

Session 2024-25
No. 71



Wednesday
8 January 2025

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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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
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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
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Lord Leong	Whip
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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
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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, Whip
Lord Timpson	Minister of State, Ministry of Justice
Baroness Twycross	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture Media and Sport, Spokesperson, Cabinet Office, Whip
Lord Vallance of Balham	Minister of State, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Baroness Wheeler	Deputy Chief Whip

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 8 January 2025

UK and Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council 2024

[HLWS353]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Europe, North America and Overseas Territories (Stephen Doughty) has today made the following statement:

The twelfth UK-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council was held from 19–21 November 2024 in London. The Council was attended by elected leaders and representatives from Anguilla, Ascension Island, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, the Pitcairn Islands, St Helena, the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia, Tristan da Cunha and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The Overseas Territories are an invaluable part of the British family. The UK has a responsibility to ensure security and good governance of the Overseas Territories and their peoples.

The JMC is the highest forum for political dialogue and consultation between the elected Leaders of the Overseas Territories and UK Ministers. We met under the strapline of *'Listen, Transform, Deliver – Together'*. This reflects the UK's desire to build closer relationships, based on mutual respect and inclusion, and to transform the UK's relationship with the Overseas Territories for us both to deliver greater security and prosperity.

In my capacity as Minister for the Overseas Territories, I chaired the Council. Other Ministerial colleagues who attended the discussions included the Home Office Minister (Lord Hanson), the Minister for the Armed Forces (Luke Pollard MP), the Minister for Climate (Kerry McCarthy MP), the Minister for Public Health and Prevention (Andrew Gwynne MP), and the Minister for Early Education (Stephen Morgan MP). Representatives from UK Export Finance and the Joint Maritime Security Centre also joined us. His Majesty the King also spent time meeting with representatives of the OTs at the annual reception for the Diplomatic Corps at Buckingham Palace.

The key themes of discussion at this year's Council were: resetting the relationship between the UK and the Overseas Territories; security and irregular migration; economic diversification and resilience; tackling illicit finance; environment and climate change, overseas development assistance; and, breaking down barriers to opportunity for citizens. Discussions were positive and constructive, reflecting a shared desire to transform the relationship.

The elected Leaders of the Overseas Territories warmly welcomed the five principles I set out to guide the UK's

relationship with the elected Governments of the Overseas Territories:

- i) devolution and democratic autonomy for the Overseas Territories;
- ii) listening to the Overseas Territories, following the principle of "nothing about you without you";
- iii) partnership with the Overseas Territories based on mutual respect and inclusion- rights come with responsibilities;
- iv) good governance and ensuring proper democratic accountability and regulation; and
- v) defending the Overseas Territories' security, autonomy and rights, including the right of self-determination.

The Council agreed priorities and set out commitments and areas for joint work in the year ahead. Representatives welcomed that each UK Government Department has an assigned minister with responsibility for the Overseas Territories. I convene and chair this group to ensure mission-driven focus on the Overseas Territories. Representatives welcomed the extension of access to the Leadership College for Government for permanent secretaries (or equivalents) of the Overseas Territories. This will build expertise and help develop senior peer relationships between the Overseas Territories and the UK. We discussed the complex and varied security and irregular migration challenges of the Overseas Territories. The UK and the Overseas Territories' Governments expressed their solidarity with the Government and people of the Turks and Caicos Islands in respect of the security challenges they currently face and committed to working together across the British family to assist where possible.

We discussed the vital role of the Overseas Territories' stewardship of internationally important and unique environments and ecosystems, including protecting 94% of unique British biodiversity. Representatives welcomed the commitment of the Foreign Secretary that climate and nature crisis will be central to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's work, which builds on the Prime Minister's commitment that climate and nature will be at the centre of the cross-UK Government missions. We discussed economic growth. We resolved to promote and encourage trade and investment as key engines of prosperity.

