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**No. 61**



**Tuesday**  
**10 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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<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
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<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

Tuesday, 10 December 2024

## Calais Group

[HLWS290]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** My right hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Yvette Cooper) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today I, jointly with German Interior Minister Faeser, convened Calais Group partners; Belgium, France, and The Netherlands, in London, in the presence of the European Commission and its agencies, Frontex and Europol to deliver real and tangible results on the fight against the dangerous people smuggling networks that threaten our collective border security.

At this important forum, all Calais Group partners agreed to jointly deliver the Calais Group Priority Plan in 2025. This plan is testament to our shared commitment to dismantle the people smuggling networks – it builds on our excellent joint working through existing structures and refocuses shared priorities to bring to justice those that undermine our border security.

The Priority Plan contains actions which will deliver enhanced cooperation in 2025, taking a whole of route approach to tackle the end-to-end criminality of migrant smuggling networks who continue to deploy more dangerous tactics, putting lives at risk.

The key areas of collaboration include:

- Co-ordinating preventative communications to deter irregular migrants from paying Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) to facilitate dangerous journeys.

- Strengthening our ability to work together via Europol to enhance targeting and disruption of prominent OCGs and their criminal supply chains through deepening intelligence and information sharing and ensuring there are effective and robust legislative frameworks criminalising the small boat supply chain with a focus on the evolving tactics and targeting the end-to-end criminality of the Kurdish/Iraqi OCGs involved in the smuggling of migrants into and across Europe.

- Tackling the use of social media by OCG's to recruit and advertise dangerous journeys across Europe and the Channel to migrants.

- Targeting the illicit finance models of migrant smuggling networks to better target preventative, investigation and disruption efforts to take action on criminal finances and ensure that migrant smuggling is not a viable or profitable business.

- Enabling reciprocal exchange of the most pertinent information relating to migration flows and border security issues to better understand and respond to emerging trends and migrant flows.

It demonstrates the commitment of near neighbour partners to break the business model of migrant smuggling networks and reaffirms our resolve to use

every tool available to ensure these criminals are brought to justice.

Alongside this crucial meeting, the Government is also today publishing a statement on Delivering Border Security, setting out our approach to establishing the Border Security Command, tackling organised immigration crime and improving the UK's border security. The new Border Security Command will lead and drive forward the required step change in the UK's approach to border security, including our international response.

Organised immigration crime is a global threat, with no respect for national boundaries. Tackling it requires working closely with international partners. The Border Security Command is scaling up efforts with key near neighbour partners and the EU, through the Calais Group to disrupt the people smuggling trade and the criminal gangs that profit from it.

Copies of the Calais Group Priority Plan and the Delivering Border Security Statement will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and will also be published on GOV.UK later this afternoon.

## Early Years Funding 2025-26

[HLWS289]

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

This government is clear that whoever you are, wherever you come from, ours should be a country where hard work means you can get on in life. Ensuring every child has the best start in life is crucial to breaking down barriers to opportunity from the earliest point in our lives.

Early years educators, providers and local authorities are already doing incredible work to meet this mission and expand their provision so that more families can benefit from affordable, accessible and high-quality early education and childcare.

As announced at 2024 Autumn Budget, we expect to provide over £8 billion for the early years entitlements in 2025-26 – a more than 30% increase compared to 2024-25 – as we work towards the expansion of the entitlements.

Today, we have also published the new early years local authority core funding rates for 2025-26. The national average 3- and 4-year-old hourly funding rates of local authorities is increasing by 4.1%, the 2-year-old hourly funding rates is increasing by 3.3%, and the 9 months to 2-year-old hourly funding rate is increasing by 3.4%. As usual, the hourly funding rates will vary between local authorities, reflecting the relative needs of the children and different costs of delivering provision across the country.

To ensure that providers are set-up to deliver 30 funded hours of childcare and early education for children age 9 months to when they start school, and that parents are

able to access this across our communities from September 2025, on top of over £8 billion through the core funding rates, we will be investing an additional £75 million of revenue funding in 2025-26 through an expansion grant, recognising the significant effort and planning to prepare for the final phase of the expansion. This grant is on top of over £8 billion provided through the core funding rates.

It is essential that high quality early education and childcare are accessible for all children and families, given the importance of the early years of life. However, currently there are gaps in both provision and quality, especially for disadvantaged children. That is why we are delivering the largest ever uplift to the early years pupil premium, increasing EYPP rates by over 45% per hour in 2024-25 to £1 per hour in 2025-26, equivalent to up to £570 per eligible child per year.

This unprecedented increase is an investment in quality early education for those children who need it most, providing additional support for disadvantaged children to meet development goals at age 5.

Eligible children can also receive £938 per child per year through the disability access fund to support reasonable adjustments for children with a disability. We also expect to spend £92.6 million on maintained nursery school (MNS) supplementary funding in 2025-26, in recognition of the additional costs MNS face.

It is important that providers can plan ahead, therefore we have set the expectation that local authorities communicate their rates to providers by 28th February 2025 at the latest and we will be working with local authorities to support them to do this. This will become mandatory from 2026-27.

From April 2025, we are increasing the minimum pass-through requirement, meaning local authorities must pass on at least 96% of funding to providers, as part of a phased approach to a 97% pass-through in the future.

