

Session 2024-25
No. 62



Wednesday
11 December 2024

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements1

Written Answers.....5

[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/>

Members who want a printed copy of Written Answers and Written Statements should notify the Printed Paper Office.

This printed edition is a reproduction of the original text of Answers and Statements, which can be found on the internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>.

Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

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

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Lords 2024

This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright/

Written Statements

Wednesday, 11 December 2024

Farming Schemes

[HLWS295]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: My honourable friend, the Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs, Daniel Zeichner MP, has made the following Written Statement:

I have today confirmed this Government has injected more than £343 million into the rural economy in the first week of December, benefiting more than 31,000 farmers.

This includes payments worth £223 million to Countryside Stewardship revenue customers and £74 million to Environmental Stewardship customers, administered by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA).

This Government is providing over £5 billion to the farming budget – the largest ever increase investment in sustainable food production in our country's history. To further support farmers, we have today announced new details on how farmers will benefit from improved and optimised farming schemes.

A new and improved Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (CSHT) scheme will open in 2025, providing new quarterly payments designed to improve farmers' cashflow and a rolling application window so customers can apply throughout the year. It also includes new actions to improve flood resilience and species abundance and important funding to secure enhanced environmental benefits and deliver for nature recovery, including sensitive areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

Our commitment to farmers is steadfast. That is why I'm working hard to get money into farmers' bank accounts as well as announcing today how farmers can benefit from the new CSHT scheme, with more flexible actions, improved payments to help cashflow and a rolling application window.

It's part of our £5 billion farming budget over two years - the largest ever directed at sustainable food production in our country's history. As we set out our Plan for Change, we are focused on supporting our farmers, supporting rural economic growth and boosting Britain's food security.

Our farmers are the heartbeat of the nation's rural economy, and I remain focused on supporting them by getting payments into bank accounts as quickly as possible.

I am very pleased that this December we have been able to inject more funding than ever from environmental schemes into the rural economy.

This comes at the same time as providing more certainty over the details in the CSHT offer to enable farmers to see for themselves how it can benefit them.

CSHT will open through an initial controlled roll out to ensure everyone gets the necessary support. Initially,

applications will be by invitation – on a rolling monthly basis.

We are also publishing an additional 14 Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) endorsed actions, further improving the offer. These will be available from summer 2025 to enable farmers and land managers to contribute further benefits to Grassland, Heritage, and Coastal sites, among others.

Further payments made in December include £39 million under SFI, as part of the quarterly payments system designed to improve farmers' cashflow and a further £7.4 million has been paid to customers who have completed Capital Grants works.

As part of this Government's New Deal for Farmers, we will set up a new British Infrastructure Council to steer private investment in rural areas including broadband rollout in our rural communities.

We are also developing a 25-year farming roadmap, focusing on how to make the sector more profitable in the decades to come.

Farmers and land managers are stewards of the environment, and we will continue to invest in them to make their businesses, food production and our country more sustainable and resilient through Environmental Land Management.

Fishing Opportunities: 2025

[HLWS293]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: My honourable friend, the Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs, Daniel Zeichner MP, has made the following Written Statement:

The UK has reached agreement with the EU and Norway on catch opportunities for 2025 through the UK-EU-Norway trilateral and UK-EU bilateral negotiations. Across these negotiations, the UK secured agreement on over 80 Total Allowable Catches (TACs), providing access to £660 million of UK fishing opportunities. Alongside the Coastal State negotiations on stocks including mackerel, this brings the total UK fishing opportunities secured for 2025 to 720,000 tonnes, worth an estimated £890 million based on provisional landing prices.

Further, since leaving the EU, the UK has a larger share of many of the Total Allowable Catches (TACs) set at these negotiations. It is estimated that the UK might have received around 600,000 tonnes of fishing opportunities if we were still an EU member state, in comparison to the 720,000 tonnes actually received. That's an estimated increase of 120,000 tonnes of fishing opportunities for the UK fleet in 2025.

In these negotiations the UK Government worked closely with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive to secure outcomes that deliver on all our domestic and international obligations, improving the sustainable management of our fish stocks for the long term in support of the whole of the of the UK fishing industry.

UK-EU Agreement

The UK has secured fishing opportunities of 150,000 tonnes, worth around £360 million based on historic landing prices, through agreement on around 70 TACs as well as agreement on arrangements for non-quota stocks. This is an increase of around 10,000 tonnes compared to 2024 largely driven by increasing scientific advice on sustainable catch levels for Northern Shelf anglerfish.

An initial estimate suggests that slightly fewer UK-EU TACs are set to align with scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) compared to last year, due to a challenging advice picture for a number of stocks. The Government will publish early in 2025 a full assessment of the number of TACs set consistent with ICES advice across all annual negotiations.

The UK and EU also made commitments to work together through the Specialised Committee for Fisheries to address the management challenges of certain fisheries. This includes reviewing the effectiveness of measures to protect spurdog and continuing to progress work on technical measures to support the recovery of depleted stocks in the Celtic and Irish Seas. The UK and EU also agreed to continue to work together through the SCF to support ICES in improving the science base for a number of stocks, including pollack in ICES area 6 and 7 (which will be benchmarked by ICES in early 2025) and sole 7hjk.

For non-quota stocks (NQS), the UK and the EU agreed a roll-over of access arrangements for 2025 to ensure continued access to fish NQS in EU waters. UK fleet landings for these stocks are historically worth around £30 million a year. We also agreed to roll-over existing joint management measures and increase within ICES advice some catch limits for seabass, and a roll-over of access arrangements for spurdog in the North Sea and albacore tuna.