Tackling illicit finance across the UK, OTs and Crown Dependencies is a Government priority. We agreed to work in partnership on this important agenda. I emphasised the importance of implementing Publicly Accessible Registers for Beneficial Ownership (PARBOs). The UK also set out the ambition for this becoming the global norm and the expectation that the OTs would implement registers that are fully accessible to the public. Montserrat has joined Gibraltar in implementing a public register and commitments were made by St Helena – who passed legislation earlier this month - and the Falklands Islands to implement these by April 2025. Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin

Islands, the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands will have legislation on legitimate interest access registers of beneficial ownership approved through their respective legislatures by April 2025, with implementation by June 2025 or earlier. The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary attended the closing

session of the Council underscoring their determination to reset the relationship with the Overseas Territories.

We agreed a joint communiqué, which was issued following the conclusion of the Council and published on the gov.uk website.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 8 January 2025

All-party Parliamentary Groups

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what are the rules for All-Party Parliamentary Groups requiring them to advertise their future meetings; and who is responsible for monitoring and enforcing any non-compliance. [HL3637]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The arrangements for All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) are set out in the [The All-Party Parliamentary Groups Guide to the Rules](#). This states that the chair of the relevant APPG is responsible for the publication of certain meetings at least a week in advance in the All-Party Notices. The meetings which require a notice are an annual general meeting; an extraordinary general meeting; or any other meeting where a vote is to be held or a decision taken, or where there is an outside speaker. The notice in the All-Party Notices must include the details of a parliamentary contact and, if relevant, the name of the outside speaker.

The Guide to the Rules was approved by the House of Commons Standards Committee following a resolution of the House of Commons.

Paragraph 10 of the House of Commons Code of Conduct provides that an MP who is the chair and registered contact of an APPG must ensure that the APPG complies with the rules on APPGs. The Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards may investigate alleged breach of those rules. Members of the House of Lords are not permitted to be named as the chair and registered contact of an APPG but may be an office holder.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

All-Party Parliamentary Groups Guide to the Rules [guide-to-the-rules-sep-2023.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-12-19/HL3637>

China: Foreign Relations

Asked by *Viscount Waverley*

To ask His Majesty's Government to what extent pragmatic but stable engagement with China is integral to their foreign policy. [HL3630]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: As G20 countries and members of the UN Security Council, the UK and China have a shared responsibility to work together. This Government will take a long-term, consistent and strategic approach to UK-China relations; cooperating where we can, competing where we need to and challenging where we must.

Colombia: Gender-based Violence

Asked by *Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what support and funding, if any, they give to Indigenous Women's Commissions in the various Colombian Indigenous Tribes (1) to support the legal training the commissions offer about sexual and gender-based violence, (2) to train magistrates in the Indigenous Justice System about gender, and (3) to support the work they do with indigenous women and girls, victims of sexual and gender-based violence. [HL3642]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: Colombia is a priority country for the UK's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) Strategy. The UK has supported the Special Jurisdiction for Peace for those documenting cases of sexual violence in conflict. With women's organisations, our support has ensured survivors of sexual violence, including indigenous women, receive justice and support. The UK has also supported Colombia's first Women Peace and Security National Action Plan, ensuring indigenous women's experiences were heard. During his visit to Colombia in November, Lord Collins met civil society and women's organisations to underline UK support.

Colombia: Indigenous Peoples

Asked by *Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether UK aid is being used to address the depletion of important ecosystems in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia. [HL3643]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: We remain concerned about the environmental damage from organised crime in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, and Embassy officials have raised this with the Ministry of Environment. Through the Magna Carta Fund, the UK has supported civil society to protect indigenous environmental defenders. This has included the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, where we support protection and judicial mechanisms for environmental defenders, and contribute funding to conservation and restoration schemes to protect fragile ecosystems.