Full details on the 2025-26 local authority hourly funding rates, including step-by-step tables, have been published on GOV.UK.

### **Irregular Migration: UK-Germany Joint Action Plan**

[HLWS288]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Yvette Cooper) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Organised immigration crime is an international problem which requires international solutions. That is why we are substantially scaling up collaboration with international partners to disrupt the people smuggling trade and the criminal gangs that profit from it.

Yesterday, I signed a landmark agreement with the German Federal Minister of the Interior and Community Nancy Faeser. The UK-Germany Joint Action Plan to tackle irregular migration will deliver strengthened investigative and prosecutorial responses to organised immigration crime, alongside enhanced intelligence sharing between our respective law enforcement agencies and greater coordination of our efforts in source and transit countries to tackle irregular migration at source.

Many of the same criminal smuggler gangs who organise small boats in the Channel are also operating in Germany and across Europe with an impact on the security of all our countries and therefore stronger law enforcement across borders is essential to tackle the dangerous gangs, illicit finance and supply chains that affect.

There is recognition on both sides that activities on German soil which facilitate migrant smuggling towards the UK require a clarified legislative approach. Once enacted, this legal change will make it easier to disrupt and prosecute organised crime including making it easier to significantly increase the number of arrests and prosecutions made in relation to the supply of small boats equipment – ensuring that those driving this trade are brought to justice.

Germany is a key international partner in our efforts to tackle people smuggling and the organised criminal groups who profit from this trade. The Joint Action builds on our existing cooperation with Germany and will deliver a new framework for enhancing our joint efforts to tackle organised immigration crime.

Minister Faeser's visit to London yesterday included a visit to NCA Headquarters for a briefing on the scale of the small boat supply chain, existing operational cooperation between our respective law enforcement agencies, and the further cooperation UK and German law enforcement agencies can undertake together through the Joint Action Plan.

A copy of the UK - Germany Joint Action Plan will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and will also be published on GOV.UK.

# Written Answers

Tuesday, 10 December 2024

## Agriculture: Inheritance Tax

Asked by **Lord Roborough**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to replace investment in farm businesses lost as a result of the reduced agricultural and business property inheritance tax reliefs with an increase in the DEFRA capital budget. [HL2940]

**Lord Livermore:** At Autumn Budget 2024, the Government took a number of decisions on tax, welfare, and spending to restore economic stability, fix the public finances, and support public services. These were tough decisions given the situation we inherited from the previous administration, but the Government has done so in a way that makes the tax system fairer and more sustainable. This includes the reforms to agricultural property relief and business property relief.

Despite the fiscal constraints, the Farming and Countryside Programme budget has been protected at £5 billion across the next two years. This includes the largest ever proportion of the budget directed at sustainable food production and nature's recovery in our country's history. This will accelerate the transition to a more resilient and sustainable farming sector, supporting investment in farm businesses and boosting Britain's food security.

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford**

To ask His Majesty's Government what consultation they undertook with the farming sector prior to the proposal to change agricultural property relief. [HL2965]

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to publish the evidence used to inform their decision to change agricultural property relief, and their reasoning. [HL2967]

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that the change to agricultural property relief will have on (1) investment in new technology for existing farming businesses, (2) food supply to the market should existing farmers leave the sector, and (3) encouraging new entrants and young farmers to start farming. [HL2968]

**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).

Additionally, the Chancellor wrote to the Treasury Select Committee on 15 November 2024, setting out

further detail regarding the distribution of claims at death for agricultural property relief. This letter has been published at <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/45691/documents/226235/default/>.

It is expected that up to up to 520 estates claiming agricultural property relief will be affected by these reforms. Almost three quarters of estates claiming agricultural property relief (or those claiming agricultural property relief and business property relief together) are expected to be unaffected.

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.

## Agriculture: Subsidies

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford**

To ask His Majesty's Government what impact assessment they made before removing the Basic Payment Scheme. [HL3063]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Direct Payments under the Basic Payment Scheme in England were replaced with delinked payments at the beginning of 2024. [Analysis of the impacts of removing Direct Payments](#) (attached) was included in Defra's 2019 farming evidence compendium and the [2020 Agriculture Bill Impact Assessment](#) (attached).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Agriculture Bill Impact Assessment [Agriculture Bill Narrative Impact Assessment (1).pdf]

Impact of Removing direct payments [Moving away from direct payments.pdf.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-12-02/HL3063>

## Artificial Intelligence: EU Law

Asked by **Lord McNicol of West Kilbride**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the financial impact on the economy of regulatory divergence between the United Kingdom and the European Union following the introduction of the Artificial Intelligence Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689). [HL2997]



**Lord Vallance of Balham:** The Government is committed to establishing appropriate rules on those working to develop the most powerful artificial intelligence models. Our proposals will be highly targeted and will enhance safety. They will also support growth and innovation by ending regulatory uncertainty for AI developers, strengthening public trust, and boosting business confidence.

The Government carefully considers the impact of potential regulatory barriers on the economy and UK businesses, including in relation to international trade and market barriers, and will set out further details of our approach in due course.

