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**Thursday
27 October 2016**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements 1

Written Answers.....4

[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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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 Evans of Bowes Park	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Anelay of St Johns	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Whip
Lord Bates	Minister of State, Department for International Development
Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government, Wales Office
Lord Bridges of Headley	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Exiting the European Union
Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen	Whip
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Dunlop	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office and Northern Ireland Office
Lord Freud	Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Goldie	Whip
Lord Keen of Elie	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
Lord Nash	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Baroness Mobarik	Whip
Baroness Neville-Rolfe	Minister of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Lord Price	Minister of State, Department for International Trade
Lord Prior of Brampton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health
Baroness Shields	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office and Department for Culture Media and Sport
Lord Taylor of Holbeach	Chief Whip
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Lord Young of Cookham	Whip
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Thursday, 27 October 2016

Brussels IIa Regulation on Family Law

[HLWS225]

Lord Keen of Elie: My right honourable friend the Minister of State for Courts and Justice (Sir Oliver Heald QC) has made the following Written Statement.

"The Government has today decided to opt in to the European Commission's proposal which repeals and replaces Regulation 2201/2003, also known as the Brussels IIa Regulation, on cross-border family matters.

Brussels IIa has applied since 1 March 2005 and is the main instrument for families involved in cross-border divorce or children proceedings. It establishes rules to decide which EU Member State's courts can determine divorce and other matrimonial matters, and parental responsibility matters (including residence and contact), and how orders arising from these cases can be recognised and enforced in another Member State. It also provides rules on the return of children abducted to, or wrongfully retained in, other Member States (usually by one parent), which supplement the international 1980 Hague Child Abduction Convention.

Following an evaluation of the current Regulation the Commission's proposal aims to improve its use by providing clearer deadlines for certain procedures; making it easier for judgments to be recognised and enforced in another Member State; clarifying and streamlining certain parts of cross-border child abduction proceedings; removing the possibility that a court will refuse to enforce a judgment on the basis that it would have applied different national rules to whether a child should have been heard in the proceedings; and clarifying and improving the procedures for cooperation between authorities.

Notwithstanding the result of the referendum on EU membership the Government considers it is in the UK's interests to opt in to this proposal. Firstly the UK already applies the current Regulation to the benefit of UK citizens, including children, in cross-border families, and it wants to avoid the risk that, if the new Regulation comes into force before the UK's exit, and the UK has not opted in to the Regulation, the existing Regulation will no longer apply to the UK because it might be deemed inoperable. This might mean for a period of time no EU instrument regulates these matters for UK families even though the UK is still a Member State. Secondly, even after a UK exit the Regulation will affect UK citizens, principally in other Member States, and it is in the UK's interests to influence the negotiations. As a family justice measure, this proposal must be agreed by unanimity in the Council.

During the negotiations the Government will aim to make sure that what is agreed respects national competence, limits any impacts on domestic law and

procedures and minimises any additional burdens on the courts and the authorities that will use the new Regulation."

ECOFIN

[HLWS223]

Lord Young of Cookham: My right honourable friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr David Gauke) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

A meeting of The Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) was held in Luxembourg on 11 October 2016. The Government is committed to leaving the European Union; in the interim, it continues to participate fully in ECOFIN meetings. EU Finance Ministers discussed the following items:

Opening Session

Ministers were briefed on the outcomes of the 10 October meeting of the Eurogroup and the Commission presented an update on the current economic situation. Ministers also discussed issues relating to the improvement and implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact and Commission proposals for a European Fund for Sustainable Development.

Current Financial Services Legislative Proposals

The Council Presidency provided an update on current legislative proposals in the field of financial services.

Fight against fraud

The Council Presidency and Commission delivered information on VAT-related aspects of the draft Directive on the fight against fraud affecting the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law (PIF Directive).

Banking Union

Ministers discussed the current state of play regarding implementation of Banking Union within the Eurozone.