UK-EU-Norway Trilateral Negotiations

The UK has also reached agreement with Norway and the EU on catch limits for 2025 for six jointly managed North Sea stocks, giving the UK fishing fleet access to opportunities worth over £300 million, based on historic landing prices.

The Parties agreed TACs for six stocks. Four of the six stocks were set in line with, or below, independent scientific advice from ICES. For North Sea herring, parties aimed to set TACs in line with advice. However, the current management structure, to which the UK has long objected, means we cannot consider outcomes to be in line with headline advice. Finally, for Northern Shelf cod, the parties acknowledged the current advice structure means the sub-stock located in the Southern North Sea and Eastern Channel in quarter one brings down the advised catch limits for sub-stocks further North and therefore brings significant challenges for the whitefish sector in the North Sea. The parties therefore agreed an approach to set the TAC using part of the headline advice in combination with an alternative catch scenario

provided by ICES. This approach is forecasted to lead to biomass increases across all three of the stock's sub-stocks and secures fishing opportunities that recognise the economic importance of cod in the mixed fishery.

The Parties renewed their commitment to deliver Long-Term Management Plans (LTMP) for their shared stocks and agreed a request to ICES to advise on an LTMP for saithe. The Parties also noted their commitment to start discussions on a new management model for herring in 2025, a significant priority for the UK. That model should also incorporate the newly developed LTMP. The Parties also agreed to start discussions in 2025 about moving the management of Northern Shelf anglerfish (monkfish) to a joint basis, and they further committed to continue to progress their joint work on the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance of their shared stocks.

Multilateral coastal States negotiations

The UK has agreed TACs at the level advised by ICES on the three widely distributed stocks we share with other coastal States in the North-East Atlantic: mackerel, blue whiting and Norwegian spring-spawning/Atlanto-Scandian herring. The opportunities will be worth an estimated £240 million to the UK fleet in 2025, based on historical prices. The UK will also have additional mackerel quota in 2025 as part of the multi-year deals with Norway and Faroes agreed last year.

Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)

The UK has continued to support the sustainable management of widely distributed and highly migratory stocks via Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) of which it is a member. RFMO negotiations this year have resulted in the agreement of a wide range of stock-related measures, conservation measures and measures to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU) activities. These negotiations have also delivered around 2000t of fishing opportunities for the UK, as well as a new sharing arrangement for the reopened Canadian Northern cod fishery.

UK-Norway and UK-Faroe Islands bilateral negotiations

Bilateral negotiations between the UK and Norway and the UK and the Faroe Islands on access arrangements and exchanges of fishing opportunities are ongoing.

Northern Ireland Act 1998: Consent Process Outcome

[HLWS292]

Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Hilary Benn) has today made the following statement:

Following my Written Ministerial Statement of 2 December (HCWS277), I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Assembly held a vote on the continued application of Articles 5-10 of the Windsor Framework yesterday. The motion passed with a majority of the elected members voting, but not with cross-community support.

As set out in both Schedule 6A of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Article 18 of the Windsor Framework, this result means that the next of these votes will take place in four years' time and not eight years' as cross-community support was not forthcoming.

I am now under a legal duty to commission an independent review into the functioning of the Framework. The review will report to me with its findings within six months, after which I shall be required to lay a copy of it before Parliament and then to respond.

The Government is, separately, obliged to inform the European Union of the result of the vote and the Minister for the Cabinet Office will shortly do so in line with the terms of the Windsor Framework. I shall continue to keep the House updated on these matters.

Prison Capacity Strategy

[HLWS291]

Lord Timpson: My Right Honourable Friend the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP) has today made the following statement:

Integral to this government's Plan for Change is ensuring that we have the prison places we need to lock up dangerous criminals and keep the public safe.

On 4 December, the National Audit Office published a scathing report on 'Increasing the Capacity of the Prison Estate to meet demand'. It is unequivocal in its criticism of the previous Government's approach to the criminal justice system, including its commitment to deliver 20,000 additional prison places by the mid-2020s and failure to deliver, with only 500 additional cells being added to the overall prison places stock.

Significant delays to projects – in some cases running years behind schedule – and a failure to address rising demand have left the system thousands of places short of the capacity it requires. It is now clear that even the original mid-2020s commitment was not sufficient to keep pace with the expected demand on prison places, according to the last Government's own projections. This put the viability of the entire system in jeopardy. Had we run out of prison places, police would not have been able to make arrests and courts could not have held trials. It could have led to a total breakdown of law and order in our country – with all the associated risks to public safety.

The expected cost of MoJ and HMPPS's prison expansion portfolio to build 20,000 additional places is currently estimated to be £9.4bn to £10.1bn, which is at least £4.2bn higher than estimated for the 2021 Spending Review. None of this was revealed by the last Government and only came to light when I became Lord Chancellor in July of this year.

Today, we publish the 10-year Prison Capacity Strategy and the first Annual Statement on prison capacity.

The Strategy is detailed, setting out our commitment to build the 14,000 places the last Government failed to deliver as part of their 20,000 prison place programmes, with the aim of completing it by 2031. It further sets out what, where, when and how we will build new prisons and expand existing prisons through additional houseblocks, refurbishments and temporary accommodation.

This strategy is realistic. Prison building is complex, notably the planning process to get sites approved for development. It is also costly to the taxpayer. Our delivery plans include contingency places to act as resilience to the programmes if a project becomes undeliverable or provides poor value for money and cannot be taken forward.

We are ambitious. This strategy sets out our work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to streamline the delivery of prison supply, including reforming the planning system, and delivering on our commitment to ensure prisons are recognised as nationally important infrastructure. This Government's ambition is to secure new land so that we are ready should further prison builds be required in future.