### Asylum: MOD Wethersfield

*Asked by Lord German*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have commissioned an independent needs assessment for the Wethersfield asylum accommodation site. [HL2906]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Home Office commissioned an independent needs assessment via the British Red Cross earlier this year. Following two visits to the site in March and April, the assessment was shared with the Home Office in May. The Home Office have been working with the British Red Cross to discuss recommendations and implement any necessary changes to the site.

*Asked by Lord German*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to increase occupancy of Wethersfield asylum accommodation so that it is capped at 800 once the conditions of the special development order have been discharged. [HL2907]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** Occupancy at the Wethersfield site is currently capped at 580 as part of the Special Development Order. This means that during current operation of the site, the population will not exceed 580.

Once the relevant Special Development Order conditions have been discharged, regular occupancy will be capped at 800. Any increase in occupancy will take place in a carefully managed way.

### Asylum: Social Security Benefits

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what benefits asylum seekers are entitled to receive upon their arrival in the United Kingdom, whether they came via official channels or illegally. [HL2891]

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what clothing and other allowances are made available to asylum seekers who arrive in the United Kingdom whether through official channels or illegally. [HL2892]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Home Office has a legal obligation to meet the essential living needs of destitute asylum seekers. Details of what is considered essential can be found in the annual asylum support rate review reports, published on gov.uk; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-on-review-of-cash-allowance-paid-to-asylum-seekers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-on-review-of-cash-allowance-paid-to-asylum-seekers).

Asylum seekers are not eligible for mainstream benefits.

Further information about support asylum seekers may be entitled to can be found at [Asylum support: What you'll get - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-on-review-of-cash-allowance-paid-to-asylum-seekers).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

annual asylum support rate  
[Report\_on\_the\_allowances\_paid\_to\_asylum\_seekers\_and\_failed\_asylum\_seekers\_2020.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-11-26/HL2891>

### Blood: Contamination

*Asked by Lord Wigley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the target date for the completion of payments to all those identified as victims of infected blood. [HL3122]

**Baroness Twycross:** Our priority is to pay compensation as quickly as possible. The Infected Blood Compensation Authority is working to put in place a claim service that is simple and secure. We expect the Infected Blood Compensation Authority to begin making payments to people who are infected by the end of this year.

For people diagnosed with an eligible infection before 1 April 2025, the Scheme will remain open to applications until 31 March 2031. For people diagnosed after 1 April 2025, the Scheme will remain open to applications for 6 years from the person's date of diagnosis.

### Brook House Immigration Removal Centre: Counselling

*Asked by Lord German*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the death on 29 October of a man while detained at Brook House Immigration Removal Centre, what steps have been taken to provide those detained there with counselling and other forms of bereavement support; and how and when were those people notified of such support. [HL2910]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** Any death in immigration detention is a tragic event and our condolences are with the family and friends of the individual who sadly died on 27 October at Brook House immigration removal centre (IRC).

On the night of the individual's death, notices were circulated by the supplier, notifying residents of the death and offering immediate wellbeing support with custodial staff tasked to make any necessary referrals to the healthcare mental health team for onward care. Centre staff and the healthcare and chaplaincy teams provided support to any residents who wanted to speak to staff, including face to face meetings and signposting to Samaritans and bereavement helplines. Additionally, the chaplaincy team arranged a memorial service for all faiths the following day. Residents attending this service who wished to talk were referred on to the healthcare mental health team.

Centre suppliers at Brook House IRC and across the immigration detention estate assessed all open and post closure Assessment, Care in Detention and Teamwork (ACDT) cases the day following the death, with formal reviews undertaken for those considered particularly vulnerable to the news and at increased risk of self-harm.

### **Buildings: Insulation**

*Asked by **The Earl of Lytton***

To ask His Majesty's Government, in the light of the conclusion in standard PAS 9980:2022 that the potential for rapid fire spread, even in a low rise building, results in a risk that is "unacceptably high", what is their estimate of the current number of buildings of a height of 11 metres or lower which are at such risk due to combustible external elements. [[HL2844](#)]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** For over two years, the Department has been examining under 11m buildings on a case-by-case basis where leaseholders have raised cladding safety concerns to us. To date, three under 11m buildings have been identified where remediation is needed to make the building safe. Because life safety fire risk is also related to building height, the risk to life from historic cladding fire safety defects is usually lower in buildings under 11m and we expect there to be very few cases of such buildings with unsafe cladding that presents a high risk.

Of the 35 cases seen by the department, where a Fire Risk Appraisal of the External Wall (FRAEW) conducted in accordance with the latest PAS 9980 guidance has recommended remediation, our audits have found that lower-cost mitigations like a fire alarm or significantly scaled-back works were a more proportionate response to the risks presented by the building's external wall. The risk to life is generally proportionate to the height of buildings. This position is supported by the guidance produced by the BSI for external wall assessors, on which the starting presumption is that low-rise buildings ought normally to be placed in the low-risk category with a more stringent fire safety performance specified for buildings over 18 m in height.

### **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: Diagnosis**

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

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the availability of timely access to testing for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease diagnosis within NHS England. [[HL2935](#)]

**Baroness Merron:** An assessment has been carried out by NHS England to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic affected access to spirometry testing. Work is ongoing to bring the number of spirometry tests back to pre-pandemic levels. Healthcare systems also have access to various resources to meet the needs of their populations, including providing diagnostic testing.