Asked by *Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether their Embassy in Bogotá has been monitoring the return of the displaced Wiwa Indigenous Communities of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia, and what is their assessment of the security in that region for indigenous communities. [HL3644]

Baroness Chapman of Darlington: We remain concerned at the violence facing the Wiwa community. Embassy officials visited and discussed security concerns with Wiwa communities in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in October 2024, and raised these issues with local authorities, the Ministry of Defence, and the Office of the

High Commissioner for Peace. Supporting Colombia in its commitment to secure a lasting peace is an important priority of this Government. We are working with the Colombian government and other partners to implement the 2016 Peace Agreement, including the Ethnic Chapter. We support the protection of the Wiwa indigenous peoples through our funding of civil society organisations and UN agencies.

Euthanasia: Finance

Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that there will be no cuts to the other parts of the health budget to pay for assisted dying if it is legalised in the UK. [HL3681]

Baroness Merron: As per long-standing convention, the Prime Minister has set aside collective responsibility on the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life Care) Bill, so the Government will remain neutral on the passage of the bill. As with all bills, there are multiple stages for it to go through before it can become law, and this continues to be a matter for Parliament.

If the will of Parliament is that the law on assisting dying should change, the Government would work to ensure that the law is implemented in the way that Parliament intends and that is legally effective.

Autumn Budget 2024 set budgets for this year and the next financial year. Funding for future years and future decisions across the health budget will be decided through the normal spending review process.

Football

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the meaning is of "exercises a higher degree of influence or control over" club, as set out as part of the proposed Owners' and Directors' test in Clause 3(2)(b) of the Football Governance Bill. [HL3691]

Baroness Twycross: A club's ultimate owner is defined as the owner who has the highest degree of influence or control over the activities of the club.

A club can have more than one ultimate owner if those owners - all have the same degree of influence or control.

The definition of "significant influence or control" by owners will be set out in Secretary of State guidance, which will be published in due course.

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask His Majesty's Government whether, following Committee Stage of the Football Governance Bill, they intend to continue with plans to provide the Secretary of State with legislative powers to define the beginning and end dates of the season for football competitions. [HL3692]

Baroness Twycross: This power is required so that in the case of any potential future changes to a football season and how it is calculated, the Secretary of State is able to quickly make corrective amendments to the definition.

This power is not about amending the industry's definition of a season. The current definition of a football season within the Bill is accurate for the current situation. If the current situation were to change, the Secretary of State should have the ability to alter this definition to ensure the regime is still operational.

Football: Payments

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask His Majesty's Government which of the Premier League of English Football League Clubs were consulted on the proposal to include parachute payments in the Football Governance Bill and on which dates those meetings took place. [HL3687]

Baroness Twycross: The Football Governance Bill is the culmination of almost five years of work. During this time, there has been extensive engagement with key stakeholders by the department (which included regular meetings with the Premier League, where policy such as parachute payments were discussed) and by the Minister for Sport, whilst she was in Opposition.

Ahead of the introduction of the Football Governance Bill, DCMS Ministers met with Brentford, Liverpool, Tottenham Hotspur, West Ham United, Brighton and Hove Albion, Crystal Palace and Everton and parachute payments were discussed. A significant number of meetings also took place with the Premier League executive, who represent their members and have advocated on behalf of clubs. Similar meetings were also held with the EFL and National League executives and clubs.

The Secretary of State and Minister for Sport invited all clubs to meet on 23rd October where the Bill was again discussed.

Football: Regulation

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will place copies of all correspondence with UEFA, FIFA and the International Olympic Committee regarding the proposal to introduce a Football Regulator in the Library of the House. [HL3689]

Baroness Twycross: As has been reiterated throughout the Committee stage of the Football Governance Bill, it would not be appropriate to publish private correspondence with any stakeholders in the Library of the House.

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will list all the appointments made to date to the Shadow Football Regulator, setting out how many were previously employed in the DCMS during the last five years as employees, advisers, or appointees to DCMS-appointed Sports Advisory Groups, and where the Shadow Football Regulator's office is based. [HL3690]

Baroness Twycross: The Shadow Football Regulator is a transition team within DCMS that is working to set up a new Independent Football Regulator. Staff are currently located across DCMS' sites in Manchester and London.