And we are committed to improving transparency, now and in the future. So, we will legislate, when parliamentary time allows, to make it a statutory requirement for the Government to publish an Annual Statement on prison capacity, like the one we are publishing today. The Annual Statement sets out prison population projections, the Department's plan for supply, and the current probation capacity position. This statement fulfils that transparency commitment for 2024, and holds us, and future Governments, to account on long-term planning, so that decisions on prison demand and supply are in balance.

Finally, we are being honest. Building enough prison places is only one part of the prolonged solution. In the coming years, the prison population will continue to increase more quickly than we can build new prisons. This is why, in October, I launched the Independent Sentencing Review. The Review will make recommendations in spring 2025, which will help us ensure there is always a prison place for dangerous offenders, that prisons enable offenders to turn their backs on crime and that we expand the range and use of punishment outside of prison.

I consider this 10-year Prison Capacity Strategy and the Annual Statement, along with the Independent Sentencing Review, necessary steps in our plan to protect the public and restore their confidence in the criminal justice system.

UK Food Security

[HLWS294]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: My honourable friend, the Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs, Daniel Zeichner MP, has made the following Written Statement:

Later today we intend to lay the next edition of the UK Food Security Report (UKFSR) in Parliament, as required by the Agriculture Act 2020.

The UKFSR sets out an analysis of statistics relating to food security, serving as an evidence base to inform future Government policy and public understanding.

This 2024 report will reflect improvements in the evidence base following consultation with a range of experts and stakeholders from across the food system.

Food security is national security. Food security is also complex and exposed to many different variables globally

and domestically such as the weather, markets and trade. It is therefore vital that the government monitors food security trends and even more so in a world facing increasing challenges from geopolitics and climate change.

The Government has confirmed to businesses and industry groups from across the food sector that work is underway to develop an ambitious new food strategy. The Government will be considering the UKFSR's findings to inform this work.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 11 December 2024

Aircraft: Oil

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to qualify and expedite the introduction of the new turbine engine oil MIL-PRF-23699, developed by NYCO and approved by the Society of Automotive Engineers, for engines used in commercial aviation. [[HL2962](#)]

Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill: The process of qualifying or expediting the introduction of a new engine oil is the role of the engine manufacturers who work with engine oil manufacturers to develop specifications that provide the right combination of constituents to meet their environmental, emissions, performance, reliability and maintenance targets.

Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential health effects, including for gene expression, for passengers and crew on commercial aircraft exposed to engine oil or engine oil decomposition products. [[HL2964](#)]

Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill: In 2007, the independent Committee on Toxicity (COT) undertook a review of cabin air contamination, including by products such as engine oil and engine oil decomposition products. The COT concluded that the evidence available did not establish a link between cabin air contamination and ill health but made some recommendations for further research. This was further reviewed in 2013, 2022 and 2024, concluding it unlikely that the levels of chemical contaminants in the aircraft cabin air are unlikely to cause adverse health effects following acute or long-term exposures.

Apprentices

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the decline in apprenticeships in recent years. [[HL2948](#)]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: The new government has inherited a context of a declining number of apprenticeship starts. Following reforms to apprenticeships, including the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017, apprenticeship starts by young people under 25 fell by 38% between the 2015/16 and 2022/23 academic years, with an overall decline in starts of 34%.

This government has a driving mission to break down barriers to opportunity and we want to rebalance

opportunities towards young people, who have the most to gain from apprenticeships but who too often have been locked out of accessing these opportunities.

This government's reformed growth and skills offer, which will have apprenticeships at its core, will deliver greater flexibility for learners and employers, including through shorter duration apprenticeships in targeted sectors. This will help more people learn new high-quality skills at work, and fuel innovation in businesses across the UK. The department has also begun work to develop new foundation apprenticeships, a training offer that will give more young people a foot in the door and support clear pathways and progression in work-based training and employment.

The department is also continuing outreach work in schools and colleges through the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge programme and targeting young people through the 'Skills for Life' campaign.

Armed Forces: Housing

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the progress made over the last 18 months in improving the maintenance of the accommodation of military personnel. [[HL2429](#)]

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich**

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that armed forces accommodation is sufficiently prepared for winter. [[HL2430](#)]

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich**

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made regarding the ownership and upgrading of married accommodation for serving personnel. [[HL2431](#)]

Lord Coaker: The Ministry of Defence (MOD) manages c47,000 Service Family Accommodation (SFA) properties in the UK. The Government inherited an SFA estate which is ageing and requires sustained investment to arrest decline and maintain accommodation and delivery standards.

The Secretary of State for Defence has committed to reviewing its target standard for accommodation with the aim of improving the standard of SFA across the estate, and to better delineate between the current, varied standards of condition.

Planning for winter 2024-25 has included delivering a full day Rehearsal of Concept (RoC) Drill on 5 September 2024, to test MOD's contractors' plans for winter preparedness against extreme weather scenarios. Preparedness has included ensuring appropriate resource is in place, conducting pre-winter maintenance work, issuing Winter Preparedness communications to Service

families, and preparing contingency plans should extreme weather events emerge.

Artificial Intelligence: Skilled Workers

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address any shortage in AI-specific skills. [HL2949]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: This government is committed to ensuring both learners and employers have access to the digital and artificial intelligence (AI) skills critical to our Opportunity and Growth Missions. To achieve this, we will build a responsive skills system, coordinated through Skills England, to deliver on the national, regional and local skills needs of the next decade.

The department has already provided a range of post 16 academic and technical qualifications relevant to AI skills. Developed in partnership with employers, there are currently 33 apprenticeship standards spanning levels 3 to 7 in digital occupations, including at degree level and in areas like data analytics and AI.

