborough  
House of Lords  
London

SW1A 0PW

29 November 2024

Dear Lord Roborough,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your

Parliamentary Question asking whether we plan to keep monthly data on farmer, landowner and family business owner suicides and suicide attempts (HL2859).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes annual suicide death registration statistics for England and Wales[1]. Also published regularly are provisional statistics on suicide death registrations by quarter in England[2]. As these statistics are based on death registrations, they do not inform us about suicide attempts. The ONS holds death registrations for England and Wales only; separate figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland and are available from the National Records of Scotland (NRS)[3] and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)[4], respectively.

Suicide deaths are few enough in number that disaggregating them by age group or region in our quarterly provisional statistics for England presents very small numbers for some groups. Statistics such as change in rates of suicide deaths for small groups can therefore be volatile and uncertain. As such, while the ONS is committed to continuing its quarterly publication of suicide statistics and analysing suicide deaths by occupation using annual data[5], a more regular presentation of suicide deaths by occupation is not planned.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) produce a statistical report on near to real-time suspected suicide surveillance (nRTSSS) for England[6], which is revised monthly, but does not present suicides by occupation.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/suicidesintheunitedkingdom/2023>

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/quarterlysuicidedeathregistrationsinengland/2001to2023registrationsandquarter1jantomartoquarter2aprtojune2024provisionaldata>

[3]

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/probable-suicides-2023/>

[4]

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/cause-death/suicide-deaths>

[5]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/adhocs/15043suicidebyoccupationenglandandwales2011to2021registrations>

[6]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/near-to-real-time-suspected-suicide-surveillance-nrtsss-for-england/statistical-report-near-to-real-time-suspected-suicide-surveillance-nrtsss-for-england-for-the-15-months-to-august-2023>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Letter from the National Statistician [PQHL2859 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-25/HL2859>

## Tourist Attractions: Wales

*Asked by Lord Wigley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to promote the UNESCO designated Slate communities in Wales as tourist attractions for visitors to the UK. [HL2958]

**Baroness Twycross:** While tourism in Wales is devolved to the Welsh Government, VisitBritain, an arm's length body of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, retains responsibility for marketing Great Britain on the international stage.

Visit Wales leads on the development of a tourism brand specifically for Wales, while VisitBritain works with Visit Wales to ensure that these brand values are reflected in the broader GREAT Campaign, which highlights a number of the many destinations and experiences on offer across Wales.

VisitBritain champions Wales as a distinguished travel destination, emphasizing its rich cultural heritage and landscape. VisitBritain also promotes UNESCO heritage sites on its website, including Wales slate communities.

## Undocumented Migrants

*Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of illegal immigrants residing in the UK. [HL2817]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** By its very nature, it is not possible to know the exact number of people living in the UK illegally, or produce official estimates of that illegal population. In June 2019, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a note on 'measuring illegal migration', which can be found here: [Measuring illegal migration: our current view - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/measuring-illegal-migration-our-current-view).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

ONS note [Measuring illegal migration\_our current view.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-25/HL2817>

## Unemployment: Young People

*Asked by Lord Laming*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to figures released by the Office for National Statistics on 21

November showing that 946,000 young people aged 16 to 24 are not currently in education, employment or training, what steps they are taking to address this. [HL2837]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** This government is determined to break down barriers to opportunity for all our young people. We will act to prevent the damage caused to the lives of young people who are not in education, employment or training. The government recognises the complex, long-standing nature of the challenge, and will make a raft of changes to tackle it.

Young people are required to continue in education or training until they turn 18. We are preventing young people from losing touch with education or employment before the age of 18 through a guaranteed place in education and training for all 16 and 17-year-olds, expanded work experience and careers advice, action to tackle school attendance and improved access to mental health services for young people in England. Over £7.5 billion in 16 to 19 programme funding will be invested during the 2024/25 academic year, to pay for education for any 16, 17 or 18-year-olds in post-16 education.

£240 million has been announced to drive forward measures in the Get Britain Working White Paper. This includes a youth guarantee for all young people aged 18-21 in England to ensure that they can access quality training, educational opportunities or help to find work. Working with Mayoral Authorities, and building on existing provision and entitlements, we will test new ways of supporting young people into employment or training. To do this, we will mobilise eight place-based youth guarantee trailblazers with £45 million of funding in 2025/26.

The comprehensive package also includes: a new national jobs and careers service to help more people into work, foundation apprenticeships to give people a new route into skilled work, Get Britain Working Plans for the economically inactive, and the launch of Skills England to open new opportunities for young people.

## Warm Home Discount Scheme

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the rate of the warm home discount. [HL2845]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Warm Home Discount provides eligible low-income households across Great Britain with a £150 rebate off their winter energy bill and is expected to support over three million households this winter. There are currently no plans to increase the rate of the Warm Home Discount.

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