### **Council of the Nations and Regions**

*Asked by **Lord Inglewood***

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans are in place to ensure those areas in England without mayors and not part of a combined authority will be represented in the Council of the Nations and the Regions to enable them to contribute and participate. [[HL3085](#)]

**Baroness Twycross:** The membership of the Council of the Nations and Regions is drawn from the directly elected leaders of central, devolved and local government across the UK with additional devolved powers. On 16 July 2024 the Deputy Prime Minister wrote to all areas that do not have a devolution deal to invite them to come forward with a proposal. New Mayors established through this process would also be eligible to sit on the Council of the Nations and Regions. The Government is committed to working productively with local government and has established the Leaders Council to bring together other local government leaders and Ministers to identify and tackle the strategic challenges facing local government.

### **Devolution**

*Asked by **Baroness Eaton***

To ask His Majesty's Government when they intend to publish their White Paper on English devolution. [[HL2887](#)]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The English Devolution White Paper is due by the end of this year. We will make a statement to the house when it is published.

### **Drugs: Death**

*Asked by **Lord Kamall***

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the success of projects arising from the Reducing Drug Deaths Innovation Challenge; and what plans they have to continue or expand upon these projects. [[HL2915](#)]

**Lord Vallance of Balham:** The Reducing Drug Deaths Innovation Challenge funded eleven technologies in its first phase, all of which were completed successfully. Seven projects secured phase 2 funding to advance development of their technologies through testing with relevant populations. The UK Government's Office for Life Sciences, in collaboration with the Chief Scientist Office in Scotland, is monitoring the progress of these projects and will provide guidance to support commercialisation, spread and UK-wide adoption of the technologies to prevent drug overdose deaths. Future funding and initiatives through the Addiction Healthcare Goals programme are being explored to further encourage innovative research and the development of novel technologies to treat drug and alcohol addictions.

### Education: ICT

*Asked by Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many (1) education technology service providers and (2) education technology solutions the Information Commissioner's Office has audited in the past five years; and what plans they have to make the findings available to the public. [[HL2882](#)]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** I refer the noble Lord to the answer I gave on 4<sup>th</sup> December to Question UIN [HL2699](#). The ICO continue to proactively audit the use of personal data in the EdTech sector where evidence supports it. The ICO have audited 10 EdTech service providers, with confirmed plans to audit a further seven, as well as planning to request further information from other providers to support their audit findings.

In respect to the second part of his question, common findings and examples are anonymised and will be published after all audits with service providers are completed. Publication decisions on individual audit findings attributed to named service providers is decided on a case-by-case basis, generally with their consent.

### Electric Vehicles: Sales

*Asked by Lord Offord of Garvel*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that manufacturing jobs are not lost as a result of electric vehicle sales quotas. [[HL2930](#)]

**Lord Henty of Richmond Hill:** We will continue to support industry and consumers to make the switch to zero emission vehicles, with over £300 million announced in the Budget to drive uptake of electric vehicles and £2 billion to support the transition of domestic manufacturing and supply chain.

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of electric vehicle sales targets following reports that Vauxhall are considering closing a plant in Luton. [[HL3021](#)]

**Lord Henty of Richmond Hill:** We are alive to the global challenges the industry is facing, which is why we're investing £2 billion to support the transition of domestic manufacturing, and over £300 million announced in the Budget to drive uptake of electric vehicles, as we continue to work closely with the sector to make the transition a success.

We remain committed to phasing out the sale of new cars powered solely by internal combustion engines by 2030, and we will soon bring forward a consultation which will consider how to support industry to reach this phase out date.

### Employers' Contributions: Health Services

*Asked by Baroness Benjamin*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to extend to dentists and other primary care providers the National Insurance relief already offered to hospitals. [[HL2878](#)]

**Lord Livermore:** The Government will provide support for departments and other public sector employers for additional employer National Insurance Contributions. Dentists and primary care providers are independent contractors and therefore will not be exempt from these changes.

Every year the Government consults with each sector both about what services they provide, and the money providers are entitled to in return under their contract. DHSC will confirm funding for primary care for 2025/26 as part of the usual contract processes later in the year, including through consultation with the sector.

The Government has increased funding for the NHS in England. Resource spending for the Department of Health and Social Care is set to increase by £22.6 billion in 2025-26 compared to 2023-24 outturn, providing a real-terms growth rate of 4% for the NHS, the largest since before 2010 excluding Covid-19 years. This includes funding to support the NHS to deliver the first step of an extra two million NHS operations, scans, and appointments a year in England.

The Government keeps all taxes under review.

### Employers' Contributions: Local Government

*Asked by Baroness Eaton*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will take steps to refund local authorities following the decision to increase national insurance contributions from employers. [[HL2888](#)]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** Raising the revenue required to fund public services and restore economic stability requires difficult decisions on tax, which is why the government are asking employers to contribute more. The Government has committed to provide support for the public sector employers for additional employer national



insurance contributions costs. This applies to those directly employed by the public sector, including local government. We will set out further details at the provisional Settlement in December.