G20 and IMF meetings

Council followed-up on the G20 and IMF meetings which took place in Washington on 6-9 October 2016. The Presidency and Commission provided information on the outcomes including; continuing the work on resilience and sustainability, continuing the work on tax avoidance and tax evasion and considering issues around the digitalisation of financial services.

Climate Finance

Ministers discussed preparations for the 22nd Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Marrakesh, 7-18 November 2016), and agreed draft European Council Conclusions.

European Semester 2016 – Lessons Learnt

Ministers exchanged views on key challenges, lessons learnt and the way forward for the European Semester.

Joint report on health systems and fiscal sustainability

A presentation was given by the Commission on the Joint Commission-EPC report of the health systems and

fiscal sustainability. This was followed by an exchange of views.

Other Business – The Basel Committee’s banking reform agenda

The Commission provided an update on the state of play in ongoing Basel negotiations.

G6 Rome

[HLWS226]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The informal G6 group of Interior Ministers held its most recent meeting in Rome on 20 and 21 October 2016. Representatives of the United States of America and the European Commission also attended the meeting.

The summit was chaired by the Italian Minister of the Interior, Angelino Alfano and I represented the United Kingdom. The other participating States were represented by Jorge Fernández Díaz (Spain), Tomasz Orłowski (Polish Ambassador to Italy), Bernard Cazeneuve (France), and Thomas de Maizière (Germany). The USA was represented by Jeh Johnson (US Secretary of Homeland Security) and Loretta Lynch (US Attorney General). The European Commission was represented by Dimitris Avramopoulos (Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship) and Sir Julian King (Commissioner for the Security Union). Representatives from other organisations including UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration, Interpol and Europol also attended.

The first session took place on 20 October. This consisted of a discussion on migration in the 21st century, focusing on effective upstream action in source and transit countries, particularly in Africa. The discussion also covered procedures to identify those in need of protection, how to deter economic migrants who do not need our protection and approaches to enhance cooperation with transit countries. There was a general consensus that upstream intervention was essential to addressing the issue of illegal migration to the EU but that this will take time and will involve concerted and continued efforts by the EU and all G6 States.

The meeting continued on Friday 21 October, with the next session on security and terrorism, focusing on efforts to counter radicalisation. The attendees agreed the need to learn from each other and the importance of working closely with communities to deter extremism. Participants noted that counter-radicalisation policies worked best when delivered in a ‘bottom up’ way with full engagement from local communities in designing and developing the right strategies. The group reaffirmed the G6’s commitment to ensure that steps to improve security and counter terrorism are at the forefront of the EU’s political agenda.

The final session focused on cyber-security, which had been chosen as a discussion topic on the basis that, as technology progresses and cloud computing grows, cybercrime is perhaps the fastest growing criminal threat that we face. The attendees discussed how best to cooperate to address the problem and considered the implementation of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.

In my interventions, I outlined the large amount of work the UK is doing to address the current migratory pressures, including our upstream work, and reaffirmed our continuing commitment to help frontline Member States manage the EU’s external borders. I also sought agreement from other Member States that the EU’s approach to partnership frameworks with third countries must be comprehensive, and reiterated the three principles as set out in the Prime Minister’s speech at the UN General Assembly: to ensure that refugees claim asylum in the first safe country they reach in the region; to improve the ways we and our partners distinguish between refugees fleeing persecution and economic migrants; and to agree a better overall approach to managing economic migration which recognises that all countries have the right to control their borders. During the session on security I shared UK’s experience of countering extremism and radicalisation and highlighted the work of the Prevent programme. At the final session on Cybercrime I reiterated the UK’s support for increased international cooperation to address cybercrime, and highlighted the work of the UK’s new National Cyber Security Centre in tackling this threat.

The next G6 will take place in Poland and is likely to be held early in 2017.

Social Fund Annual Report

[HLWS222]

Lord Freud: My honourable Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Welfare Delivery (Caroline Nokes MP) has made the following Written Statement.