Learners can study three digital T Levels which include AI content, and there are 77 Higher Technical Qualifications approved and quality marked as providing the skills demanded in the workplace by employers, including AI skills. The majority of Skills Bootcamps are also in the digital sector, with 61% of starts in 2022/23 being in digital.

Within the school system, the department funds the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) to improve the teaching of computing and increase participation in computer science at GCSE and A level, across England. To support the teaching of AI, the NCCE delivers a range of courses on machine learning and AI, ethics, and teaching about AI in primary and secondary computing, which are free for teachers in state-funded education in England. The NCCE also facilitates industry-led events for pupils, to raise awareness of digital opportunities and careers in sectors such as Cyber and AI.

The government's ambition is for a curriculum that delivers excellent foundations in reading, writing and mathematics, and ensures every young person gets the opportunity to develop creative, digital and speaking and listening skills particularly prized by employers. To achieve this, the government has established an independent Curriculum and Assessment Review, covering ages 5 to 18, chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE, an expert in education policy.

The review group ran a call for evidence and held events over the autumn term to gather the views of education professionals and other experts, parents, children and young people, as well as other stakeholders, including employers. The feedback received will help the review group to consider its next steps and recommendations.

Across government, the new Industrial Strategy will channel support to eight growth-driving sectors in which the UK excels today and will propel it forwards tomorrow. Digital technologies have been identified as one of the eight growth-driving sectors and the department is currently consulting on the barriers to growth, including skills, in this sector. Furthermore, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, has commissioned an AI Opportunities Action Plan which will set out the essential role that equipping the UK's workforce with the right skills and attracting top talent will play in supporting the growth of the AI sector.

Bahrain: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recommendation of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions to re-accredit the National Institute for Human Rights of Bahrain with "B" status; and what are the implications of that for their funding for the National Institute for Human Rights of Bahrain under the Gulf Strategy Fund. [HL3008]

Lord Collins of Highbury: The UK plays no role in recommendations made by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. The Gulf Strategy Fund (GSF) does not provide direct funding to the Bahrain National Institute for Human Rights (NIHR). All GSF projects are delivered through implementing partners who provide training or technical assistance to local beneficiaries.

Bahrain: State Visits

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government which Government Ministers and officials attended the dinner held for King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa at Windsor Castle on 11 November. [HL3012]

Lord Collins of Highbury: The dinner held for King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa at Windsor Castle was a private event hosted by His Majesty The King. Guests included the Secretary of State for Defence, the Lord Chancellor, Chief of Defence Staff and the British Ambassador to Bahrain.

Brass Bands

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are giving to developing brass bands in England. [HL2995]

Baroness Twycross: The Government recognises the vital importance of culture and heritage in all parts of the country, particularly heritage in post-industrial towns

where brass bands continue to play an important local role. We also remain fully committed to supporting music in all its forms and broadening people's access to a diverse range of music genres.

Arts Council England, which is funded by taxpayers and National Lottery players, works with Brass Bands England who are a National Portfolio organisation in receipt of c.£406,000 of funding per annum to support the brass bands sector. A significant portion of their activity is focused on encouraging children and young people to participate in brass bands.

The Arts Council also funds The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain (NYBBGB) via the National Portfolio with funding of c.£100,000 per annum. NYBBGB is the UK's leading brass band charity for children and young people. They exist to give the brightest young brass and percussion musicians the opportunity to develop their musicianship and inspire others.

Between 2022 and 2024, Arts Council England will be investing over £4.5 million into organisations whose main focus is promoting Brass Bands.

Brook House Immigration Removal Centre

Asked by Lord German

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the death of a man detained at Brook House Immigration Removal Centre on 29 October, whether all suppliers in every immigration removal centre, including Brook House, undertook an ad hoc assessment of all open and post closure local 'assessment care in detention teamwork' files, as required by paragraph 52 of the Detention Services Order 08/2014, published in July 2021. [HL2978]

Asked by Lord German

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the death of a man detained at Brook House Immigration Removal Centre on 29 October, whether formal 'assessment care in detention teamwork' reviews were completed for all categories of person set out at paragraph 52 of the Detention Services Order 08/2014, published in July 2021. [HL2979]

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).

The published Home Office Detention Services Order 08/2014 "Death in immigration detention" provides guidance as to the actions that Home Office and contracted supplier staff must take in the event of a death in detention.

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.

Business: Investment

Asked by Lord Mendelsohn

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Office for Budget Responsibility's forecast that real business investment will fall 0.6 percentage points as a share of gross domestic product from 2023 to 2029, and what plans they have to address the risk of business investment falling. [HL3194]

Lord Livermore: Growth is the central mission of this government, and investment is central to this. This is why we have established the National Wealth Fund, which is expected to catalyse over £70bn of private investment; announced ambitious planning reforms to remove blockages to investment; and put forward proposals to reform the UK pensions system which could unlock around £80 billion of productive investment.

Our modern Industrial Strategy will also set out plans to support investment in growth-driving sectors and, in October, the international business community put its confidence in the UK's growth potential, committing £63 billion of investment around the International Investment Summit.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) expects real business investment to grow at 0.8 per cent on average each year between 2025 and 2029.

The OBR also expects the crowding-in of private investment as a result of the public investment announced in the Budget to increase potential output, increasing GDP by 0.4% after ten years, and by 1.4% in the long-run.

Care Homes: Children

Asked by Baroness Barran

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the £90 million of funding announced in the Autumn Budget for children's homes is new funding; how many places will be funded; and where those places will be located. [HL2873]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: The Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2024 represented HM Government's decisions on future spending in the context of the unfunded pressures, across both capital and resource spend, which the new government inherited in July and which my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, set out.