## Employment

Asked by **Lord Wigley**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Twycross on 19 November (HL2370), what are the latest figures for employee activity rates for the regions of England. [HL3125]

**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 Rt Hon. the Lord Wigley

House of Lords

London

SW1A 0PW

4 December 2024

Dear Lord Wigley,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Twycross on 19 November (HL2370), what are the latest figures for employee activity rates for the regions of England (HL3125).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) collects information on the labour market status of individuals through the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is a survey of people resident in households in the UK. The responses allow us to estimate how many people are in employment, and how many of those are in employment as employees, as opposed to other forms of employment such as self-employment.

Due to the current smaller sample sizes being achieved by the LFS, recent estimates are showing increased volatility and should be treated with additional caution.

The latest available estimates (July to September 2024) of the rates of employees for people aged 16 to 64 years, determined as the percentage of the population in employment as an employee, resident in each of England's nine regions, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Rates of employees, people aged 16 to 64 years, regions in England, not seasonally adjusted.

Region in England	July to September 2024
North East	65.4
North West	65.9
Yorkshire and The Humber	64.1
East Midlands	66.8
West Midlands	65.3

Region in England	July to September 2024
East	67.5
London	65.1
South East	68.1
South West	67.1

Source: Labour Force Survey

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Letter from the National Statistician [PQHL3125 (1).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-12-02/HL3125>

## Employment Schemes: Disability

Asked by **Lord Shinkwin**

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to reform Access to Work and Disability Confident; whether any reviews of these schemes will be chaired by disabled people; and what proportion of the review panels will be disabled. [HL3018]

**Baroness Sherlock:** The Get Britain Working White Paper, published 26 November 2024, set out the Department's plans for labour market transformation, including more support for workers and employers. In the Spring, we will set out our proposals for significant reforms to health and disability benefits in a Green Paper. We appreciate the real importance of this topic for disabled people, people with health conditions, their representatives and so many others and so we will be carefully considering our approach and listening to their views.

The Disability Confident scheme needs to be more robust, and we acknowledge the need for reform. Officials are currently exploring options to enhance the criteria, and we will collaborate closely with employers, disabled people's organisations, and disabled individuals themselves to fully realise the scheme's potential.

Our independent review into the role of employers in supporting healthy and inclusive workplaces will also make recommendations for change, and as part of this we are committed to working closely with disabled people. As set out in the White Paper, we will establish a disability panel to ensure the views and voices of disabled people are put at the heart of the design and delivery of our reforms.

As in all policy areas, any further reform proposals would be announced in due course in the usual way.

## Energy: Waste

Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering**

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their policy on developing energy from waste. [HL3098]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** The Government is committed to transitioning to a circular economy, a future where we keep our resources in use for longer, waste is reduced, we accelerate the path to net zero, we see investment in critical infrastructure and green jobs, our economy prospers, and nature thrives. As part of this we will consider the role of Energy from Waste, including waste incineration, in the context of circularity, economic growth, and reaching net zero.

As we move towards a circular economy there will still be a need for the safe and sanitary management of residual waste. In accordance with the Waste Hierarchy, sending residual waste that cannot currently be prevented, prepared for reuse, or recycled to Energy from Waste plants is preferable to disposal in landfill.

Defra will publish an analysis of municipal residual waste treatment infrastructure capacity including exports, against expected future residual waste arisings in England, so we can understand what future capacity may be required following implementation of the packaging reforms. This analysis will support decision making relating to planning for new residual waste treatment infrastructure.

### Fertilisers and Food: Imports

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of taxing imported fertilizer but not imported food on ensuring that British farming remains globally competitive. [HL2969]

**Lord Livermore:** Overall, the Government does not expect the introduction of the UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) on fertiliser to have a significant impact on UK farmers.

The UK's core tariff schedule, known as the UK Global Tariff (UKGT), sets out the tariff rates that apply to all imported goods balancing the interests of UK consumers, producers, productivity, competitiveness and external trade. A large proportion of agri-food and fertiliser imports enter the UK tariff free. This is either because the tariff applied on the specific product under the UK Global Tariff schedule is zero or because the product is eligible for a zero-duty preferential tariff when imported from countries with which the UK has signed a bilateral trade deal.

Additionally, the UK operates an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). This is the UK's principal carbon pricing mechanism and covers the manufacturing of fertiliser. In recent years, UK-based fertiliser manufacturers have received more free allowances than they needed to surrender to cover their emissions.

The UK CBAM rate charged on imports, including fertiliser, will reflect the carbon price paid by domestic industries after support mechanisms (such as free allowances) have been taken into account. As a result, we expect initial liabilities arising from the UK CBAM to be

relatively low whilst encouraging the supply and use of fertiliser with lower levels of embodied carbon than would otherwise have been the case.

More generally, about 70% of UK agri-food imports come from the EU. The EU also have an Emissions Trading Scheme and will introduce a CBAM from January 2026; both of which include fertiliser. This means that fertiliser used by EU farmers will also have been subject to a carbon price. At the same time, many non-EU food imports cannot be produced in the UK.