In the Annual Report of the Social Fund by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the Social Fund 2014/2015, published in June 2015, in Annex 9 on page 52 of the report the number of Social Fund appeals decided in the appellant’s favour was incorrectly reported by Her Majesty’s Courts & Tribunal Service (HMCTS) as follows:

Social Fund (Funeral Payments): 380

Social Fund (Sure Start Maternity Grants): 190

Total: 560

The percentage decided in the appellant’s favour was incorrectly reported as follows:

Social Fund (Funeral Payments): 77%

Social Fund (Sure Start Maternity Grant): 90%

Total: 81%

This was due to an error, which led to the figures for appeals decided in the Department's favour being mistakenly given under this heading. The correct figures (rounded as in the report to the nearest ten) are:

Social Fund (Funeral Payments): 110

Social Fund (Sure Start Maternity Grants): 20

Total: 130

The correct percentage decided in the appellant's favour are:

Social Fund (Funeral Payments): 22%

Social Fund (Sure Start Maternity Grant): 11%

Total 19%

I apologise for this inadvertent error.

Later today I will lay a correction slip to formally correct the record.

Technical and Further Education

[HLWS224]

Lord Nash: My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Education (Justine Greening) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

We have today introduced a Technical and Further Education Bill.

My ambition is to drive long needed improvements in the quality of technical education in this country - mirroring the impact of this Government's reforms to the quality of academic education. The reforms in this Bill are fundamental to the Government's vision of ensuring that all people, irrespective of their background, have a level playing field to fulfil their potential and have high quality routes to secure not only their own futures but also the skills that British business needs.

Following implementation of the current Government programme of Area Reviews for the FE sector - which are designed to give institutions the opportunity to put themselves on a secure and sustainable financial footing - the Bill will also reflect the important principle of student protection, already set out in the Higher Education and Research Bill currently before Parliament, through the introduction of an effective insolvency regime for Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges. The Bill we are introducing today ensures that, for the first time, suitable protections are available for students in further education, and this follows a public consultation, during July and August 2016, on introducing such a regime which saw broad support.

Beyond the measures in the Bill, this Government has a fundamental mission of social reform to deliver our vision of an education system that works for everyone. Education is at the heart of our ambition to make Britain a true meritocracy. That is why we've put responsibility for early years, schools, Further and Higher Education, Adult skills and Apprenticeships in one single department. In light of these changes and the Department for Education's existing two Bills in Parliament - the Children and Social Work Bill and the Higher Education and Research Bill - we have rightly reflected on our strategic priorities and the proposals for education legislation put forward at the time of the Queen's Speech. I am clear that the Technical and Further Education Bill will enable us to get on with transforming technical education in this country whilst we continue to develop proposals for a school system that works for everyone.

The Schools that Work for Everyone consultation, which I announced in an oral statement to the House on 12 September, remains ongoing. This consultation asks how we can create more great school places in more parts of the country - including selective places for local areas that want them - and asks our independent schools, universities and faith schools to play their part in improving the quality of our state-funded schools. In addition, my department has renewed its focus on ensuring everything we do drives towards improving social mobility with an emphasis on not just the most disadvantaged families but also on those that are just about managing. Our ambition remains that all schools should benefit from the freedom and autonomy that academy status brings. Our focus, however, is on building capacity in the system and encouraging schools to convert voluntarily. No changes to legislation are required for these purposes and therefore we do not require wider education legislation in this session to make progress on our ambitious education agenda.

The Technical and Further Education Bill takes forward the Government's ambition to streamline technical education to ensure clear routes into skilled employment. These reforms will put employers at the heart of the skills system, enabling them to drive the skills they need and value the most. Supporting individuals to a lifetime of sustained skilled employment will not only help to boost productivity and the growth of our economy in line with our Industrial Strategy but it will also deliver on the Government's vision for an economy that works for all, not just the privileged few. The measures in the Bill build on the progress the Government has already made by investing in high quality apprenticeships and they deliver against the commitments the Government made in the Post-16 Skills Plan published earlier this year.