As of 19th December 2024, the Shadow Regulator comprises 38 Full Time Equivalent staff, 36 of which are at grades below senior civil service (SCS) level - as is usual practice regarding the civil servants we are unable to comment further on these appointments due to the risk of identifying the individuals who have been appointed.

The remaining two appointments are at SCS level. Of these, one returned to DCMS following a secondment to the Sports Ground Safety Authority. The other was recruited from an independent regulator.

Hospitals: Admissions

Asked by Lord Kamall

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the cut in the winter fuel payment on hospital admissions this winter. [HL3674]

Baroness Merron: An impact assessment of the cut in winter fuel payment on hospital admissions this winter has not been produced. The Government has taken action to ensure low-income households are protected this winter.

Hospitals: Discharges

Asked by Lord Kamall

To ask His Majesty's Government how many people as of 1 December who were medically fit to be discharged from hospital had not been. [HL3678]

Baroness Merron: On 1 December 2024, the number of patients in England remaining in hospital who were medically fit to be discharged was 12,086.

Independent Football Regulator

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Twycross on 18 December (HL Deb col 370), whether it is their intention to seek assurances from UEFA that the introduction of backstop powers to the proposed Football Regulator does not impact on the autonomy and independence of football's governance as required by UEFA. [HL3688]

Baroness Twycross: As set out during the House of Lords Committee Stage debate on 18 December, UEFA raised no concerns about the backstop in its most recent meetings with DCMS and the Minister for Sport. The Department continues to engage with UEFA and other relevant stakeholders as the Bill progresses through Parliament.

Packaging: Recycling

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask His Majesty's Government how they intend to engage with industry in relation to the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations 2024 as part of the development of illustrative base fees; and what plans they have to publish the methodology used to develop the most recent illustrative fees. [HL3164]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: Under the new Government, Defra has engaged with industry to ensure that the calculation of local authority costs to manage household packaging waste is as accurate as possible. This engagement continues and underpins further development of illustrative Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (pEPR) base fees to ensure robust quality assurance of the modelling.

We included a summary of the methodology to calculate pEPR fees as part of the two publications of pEPR illustrative base fees, in August and September 2024. As part of our current engagement with industry we are sharing further details on our methodology and will continue ensuring that the information is shared more widely.

Physician Associates: Assessments

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask His Majesty's Government how many physician associates currently working in the NHS or in private healthcare have not passed the Physician Associate National Examination; and whether they plan to ensure that physician associates currently working have passed it before the deadline for registering with the General Medical Council in December 2026. [HL3523]

Baroness Merron: The Department does not hold data on how many Physician Associates (PAs) currently working in the National Health Service or in private healthcare have not passed the Physician Associate National Examination (PANE).

Statutory regulation of PAs and Anaesthesia Associates (AAs) by the General Medical Council (GMC) has begun. The GMC has made it a mandatory registration requirement for all PAs to have passed the PANE. Under the Anaesthesia Associate and Physician Associate Order, PAs and AAs must join the GMC register or cease practising by December 2026.

Social Rented Housing

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask His Majesty's Government how many social homes they expect to be delivered in each of the next five years. [HL3567]

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage: With regard to our work to increase the number of new social homes, I refer to the noble Lord to the answer given to Question UIN 19382 on 20th December 2024.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UIN 19382 [UIN 19382.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2024-12-17/HL3567>

Youth Services

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking in relation to recruitment to the youth-led round

tables and Youth Advisory Board in developing the National Youth Strategy. [HL3638]

Baroness Twycross: We will ensure that young people can influence decisions on the new Youth Strategy at every stage. A Youth Advisory Group is being established, with the first meeting scheduled for January 2025. Members of the group will comprise young people with diverse lived experience from across the country. We will also engage with other youth stakeholder groups through roundtables and a range of other activities. The Minister for Youth, the Secretary of State and DCMS officials have already met with a number of young people and youth sector organisations to hear their thoughts on the Strategy. We will continue to do so over the coming weeks and months.

We know there is existing work across the sector to understand issues faced by young people, propose solutions, and promote youth voice in decision-making. We will build on what already exists to co-produce the strategy.

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