The government has decided to invest further in supporting the development of children's social care. £86 million of the £90 million funding announced in the Autumn Budget for 2025/26 represents the decision to invest in the Children's Homes capital programme to maintain capacity and expand provision in secure and open residential children's homes. The remaining £4 million will support smaller capital initiatives linked to

the new government's wider ambition to reform of children's social care.

The programme will support the provision of up to 550 open children's home placements nationwide, including a new bidding round launched to increase provision for children with complex needs.

The programme is intending to support the provision of around 80 additional secure children's home placements nationwide. Currently, this includes the building of new or replacement homes in Lincolnshire, Devon, Hampshire, and in London and West Midlands regions. There will be improvement works undertaken at other existing homes nationwide that may expand provision.

Churches: Music

Asked by Lord Kempell

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect and support sacred choral music in the UK including by supporting (1) cathedral choirs, and (2) relevant music education. [HL3148]

Baroness Twycross: HM Government has a strong commitment to all forms of music, including choral music.

Between 2019/20 and 2023/24 Arts Council England funded activity with a choral focus or element by nearly £200 million. This funding has supported the development, touring and promotion of choral music throughout England. Organisations supported by this funding include Ex Cathedra, a nationally recognised choir with a repertoire that reaches from the 12th to the 21st centuries.

Within the Music and Dance Scheme, the Department for Education continues to fund bursaries for training choristers through the Choir Schools' Association.

Civil Partnerships and Marriage

Asked by Lord Cameron of Lochiel

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to make an order under section 104 of the Scotland Act 1998 to enable pre-existing marriages to become civil partnerships. [HL3224]

Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent: The UK Government is currently engaging with the Scottish Government and considering their proposal. We will keep Parliament informed of any developments.

Collections: Human Remains

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the presence of ancestral human remains in the national collections, and what records they keep centrally of the quantity and location of such items. [HL3034]

Baroness Twycross: No such assessment has been made, and there are no centrally kept records. Museums are independent of government and decisions related to their collections are for their trustees to make.

The Human Tissue Act 2004 allows national museums to remove human remains from their collections provided that they are reasonably believed to be remains of a person who died less than 1,000 years before the day the relevant section came into force.

DCMS issued Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums in 2005 which encouraged museums to establish an advisory framework to assist in determining repatriation claims and provided a set of criteria which need to be taken into account in assessing claims.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Remote Working

Asked by Lord Watson of Wyre Forest

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to evaluate the effectiveness of the hybrid working policy of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. [HL3027]

Baroness Twycross: Our department's hybrid working policy expects the majority of our staff to spend at least 60% of their time in our offices or meeting key stakeholders.

To monitor the effectiveness of this policy, all Government departments publish HQ Office Occupancy data on a quarterly basis which shows the monthly average number of staff working in Civil Service Headquarters (HQ) buildings.

In September, which is the most recent monthly average published on gov.uk, our department had a 65% attendance at our London Headquarters.

Domestic Abuse: Ethnic Groups

Asked by Baroness Gohir

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of why women from minority ethnic groups are over-represented in domestic homicide data; and what steps they intend to take to reduce those rates. [HL2980]

Lord Hanson of Flint: Domestic homicide is a tragic crime and we are committed to developing the evidence base to improve our understanding of the triggers and causes of deaths related to domestic abuse, including for women from minority ethnic groups. This includes funding research by the National Police Chiefs' Council's Domestic Homicide Project, which captures information on domestic abuse related deaths from all 43 police forces and provides information on the ethnicity of both victims and perpetrators.

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) also allow for in depth learning from these deaths. The Domestic Homicide

Review Library holds all published DHRs to allow for more analysis of patterns and trends of domestic homicides and suicides linked to domestic abuse going forward.

Economic Situation: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent on 27 November (HL Deb col 684), whether it is still their position that there are two distinct economies on the island of Ireland as set out in the Windsor Framework command paper, published in February 2023 (CP 806). [HL3092]

Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent: The Government is clear that Northern Ireland's constitutional place is in the Union. The Government remains fundamentally committed to protecting Northern Ireland's place within the economically vital UK internal market and ensuring its smooth operation in practice, which is affirmed through the Windsor Framework. In doing so, we also recognise that many businesses in Northern Ireland trade with Ireland and that this trade brings benefits and opportunities overall.

Football: Women

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are giving to the development of women's football in England. [HL2993]

Baroness Twycross: We are dedicated to supporting every aspect of women's sport and ensuring all women and girls, no matter their background, are able to participate in sport and physical activity.

Karen Carney OBE's Review of Women's Football set out a route to lift minimum standards and deliver bold and sustainable growth. It included recommendations on meaningful access to facilities, player welfare and development of the talent pathway for women and girls across the country. The Minister for Sport recently convened all parties with recommendations in the review to press them for tangible progress.

The Football Foundation, the charity funded by the Government, the Football Association and the Premier League, has committed to implementing recommendations from a recent independent review to ensure new minimum standards for women and girls at funded sites. This includes guaranteeing a share of priority slots to women's and girls' teams, setting up a new small grants programme, specifically targeted at creating female-friendly facilities off the pitch, and ensuring refreshed Local Football Facility Plans reflect the growth in women and girls' football.

Sport England's 'Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities' guidance also supports grassroots sporting venues to provide well designed spaces for female users.