Written Answers

Thursday, 27 October 2016

Aerospace Industry: Exports

Asked by Lord Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the estimated value of UK aerospace exports in the last five years for which figures are available. [HL2400]

Lord Price: Estimates of the value of UK exports of Aerospace products for the last five years are provided below:

Year	Exports (Current prices, £million)
2011	20,728
2012	22,328
2013	24,275
2014	22,580
2015	24,864

Source: ONS Trade in Goods Classified by CPA

Air Traffic Control

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications for UK-based airlines of the Single European Sky when the UK leaves the EU. [HL2434]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is considering carefully all the potential implications arising from the UK's exit from the EU for our aviation industry. This includes the implications for UK-based airlines relating to Air Traffic Management and the Single European Sky after the UK leaves the EU.

Alcoholic Drinks: Sales

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the operation of the current law on the sale of (1) powdered alcohol, and (2) vaporised alcohol, in the UK. [HL2570]

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the public benefit accruing from licensing the sale of powdered and vaporised alcohol. [HL2571]

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have had discussions with the alcohol, tobacco and food industries about the licensing for sale of powdered and vaporised alcohol. [HL2572]

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent the sale of powdered and vaporised alcohol to children and under 18-year olds, especially online. [HL2574]

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to prevent powdered alcohol being mixed with soft drinks and consumed in places such as at football matches where consuming alcohol is presently prohibited. [HL2575]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Alcohol is defined in the Licensing Act 2003 as "spirits, wine, beer, cider or any other fermented, distilled or spiritous liquor". A provision in the Policing and Crime Bill will amend the definition of alcohol in the 2003 Act to include alcohol "in any state". This will provide legal clarity that the sale of powdered and vaporised alcohol must be regulated under the 2003 Act in the same way as other forms of alcohol.

An impact assessment entitled powdered and vaporised alcohol has been published on gov.uk under the provisions in the Policing and Crime Bill: firearms and alcohol licensing.

As far as the Government is aware, powdered alcohol is not yet on sale in the UK or elsewhere, including online, or that there are any plans to sell it in the UK. Vaporised alcohol is sold in a few licensed premises as a novelty product, but the Government is not aware of it being sold without a licence.

Members of the public are protected from the effects of irresponsible alcohol sales through regulation under the 2003 Act. Regulation focuses on the prevention of harmful sales while retaining the benefits of responsible sales. The Act contains a number of criminal offences relating to the sale and supply of alcohol, including the offence of selling alcohol to a child under the age of 18. Licence holders must comply with the age verification requirements under the 2003 Act, including when alcohol is sold online.

Consultation on bringing powdered and vaporised alcohol into the definition of alcohol was undertaken via workshops in summer 2015, which were attended by industry partners such as the British Beer and Pub Association, Association of Convenience Stores, Wine and Spirits Trade Association, and Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers. These partners were in agreement that the legal position should be put beyond doubt.

The Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc) Act 1985 prohibits the possession of alcohol when entering designated sports grounds and from areas where the event may be directly viewed. This includes, for example, entry into football stadia and within sight of the football pitch. The amendment to the definition of alcohol in the 2003 Act will carry over into this Act, so the possession of powdered alcohol will become an offence in these

circumstances. Preventing people from taking alcohol, in any form, into football matches or similar places where alcohol is prohibited is a safety and security matter for the venues themselves.

Arts: Curriculum

Asked by The Earl of Glasgow

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will give further consideration to including the arts and other creative industries within future school curricula. [HL2407]

Lord Nash: The Government believes that every child should experience a high quality creative education throughout their time at school. That is why subjects such as music, art and design, drama and dance are included in the National Curriculum for 5-14 year olds. The National Curriculum is compulsory for maintained schools. Academies and free schools are not required to teach the National Curriculum but can use it as a benchmark. They can also use their freedoms to innovate and build more stretching and tailored curricula, to meet the particular needs of their pupils or their local area or the particular ethos of the school.

All schools, including academies and free schools, must provide a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society.

Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, in the light of the UK's decision to leave the EU, the proposed trade deal between the EU and Canada should be amended to take account of the consequent reduction in the population of the EU. [HL2412]

Lord Price: Until we complete our withdrawal negotiations, the UK remains a full member of the EU, with all the rights and responsibilities of membership. The UK Government has been clear in its support for the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). This approach is in line with our commitment to back the EU's trade agenda and participate constructively in decision-making on trade while the UK remains a member of the EU.

The negotiations between the European Commission and Canada on CETA were concluded in August 2014. A legal revision of the text making further amendments was completed in February 2016.

Department for Exiting the European Union: Staff

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Department for Exiting the EU plans to remain within the Cabinet Office premises or to relocate; and if it plans to relocate, whether it will move to its own building, or move, in its entirety or in part, to premises of another government department. [HL2346]

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are planning to transfer to other government departments any of the staff currently working within the Department for Exiting the EU, and if so, what is their estimate of the proportion of staff who will be moved to (1) the Ministry of Defence, (2) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (3) the Cabinet Office, or (4) other government departments. [HL2347]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The department is permanently headquartered at 9 Downing Street. This will not change and Ministers will continue to operate from this building. Staff are also accommodated in 70 Whitehall.

We are working with the Government Property Unit as where to locate further staff on a more permanent basis.

DExEU staff will continue to be employed on the basis of being 'on loan' from a wide variety of departments and will not permanently transfer departments. No staff have been formally moved from DExEU to the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Cabinet Office, or other government departments.

Department for Exiting the European Union: Vacancies

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many roles within the Department for Exiting the EU are currently unfilled; and how many job applications have been received for those roles. [HL2348]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The Department for Exiting the European Union now has over 250 staff and the expertise of 120 officials in Brussels, and is continuing to grow.

We are not in a position to give a total number of job applications as recruitment is ongoing and we will not be giving a running commentary. Our aim is to have a streamlined Department, while ensuring the right skills and experience to get the best outcome for the UK.

Disaster Relief

Asked by Lord Bowness

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the UK will continue to play an active role in the EU Civil Protection mechanism after the UK leaves the EU. [HL2359]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The Government will discuss with the EU and member states how best to continue cooperation.

East Coast Railway Line

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the current capacity and reliability constraints on the East Coast Main Line railway will be comprehensively addressed in Control Period 6. [HL2444]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government intends to articulate in 2017 its emerging priorities for improvements to train services and the national rail network (including possible enhancements to the East Coast Main Line) from 2019.

In Control Period 5 the Intercity Express Programme will provide the infrastructure to operate new trains from December 2018 which will reduce journey times and increase capacity. Schemes as part of the East Connectivity Fund will also be delivered to improve capacity and reduce journey times, the first of which is enhancements in the Doncaster area set to be complete by May 2017.

Higher Education: Disability

Asked by Lord Addington

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of changes to departmental responsibility for the Disabled Students Allowance, where the minimum standards for disability adjustment that Higher Education Institutions must undertake are published. [HL2267]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: As independent, autonomous bodies, higher education institutions are responsible for ensuring they comply with the Equality Act 2010's provisions in respect of disabled students.

Guidance on the Act's requirements is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission; and guidance on managing reasonable adjustments in higher education under the Act is available from the Equality Challenge Unit.

Asked by Lord Addington

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the recent changes to the Disabled Students Allowance, what guidance has been issued to the Higher Education sector on the provision of support for disabled students. [HL2268]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Student Finance England issued guidance on Disabled Students' Allowances for the academic year 2016/17 in February 2016.

My Department has been working with the Higher Education sector to develop guidance on good practice in inclusive provision for disabled students, which will be issued shortly.