### Government Departments: Equality

*Asked by Baroness Finn*

To ask His Majesty's Government which cross-government diversity network represents the interests of biological women. [HL2900]

**Baroness Twycross:** The Cross Government Gender Network is a Civil Service wide forum made up of gender related staff networks, including women's networks, working towards advancing gender equality and parity in the Civil Service and across arms-length bodies. Other networks are available which also represent the broader interests of women.

### Horticulture

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what further consideration they will give to the recommendations of Horticultural Sector Committee in its report *Sowing the Seeds: A blooming English horticultural sector*, published in November 2023; and how they intend to deliver a cross-government, industry-backed and growth-focused environmental horticulture strategy. [HL3052]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** The Government appreciates and values the vital work of the horticulture industry, and we welcomed the Committee's report 'Sowing the seeds: A blooming English horticultural sector'. As part of our mission-driven government we are currently considering how we can achieve our ambitious, measurable and long-term goals for all our farming sectors.

### Human Trafficking: Prostitution

*Asked by Lord McColl of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they provide to help victims of sexual exploitation exit prostitution. [HL2918]

*Asked by Lord McColl of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce demand for trafficking for sexual exploitation. [HL2919]

*Asked by Lord McColl of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the scale of commercial sexual exploitation in England and Wales. [HL2920]

*Asked by Lord McColl of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government what action they are taking to prevent organised crime groups advertising victims of trafficking and other sexual exploitation offences on websites advertising prostitution. [HL2921]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation is a truly horrific crime. The scale of violence against women and girls in our country is intolerable and this Government will treat it as the national emergency that it is, with a commitment to halve violence against women and girls, underpinned by a new VAWG strategy to be published next year.

The Government is working closely with law enforcement to tackle the drivers of trafficking for sexual exploitation, including through law enforcement operational intensifications aimed at tackling modern slavery threats, and targeting prolific perpetrators.

We have several ways to estimate the scale of sexual exploitation. Victims of sexual exploitation make up a significant proportion of referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (the framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery to appropriate support). The most recent statistics show that between July to September 2024, sexual exploitation (either partly or wholly) accounted for 17% (697) of all referrals sent to police forces in England and Wales for investigation. Of these, the majority were for females (76%; 528).

Available academic research on prostitution highlights the challenges in estimating prevalence. Research conducted by the University of Bristol focusing on England and Wales was unable to identify a single prevalence estimate. However, it assessed a number of existing national estimates made over the last 20 years which ranged from 35,882 to 104,964, across England and Wales.

Online platforms are a significant enabler of sexual exploitation. The Online Safety Act 2023 sets out priority offences, including sexual exploitation and human trafficking offences, and companies will need to adopt measures and put in place systems and processes to identify, assess and address these offences based on a risk assessment.

The Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract provides support to adult potential and confirmed victims of modern slavery in England and Wales. This support includes financial support and a support worker to help them access wider services, including medical treatment, legal aid, legal representatives, and legal advice.

The Government will continue to keep policies to tackle sexual exploitation under review.

## **Infrastructure: Northern Ireland**

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to establish an investment and reinvestment initiative to support Northern Ireland infrastructure schemes which is separate to the block grant allocation scheme for Northern Ireland. [HL2938]

**Lord Livermore:** Infrastructure strategy and investment is a devolved responsibility of the Northern Ireland Executive (NIE). As part of the NIE's Interim Fiscal Framework agreed in May 2024, the NIE committed to publish a comprehensive and costed long-term strategic infrastructure plan setting out priority areas for action and how it will support prosperity and growth.

The NIE's Spending Review settlement for 2025-26 is the largest in real terms of any settlement since devolution. The NIE is receiving £18.2 billion in 2025-26, including an additional £1.5 billion through the operation of the Barnett formula.

## **Land: Ownership**

*Asked by Lord Roborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of losing agricultural property relief and business property relief for inheritance tax on the long-term ownership of land by private farmers and landowners, as opposed to UK and overseas-controlled corporate and institutional ownership. [HL3005]

**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).

It is expected that up to up to 520 estates claiming agricultural property relief will be affected by these reforms. Almost three quarters of estates claiming agricultural property relief (or those claiming agricultural property relief and business property relief together) are expected to be unaffected.

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

## **Levelling Up Fund**

*Asked by Lord Wigley*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect the final payments to be made to beneficiaries of the Levelling Up Fund. [HL2954]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** Whilst many projects have progressed at pace, we are aware that others have faced difficult delivery conditions which may make it hard to deliver by the original programme end date of March 2026.

With this in mind, we are looking at whether there is scope for places to move some spending into future years. This is dependent on Departmental budgets which will be agreed as part of the Spending Review process for 2026-2029. We will communicate the outcome to grant recipients following Spring Budget.

We still encourage projects to deliver as quickly as they can, so that the positive impacts of this investment can be felt by communities more quickly.

### London North Eastern Railway: Fares

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to undertake an interim review of the Simpler Fares pilot scheme on London North Eastern Railway; and what are the reasons for the two-year length of the pilot scheme. [HL3000]

**Lord Henty of Richmond Hill:** An evaluation is underway to assess the impact of the trial, this is expected to be completed next year and we intend to publish this in due course. Further data is required to validate findings over a longer time period and account for seasonality. The results of this trial will be carefully considered before taking any further decisions. The two-year length allows time for this process.