Gulf Strategy Fund

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Collins of Highbury on 9 August (HL537), when the annual summary of projects funded by the Gulf Strategy Fund in 2023–24 will be published. [HL3010]

Lord Collins of Highbury: The FY2023/24 annual summary will be published following the conclusion of the review. Future annual summaries will be prepared and published in line with the findings and recommendations of the review.

Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government which Government Ministers and officials (1) were consulted, (2) were informed, and (3) provided advice, on the appointment of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to the Honorary Knights Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order; and, if so, when. [HL3011]

Lord Collins of Highbury: Awards in the Royal Victorian Order are made personally by The King. With advice from His Majesty's Government, The King invested King Hamad of Bahrain with his Honorary Knighthood at Windsor Castle on 11 November 2024 in the year of his Silver Jubilee.

High Speed 2 Line: Finance

Asked by Lord Hain

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Livermore on 11 November, why is HS2 defined as an England and Wales project attracting no Barnett consequential. [HL2982]

Lord Livermore: Heavy rail infrastructure is not devolved in Wales, hence the UK Government is responsible for spending on heavy rail infrastructure across England and Wales. The Government is committed to rail schemes in Wales, by providing funding for operations, maintenance and infrastructure, and enhancement schemes such as modernising Cardiff Central Station.

The approach to heavy rail infrastructure is consistent with the funding arrangements for other policy areas, such as the construction of prisons, where the UK Government is responsible for spending in Wales, as Justice is Reserved.

The Welsh Government is receiving at least 20% more funding per person than equivalent UK Government

spending in England. That translates into over £4 billion more in 2025-26.

Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the preservation of historic places of worship if the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme is not extended after March 2025. [HL3116]

Baroness Twycross: The Department monitors the implementation and impact of the grant scheme through the regular reporting of the grant administrator. Since 2010, the grant scheme has returned over £350 million to listed churches, synagogues, mosques and temples.

Departmental settlements have been set following the Budget announcement on October 30. Individual programmes will now be assessed during the departmental Business Planning process.

Local Press

Asked by Lord Watson of Wyre Forest

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the work of the Local Democracy Reporting Service; and whether they plan to enhance its effectiveness in supporting local journalism and democratic accountability. [HL3026]

Baroness Twycross: The Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) plays an important role in supporting local journalism. LDRS reporters have been able to uncover stories that publishers may have otherwise been unable to discover due to increasing constraints on their resources. This is an area of reporting that is often significantly under provided but is essential to journalism's role of holding those in authority to account.

The Secretary of State has recently announced her plans to develop a Local Media Strategy, in recognition of the importance of this vital sector. We are working across Government and with the sector and other stakeholders as we develop this strategy, and recognise the continued importance of the LDRS.

Military Aircraft: Oil

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government what evaluation they have made of the use of MIL-PRF-23699 lubricants in Royal Air Force and Royal Navy jet-powered aircraft; and of its potential benefits in reducing hazards for those exposed to engine oil or engine oil decomposition products. [HL2963]

Lord Coaker: MIL-PRF-23699 is a specification for jet engine lubricants against which numerous individual products are manufactured by different suppliers. Although no overall assessment has been made of

lubricants manufactured to this specification, hazard assessments are made against the specific products used within Royal Air Force and Royal Navy air systems jet engines. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations require Original Equipment Manufacturers to provide Safety Data Sheets for all supplied products, including lubricants, which inform the hazard assessment process. Where residual risks are identified, they are relayed to the air system operator alongside any associated warnings and recommended mitigations.

Mortgages: Interest Rates

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the impact of rising mortgage rates on the length of mortgage terms and the resulting effect on the retirement age of mortgagors. [HL3214]

Lord Livermore: Average mortgage rates remain well below the recent peaks seen in Summer 2023 and Autumn 2022. However, this Government recognises that many households have been faced with higher mortgage rates in recent years. That is why we are committed to delivering economic stability to grow the economy and keep taxes, inflation and mortgage rates as low as possible.

Longer terms can help buyers to take their first steps onto the property ladder, and Financial Conduct Authority rules are in place to ensure that lending decisions take borrowers' ability to repay into account.

Non-crime Hate Incidents

Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Hanson of Flint on 26 November (HL2462), what estimate they have made of the cost to individual police forces of collecting and collating data on non-crime hate incidents. [HL2985]

Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough

To ask His Majesty's Government why they do not centrally collect or collate information on the number of children who have been investigated by police forces for non-crime hate incidents. [HL2990]

Lord Hanson of Flint: The Home Office does not currently hold data on the cost to individual police forces for collecting and collating data on non-crime hate incidents.

The data collected from the police balances policy needs and the burden on police forces.

Overseas Students: Hong Kong

Asked by Lord Tyrie

To ask His Majesty's Government after how many years of residence in the UK Hong Kong citizens admitted to the UK on a British National Overseas visa

qualify for home fee status at English higher education institutions. [HL2951]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: To qualify for automatic home fee status in England, a person must have settled status or ‘a recognised connection’ to the UK. In the case of persons with settled status, they must be ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands (Channel Islands and Isle of Man) for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

Subject to meeting the normal eligibility requirements, Hong Kong British National Overseas status holders will be able to qualify for home fee status and student finance once they have acquired settled status in the UK, usually after five years. Most persons who acquire settled status will automatically meet the three-year ordinary residence requirement for home fee status and student finance.

Pedestrian Areas: Greater London

Asked by Lord Bailey of Paddington

To ask His Majesty's Government what impact assessments they have made of the proposal for a Mayoral Development Corporation to pedestrianise Oxford Street, and what discussions they have had with Westminster City Council on this topic. [HL3029]

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage: Responsibility for designating any area of land in Greater London as a Mayoral development area rests with the Mayor of London. Any future proposal for Oxford Street will be subject to a statutory consultation in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. The government remains supportive of locally-led plans to revitalise Oxford Street and looks forward to working with the Mayor of London and local leaders to ensure Oxford Street remains a world-class retail destination.