Housing: Construction

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to encourage house building on sites where planning permissions have been given for house building. [I] [HL2321]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: We are keen to drive up delivery of new housing once permission has been granted and we are actively taking steps to tackle some of the factors which can delay a start to development. We are taking forward measures through the Neighbourhood Planning Bill, which was introduced on 7 September, to improve the use of planning conditions to avoid unnecessary delays to development. We have also, through the Housing and Planning Act 2016, introduced a provision for a section 106 dispute resolution process. This will assist in speeding up negotiations on the content of section 106 planning obligations, where developers and local authorities have failed to reach an agreement. Secondary legislation is required to implement the provision. We also expect the members of the Home Builders Federation to adhere to their commitments in May to provide local authorities with transparent annual returns on build-out rates. And we will be setting out further measures in the forthcoming Housing White Paper.

Infrastructure: Environment Protection

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking with local government to promote green infrastructure. [I] [HL2320]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The government is committed to developing a 25 year plan to improve the environment and this will include the importance of green infrastructure as a key underpinning of both the economy and well being.

The government is spending more than £600 million by 2020 to support the development, manufacture and uptake of electric ultra low emission vehicles in the UK. Part of this includes assisting local authorities by providing grant funding through the On Street Residential Scheme and Workplace Chargepoint Scheme to help meet the cost of installing electric vehicle chargepoints on streets in residential areas without access to off-street parking. Under the Go Ultra Low City Scheme the government is supporting a variety of infrastructure programmes for

both public and domestic chargepoints across eight cities/regions of Bristol/West of England, London, Nottingham, Milton Keynes, York, Dundee, Oxford and the North East.

The government has made £1.5 million available to communities to create 'Pocket Parks', turning unused spaces into sensory gardens, wildlife habitats and food growing areas. The government has also submitted written evidence to the Select Committee inquiry on the future of public parks and will respond to any recommendations made as a result of this inquiry in due course.

Intelligence Services

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government from which organisations they receive open source intelligence, in addition to that provided by the BBC monitoring service. [HL2244]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, in common with other Government departments, receives a wide range of free and paid-for open source information. FCO Staff have, for example, access to books (electronic and hard copy), news and social media, subscription services for journals and academia, and output from think tanks and research organisations.

NHS: Staff

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the ratio of front-line medical staff to administrators in the NHS. [HL2289]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The ratio of medical staff to administrators in the National Health Service is 1:1.05. The number of medical staff includes only doctors and does not include roles such as nurses, midwives and other non-medical clinicians. Administrative staff are managers, senior managers and central functions staff who perform administrative and clerical duties.

North East Combined Authority

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to work with the North East Combined Authority following recent decisions not to proceed with a Metro Mayor. [I] [HL2319]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government remains fully committed to the North East and to devolution, and we have made clear our willingness to work with North East leaders who want to discuss options for a new deal. We stand ready to work with those councils that share our aim to boost jobs, create opportunities and build a stronger Northern Powerhouse.

This guides our ongoing engagement with councils in the area.

Prisoners: Basic Skills

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the estimated (1) numeracy, and (2) literacy, rate among prisoners in each of the last three years. [HL2293]

Lord Keen of Elie: Prisons should be places of safety and reform. I am determined to make sure that we achieve better outcomes for all prisoners including in education, and I want to see much clearer accountability for prison governors for the education delivered in prison and the results prisoners achieve. Mandatory education assessments were introduced for the first time in August 2014, for all new receptions to custody in England. This shows that in the year to September 2015 fewer than half the people entering prisons had basic standards of English and maths, and around a third had identified learning difficulties or disabilities. Data prior to August 2014 is not available.

Prison education is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Road Works

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cost to high street businesses of street works that (1) overrun, and (2) exceed budget. [I] [HL2318]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government has not made a specific assessment of the cost to high street business of street works that overrun. It is for the works promoter to consider the impact of works that exceed budget.

The Government published an Impact Assessment in 2012 to accompany the most recent change in legislation affecting the charges that local authorities can levy against the promoters of street works that overrun. The Impact Assessment considered the benefits to businesses of the proposals in terms of reduced congestion.

We are also aware of the general disruption that street works can cause and we are committed to improving the way that they are managed. We know that high street businesses benefit from improvements to the network and from the provision of new and upgraded utility services. However, we are working closely with the sector to ensure that street works are in place for no longer than is necessary.