### Lord Alli

*Asked by Baroness Finn*

To ask His Majesty's Government what use Cabinet Office Ministers, including the Prime Minister, have made of Lord Alli's house in London since 5 July. [HL2902]

**Baroness Smith of Basildon:** Any hospitality received by Ministers is declared in accordance with the Ministerial Code. The Cabinet Office publishes details of ministers' hospitality on a quarterly basis, and this will move to a monthly basis in future. Hospitality received by ministers in a non-ministerial capacity is published on the parliamentary registers in line with the parliamentary codes of conduct.

### Motability

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to encourage longer vehicle leases in the Motability scheme. [HL2992]

**Baroness Sherlock:** The Department works closely with Motability Foundation and is responsible for the disability benefits that provide a passport to the Motability Scheme. Motability Foundation is an independent charitable organisation that is wholly responsible for the terms and the administration of the Scheme, along with oversight of Motability Operations.

Most vehicles available within the Scheme are leased for three years, however some are for longer periods. The policies relating to the operation of the scheme are determined by the Motability Foundation and not DWP.

### Motability Operations

*Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Motability Operations Ltd about reducing the environmental impact and embodied carbon of the Motability scheme. [HL2991]

**Baroness Sherlock:** The Department works closely with Motability Foundation and is responsible for the disability benefits that provide a passport to the Motability Scheme. Motability Foundation is an independent charitable organisation that is wholly responsible for the terms and the administration of the Scheme, along with oversight of Motability Operations.

Motability is leading on work to ensure that disabled people's needs are understood and supported as the transition to Electric Vehicles (EVs) continues. Motability Foundation has commissioned research into EV design to understand the challenges that disabled people may face in using them and has conducted extensive research to understand the barriers disabled people face when using EVs charge points. Working in partnership with the UK Government's Office for Zero Emission Vehicles, the British Standards Institution was commissioned to develop a national accessible charging standard for EVs charge points. To assist their customers, a charge point is fitted as part of a Motability lease, and for customers unable to have a charge point they receive a subscription to one of the public charging networks.

### Office for Local Government: Public Appointments

*Asked by Baroness Eaton*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they intend to appoint a Chair for the Office for Local Government. [HL2889]

*Asked by Baroness Eaton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the data released by the Office for Local Government in April concerning the performance statistics of councils across England. [HL2890]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The Department is committed to resetting the relationship between local and central government. As part of this, in September the Government announced it would review the remit of the Office for Local Government (Oflog), to ensure that it is adding the greatest possible value to the system of transparency, accountability and support of local government. No decisions on the appointment of its Chair will be taken until this process is complete.



The Department is clear that data alone is rarely enough to assess any local authority's performance and often needs context through further investigation. Oflog's Data Explorer presents published data from across government and carries a prominent warning that it should be used to generate questions and not reach judgements.

### Office for Place

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government on what evidential basis Ministers decided to abolish the Office for Place. [HL2988]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** As we act to boost housing supply, we are determined to take steps to improve the design and quality of the homes and neighbourhoods being built. By redeploying the Office for Place's expertise within MHCLG, the Government can more efficiently and effectively deliver on its commitment to high-quality design and placemaking.

### Planning Authorities: Staff

*Asked by Baroness Scott of Bybrook*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the commitment in the Labour Manifesto 2024 to appoint 300 new planning officers, how many have been recruited to date. [HL2941]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The Department's Planning Capacity and Capability programme already funds successful and well-established initiatives for bringing planners into the public sector, which we will seek to build on. This includes working with two delivery partners, Pathways to Planning a programme run by the Local Government Association and Public Practice. Pathways to Planning have delivered more than 80 new graduate planners, and Public Practice are recruiting 20 more experienced professionals into their Autumn 2024 cohort.

To rapidly increase these numbers, at the Budget the Chancellor announced a £46 million package of investment to support capacity and capability in local planning authorities. We are therefore working with delivery partners to understand how we can scale up this delivery even further and, fund the recruitment and training of an additional 300 planners. This includes expansion of the Pathways to Planning programme which has had significant interest from prospective graduates wanting to take up roles in local planning authorities and train while they work. This will be further underpinned by increases in planning fees we are introducing in the coming months that will help improve the resourcing of planning services. This activity will include monitoring measures to ensure this commitment is met.

### Plastics: Pollution Control

*Asked by Lord Wigley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of recent discussions in relation to an international treaty to curb plastic pollution; and what steps they are taking to accelerate progress on this matter. [HL3120]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Over 170 countries met for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in Busan from 25 November 2024 to 1 December 2024 to discuss a landmark treaty to end plastic pollution. While it is disappointing that no agreement was reached, the Committee decided it would resume the meeting for final negotiations in 2025.

The UK was one of 85 countries to endorse the [Stand Up for Ambition](#) statement calling for a global target to reduce the production of primary plastic polymers to sustainable levels, phasing out the most harmful plastic products and chemicals of concern in plastics, ambitious and effective financing from all sources, and allowing the treaty to be strengthened over time. The UK also supported using the text proposed by the Chair as a basis for future negotiations.