Pedicabs: Licensing

Asked by Lord Bailey of Paddington

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Transport for London regarding the implementation, including timescale, of requiring the licensing of pedicabs. [HL3030]

Lord Henty of Richmond Hill: Transport for London (TfL) are currently preparing to consult on their plans to regulate London's pedicab industry. Department for Transport officials regularly meet with their counterparts at TfL on this matter, who have indicated that this consultation process will now begin in early 2025.

Public Transport: Weather

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to improve the readiness of systems and infrastructure to prevent public transport from being disrupted by extreme weather. [HL3022]

Lord Henty of Richmond Hill: The cross-government third National Adaptation Programme sets out plans to tackle the effects of climate change. For transport, this means working closely with transport infrastructure operators to take meaningful and measurable action to address risks posed by our changing climate.

The Department for Transport has plans in place to adapt to and address the risks of climate change. The Department consulted in April 2024 on a draft strategy to enhance climate change adaptation planning and action across the transport sector. The responses to this consultation are being considered.

For rail, the Department was clear in Network Rail's financial settlement for 2024-2029 that the rail network must be as resilient as reasonably possible to the effects of climate change. Network Rail's CP7 Delivery Plan sets out how it plans to invest £2.8bn over the course of CP7 in improving the resilience of its assets to extreme weather.

Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the absence of a functioning Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme in Northern Ireland on their plans for net zero. [HL3068]

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath: This policy is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Executive. We will publish an updated plan in due course, with full detail of policies and proposals to meet the UK's emissions targets on a pathway to net zero. In developing this we will continue to consult and work closely with the devolved governments.

Schools: Standards

Asked by Lord Shipley

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Fairer Schools Index developed at the University of Bristol, and its suggestion that the Progress 8 measure understates school achievements in deprived parts of England. [HL2944]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: The Progress 8 accountability measure is designed to take pupils' prior attainment into account and shows the progress made by pupils in a school compared to progress made by pupils nationally with similar starting points.

The department publishes breakdowns of Progress 8 for different pupil groups, such as disadvantaged pupils, to show the progress made by disadvantaged pupils at school level. It also shows the proportion of pupils in a school eligible for free school meals in the last six years, compared to the national average. This enables parents, and those working with schools, to view a school's results alongside information about its cohort. The government will continue to keep this under review.

Skills Bootcamps

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government how they plan to ensure that recently reprofiled and returned funds relating to Skills Bootcamps are swiftly and effectively redistributed to providers with a proven track record of delivering results. [HL2970]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to giving short-term contract extensions for high-performing Skills Bootcamps providers that can demonstrate their ability to meet milestones and deliver outcomes by 31 March 2025. [HL2971]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government when they will provide timelines and guidance for the procurement process to support strategic planning and ensure uninterrupted delivery for the 2025–26 Skills Bootcamp funding. [HL2972]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government what measures they are taking to protect and strengthen partnerships with Skills Bootcamps amid funding uncertainties and to recognise the role of curricula co-designed with employers in driving learner success and meeting economic needs. [HL2973]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: Skills Bootcamps are an important offer in the skills landscape and, in the longer term, the department intends to fund Skills Bootcamps through funding Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and local areas directly. Placing local areas in control of the delivery of all Skills Bootcamps will support better outcomes for learners and employers, with provision based on local need and directed by local knowledge and insights.

At present Skills Bootcamps remain available for learners via national contracts and grant funding in local areas. Existing national contracts remain in place until the end of their term.

The department is not planning any more competitions for national delivery of Skills Bootcamps. National providers have been informed of these changes and we will provide further information on contract extensions and variations in due course.

We will encourage providers to work with their local MCA or Local Enterprise Partnership to find out more about how they can work with them to deliver adult skills training.

Skills Bootcamps: ICT

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government how they will ensure that their programmes meet the significant

demand for Skills Bootcamps in AI, data and other high-growth areas and continue to deliver high-impact results for learners and employers. [HL2974]

Asked by Lord Clement-Jones

To ask His Majesty's Government how they plan to align Skills Bootcamps funding and delivery with their ambition to position the UK as a global leader in AI and digital innovation; and how they plan to ensure that the workforce is equipped with critical skills to drive economic growth. [HL2975]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: Skills Bootcamps are an important offer in the skills landscape. Latest published data shows that in the 2022/23 financial year, the majority of Skills Bootcamps were in the digital sector, with 61% of starts in digital.

This financial year, Skills Bootcamps are available in digital marketing, cyber security, software engineering, data analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. Mayoral Combined Authorities and local areas can use their grant funding for Skills Bootcamps in the digital sector where they have identified a local need.

The department recognises the long term importance of supporting learners and employers to develop digital skills. In addition to Skills Bootcamps, learners and employers can benefit from more than 30 high quality digital apprenticeship standards, including the level 3 cyber security technician standard and the level 5 data engineer standard. Learners can study three Digital T Levels which include AI content and there are 77 Higher Technical Qualifications approved and quality marked as providing the skills demanded in the workplace by employers, including AI skills.

The role of Skills England will include developing a coherent picture of our national and regional skills needs, and shaping the technical education needed to meet that demand.

Social Services: Children

Asked by Baroness Barran

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish the results from the Market Interventions Advisory Group on the children's social care market; and if so, when. [HL2870]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: The Markets Interventions Advisory Group was established to advise the department on options for addressing the systemic issues in the children's social care placement market, as identified by the Competition and Market Authority in their 2022 report and the independent review of children's social care, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-childrens-social-care-final-report>.