Social Security Benefits

Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of inflation on those who rely on benefits. [HL2312]

Lord Freud: Central to the Government's long term economic plan is the creation of jobs and making work pay. We know that work is the best route out of poverty so our welfare reforms are focussed on supporting those people who can work to find and keep work rather than rely on benefits, ensuring fairness and affordability for the tax payer. We are committed to balancing incentivising work with protecting pensioners and those who cannot work, and help with the costs of additional needs. That is why benefits for the additional costs of disability, and for carers, are up-rated each year in line with prices, and the basic and new State Pensions are up-rated with our triple lock guarantee.

Social Security Benefits: Appeals

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proposal to remove a panel member with direct experience of disability from appeals for Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and Attendance Allowance. [[HL2311](#)]

Lord Keen of Elie: The Government is investing close to £1 billion to reform and digitise our courts and tribunals to deliver swifter and more certain justice.

Technology will be at the forefront of our reforms but specific support will be provided to ensure tribunals remain accessible to all and physical hearings will continue to be used to resolve many cases.

An impact assessment was published alongside the Transforming our Justice System consultation paper.

The panel composition reforms will ensure that the most appropriate panel is always selected to hear a case. As now, relevant expertise will always be available where needed, regardless of how a case is resolved. The Senior President of Tribunals will continue to determine when panel members are used.

Students: Loans

*Asked by **Baroness Wolf of Dulwich***

To ask Her Majesty's Government under what circumstances a student may currently obtain a loan from the Student Loans Company for the fees for an equivalent level qualification at degree or sub-degree level. [[HL2150](#)]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Students must already hold an honours degree and must be personally eligible for support in order to qualify for a tuition fee loan for an equivalent level qualification.

In addition, they must be studying for a part-time degree in engineering, technology or computer science, and study should be at least 25% intensity of a full-time equivalent course. Graduates entering full-time study must be studying on a graduate entry accelerated medical or dental degree of no more than four years' duration.

UK Withdrawal from EU: Parliamentary Scrutiny

*Asked by **Viscount Waverley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what role they are proposing to give Parliament in scrutinising the outcome of the negotiations relating to the UK leaving the EU, prior to the final conclusion of those negotiations. [[HL2314](#)]

*Asked by **Viscount Waverley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to lay before Parliament for scrutiny the outcome of the negotiations for leaving the EU before those negotiations are concluded. [[HL2461](#)]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The Government will comply with all the constitutional and legal obligations that apply to the deal that we will negotiate with the EU.

Visas: Israel

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what distinction they draw in issuing visas between Israeli citizens who live in Israel and those who live in illegal settlements in the West Bank. [[HL2350](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: All applications for visas, entry clearances and leave to enter at the border are considered against the criteria set out in the published Immigration Rules

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules>) regardless of the applicant's nationality or where they live.

A variety of factors may be taken into account when considering the application, but that would depend upon the applicant's personal circumstances and what they had applied to do in the UK.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1

Brussels IIa Regulation on Family Law	1
ECOFIN.....	1
G6 Rome.....	2
Social Fund Annual Report	2
Technical and Further Education.....	3

Written Answers.....4

Aerospace Industry: Exports	4
Air Traffic Control	4
Alcoholic Drinks: Sales.....	4
Arts: Curriculum.....	5
Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement	5
Department for Exiting the European Union: Staff	5
Department for Exiting the European Union: Vacancies.....	5
Disaster Relief	6
East Coast Railway Line	6
Higher Education: Disability	6
Housing: Construction.....	6
Infrastructure: Environment Protection	6
Intelligence Services.....	7
NHS: Staff.....	7
North East Combined Authority.....	7
Prisoners: Basic Skills	7
Road Works	7
Social Security Benefits	7
Social Security Benefits: Appeals	8
Students: Loans	8
UK Withdrawal from EU: Parliamentary Scrutiny	8
Visas: Israel	8