We urgently need an ambitious international agreement to end plastic pollution that tackles the full life cycle of plastics. The Government is committed to moving to a circular economy for plastics - a future where we keep our resources in use for longer; waste is reduced; we accelerate the path to net zero, we see investment in critical infrastructure and green jobs; our economy prospers; and nature thrives.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Stand up for ambition [Stand Up for Ambition (HL3120 attachment).pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-12-02/HL3120>

### Pornography: Internet

*Asked by Lord McColl of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government what action they are taking to tackle the harms of pornography. [HL2922]

*Asked by Lord McColl of Dulwich*

To ask His Majesty's Government what action they are taking to prevent children being exposed to pornography. [HL2923]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** The Online Safety Act imposes duties on user-to-user services and publishers of pornography to prevent children encountering pornographic content online using highly effective age assurance.



Ofcom can enforce duties on publishers of pornography from early 2025. The duties for user-to-user services will come into effect by summer 2025.

Additionally, the Independent Pornography Review will assess the effectiveness of pornography legislation, regulation and enforcement. We expect that the independent review will finalise its recommendations in the coming months.

### **Prisoners: Telephone Services**

*Asked by Lord Farmer*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to reform the prisoner telephony contract with the external commercial provider so that inmates are subject to the same terms and conditions as customers in the community. [HL2894]

**Lord Timpson:** The current supplier of the telephony service provides a service within the public prison estate which is not directly comparable to the services they provide to their customers in the community. In the prison estate, they also provide the network infrastructure and devices, a call management solution to allow for management of PIN phone accounts and to support call monitoring, and a call routing service to connect to phone numbers that have been permitted by HMPPS. The cost of the service is predominantly funded through prisoner credit purchases.

### **Private Rented Housing: Migration**

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of large net migration on the private rented sector. [HL3046]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The Government will ensure the immigration system is fair and controlled, while also being clear that net migration must come down.

The factors affecting supply in the private rented sector are complex and difficult to disentangle. As well as demographic change, they include house prices, rent levels, taxation policy, interest rates, and the movement of tenants into homeownership and social rented housing. While it is not possible to isolate the specific impact of each of these factors, it is important to recognise that the size of the private rented sector has doubled since 2002 to now be the second largest housing tenure. 4.7 million households rent privately, which is equivalent to 19% of the housing market – a figure which has remained relatively stable since 2013/14.

However, the Government recognises that the housing crisis we have inherited means that demand is currently outstripping the supply of properties available to let. This is why we will build 1.5m homes over this Parliament by taking bold action to reform our planning system, deliver a new generation of New Towns, and deliver the biggest increase in affordable housing for a generation.

### **Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022**

*Asked by Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect to implement sections 61 to 65, 67 and 70 to 74 of the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022. [HL2883]

*Asked by Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the specific causes for the delay in implementing sections 61 to 65, 67 and 70 to 74 of the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022; and what steps are being taken to address them. [HL2884]

*Asked by Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the delay in implementing sections 61 to 65, 67 and 70 to 74 of the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022 upon (1) mobile connectivity, (2) data poverty, and (3) regional digital inclusion; and how they plan to mitigate such impacts. [HL2885]

**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.

### **Property: Valuation**

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to abolish marriage value in property valuations. [HL3047]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 removes the requirement to pay marriage value in lease extensions and freehold acquisitions.

As set out in the Housing Minister's Written Ministerial Statement on 21 November, the Government will act as quickly as possible to provide homeowners with greater rights, powers, and protections over their homes by implementing the provisions of that Act.

### **Sleeping Rough: Greater London**

*Asked by Lord Bailey of Paddington*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the levels of rough sleeping in tents in urban areas, in particular London, and what recent

discussions they have had with local authorities and Transport for London on this topic. [HL3032]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The annual rough sleeping snapshot provides information about the estimated number of people sleeping rough on a single night between 1 October and 30 November each year. MHCLG does not specifically collect data on the number of people sleeping rough in tents at either a national or local authority level. The MHCLG rough sleeping adviser team are in regular dialogue with local authorities and other agencies to understand rough sleeping pressures within local areas across England.

The Government is committed to getting us back on track to ending homelessness once and for all.

### **Transport for London: Finance**

*Asked by Baroness Pidgeon*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to provide a long-term funding settlement for Transport for London to enable investment in infrastructure. [HL2934]

**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill:** The Department will continue to work with Transport for London (TfL) with

the aim to place it on a long-term financially sustainable footing as part of Phase 2 of the Spending Review. The Government remains committed to supporting London and the transport network on which it depends and continues to regularly engage with TfL to understand its investment plans.

### **Treasury: Correspondence**

*Asked by Lord Blunkett*

To ask His Majesty's Government what targets the Treasury have for the time to respond to letters from parliamentarians specifically addressed to Treasury ministers; and what percentage of such correspondence is answered within that timeframe. [HL3181]

**Lord Livermore:** In line with Cabinet Office guidance, HM Treasury aims to respond to ministerial correspondence from parliamentarians within 20 working days. Correspondence performance data is published within HM Treasury's Annual Report and Accounts. The 2023-24 Report noted that 62% of replies to parliamentarians were answered within the timeframe.

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