The work of the group, the reports set out above and engagement with a range of stakeholders fed into our policy paper 'Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive', which was published on 18 November 2024. It

sets out the government's ambitious plans to fix the dysfunctional care market and crackdown on the excessive and exploitative profits made by some private providers.

Social Workers: Bureaucracy

Asked by Baroness Barran

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will set out a timeline for completing and publishing the Department for Education's work with the National Workload Action Group to consider "drivers of unnecessary workload" for social workers; and if so, when. [HL2871]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: The National Workload Action Group will provide its final report to the department no later than January 2025, with insights and considerations for reducing unnecessary workload for social workers. Ministers will then consider the best way to take forward findings from the report and next steps.

Teachers: Working Hours

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that mainstream schools overseen by multi-academy trusts fulfil the requirement set out in guidance to teach a minimum of 190 days a year, with an indicative 32.5 hours including breaks per week. [HL2879]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: The length and structure of the school year in academies is a matter for the academy trust.

Non-statutory guidance is in place which sets out the expectation that all mainstream, state-funded schools, including academies, should deliver a minimum school week of 32.5 hours by September 2024. As with all government policies we will keep this approach under review.

Theatre

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are providing to regional theatre in England. [HL2994]

Baroness Twycross: The Government recognises the vital role that the arts, including theatre, play for people and communities in all parts of this country, and delivers funding to theatres primarily through Arts Council England (ACE).

Arts should not be the preserve of the privileged few. It is a priority for this government and ACE to support more people to access great theatre, via funding programmes such as Project Grants and the National Portfolio. ACE's regional theatre National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) are key to delivering this priority, with many of their

funded venues delivering high quality productions every year.

Since 2022, the Arts Council has invested nearly £43 million into community theatres, supporting theatres like the award winning Little Bulb Theatre in Mendip, which receives £720,000 per annum which will help the theatre continue to engage with community groups close to its home base in rural Somerset; and the Royal & Derngate in Northampton, that received £300,000 towards costs and loss of income relating to RAAC (reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete) identified in the building and the mitigating actions it took in response.

Tourism: VAT

Asked by Lord Bailey of Paddington

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the merits of reintroducing VAT-free shopping for overseas visitors. [HL3028]

Lord Livermore: The Government has no plans to introduce a new tax-free shopping scheme in Great Britain. Visitors to Great Britain can continue to claim VAT relief where the items purchased are shipped directly to their home country as exports.

In March 2024, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) conducted a review of the previous Government's 2020 costing of removing tax-free shopping. The OBR's updated estimate is that the withdrawal of the VAT Retail Export Scheme will save the Exchequer around £540 million per year by 2025-26. Reintroducing tax-free shopping would therefore likely come at significant cost to the Exchequer. The Government has also noted recent ONS data, which shows that tourism numbers and spending for the UK has recovered at a similar rate following the pandemic to other European economies that offer tax-free shopping.

UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask His Majesty's Government further to the remarks by Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent on 27 November (HL Deb col 684), whether Ministers have ceased to be subject to any legal duties to promote an all-Ireland economy. [HL3091]

Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent: Section 10(1)(b) of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 contains duties on Government Ministers to have due regard to the Joint Report between the UK and EU negotiators of October 2017. That report makes reference in general terms to, among other things, the 'all-island economy', alongside a range of other considerations relevant to Brexit. In practice, the report's contents have been superseded by the internationally binding arrangements under the Windsor Framework and wider Withdrawal Agreement.

Visas: National Security

Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Hanson of Flint on 26 November (HL2463), why periodic data on individuals who have had UK visas revoked on the grounds of (1) national security, and (2) being non-conducive to the public good, are not currently held in a reliable and repeatable form. [HL2987]

Lord Hanson of Flint: The Home Office is continually working to improve its systems and management information. A new IT system product which will provide more reliable data, in this area, is currently under development.

The relevant data is currently held manually on spreadsheets maintained at local team level. To collate and verify that data in the context of this question could only be done at disproportionate cost.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1	
Farming Schemes1	
Fishing Opportunities: 20251	
Northern Ireland Act 1998: Consent Process Outcome2	
Prison Capacity Strategy3	
UK Food Security.....3	
Written Answers.....5	
Aircraft: Oil5	
Apprentices.....5	
Armed Forces: Housing.....5	
Artificial Intelligence: Skilled Workers6	
Bahrain: Human Rights6	
Bahrain: State Visits.....6	
Brass Bands6	
Brook House Immigration Removal Centre.....7	
Business: Investment7	
Care Homes: Children7	
Churches: Music.....8	
Civil Partnerships and Marriage.....8	
Collections: Human Remains8	
Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Remote Working.....8	
Domestic Abuse: Ethnic Groups8	
Economic Situation: Northern Ireland.....9	
Football: Women.....9	
Gulf Strategy Fund9	
Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa.....9	
High Speed 2 Line: Finance9	
Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme10	
Local Press10	
Military Aircraft: Oil10	
Mortgages: Interest Rates.....10	
Non-crime Hate Incidents.....10	
Overseas Students: Hong Kong.....10	
Pedestrian Areas: Greater London.....11	
	Pedicabs: Licensing 11
	Public Transport: Weather..... 11
	Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme: Northern Ireland..... 11
	Schools: Standards..... 11
	Skills Bootcamps 12
	Skills Bootcamps: ICT..... 12
	Social Services: Children..... 12
	Social Workers: Bureaucracy 13
	Teachers: Working Hours..... 13
	Theatre 13
	Tourism: VAT 13
	UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland..... 13
	Visas: National Security 14