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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

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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, 17 November 2016

Department for International Trade (Non-executive Board Members)

[HLWS263]

Lord Price: My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State and President of the Board of Trade (Dr Liam Fox) has today made the following statement.

I wish to update the House on the appointment of Non-Executive Board Members (NEBMs) at the Department for International Trade.

I am pleased to announce to the House that three independent NEBMs have been appointed to sit on our Departmental Board. A further NEBM has been appointed as Chair of the Board for UK Export Finance, who will also sit on our Departmental Board.

Those NEBMs are:

- Mr. Simon Walker, outgoing Director-General of the Institute of Directors, as Lead Non-Executive Board Member and also chair of the Nominations Committee.
- Ms. Julie Currie, Chief Financial and Reporting Officer at the Lloyds Bank Foundation, who alongside her duties as a Non-Executive Board Member will chair the Audit and Risk Committee.
- Dr Pippa Malmgren, founder of DRPM Group, a respected political analyst with trade policy experience who will act as a Non-Executive Board Member.
- Ms. Noel Harwerth, current Chair of GE Capital Bank Europe, who will join the UK Export Finance Board as Chair, and will also be a NEBM on the DIT Departmental Board

This is a significant milestone for our Department and I am proud of the talent and expertise represented on the Board. Our NEBMs extensive business knowledge and experience of global trade and corporate governance will be of huge value to me and the government as we shape the Department and forge the UK's trade agenda and promote the UK as a place to do business with.

The new Board members will work closely with me, my ministerial team and the executive team to provide independent scrutiny and advice and to assist the Department in delivering our priorities which include an effective long-term strategy for the UK's trade policy; promotion of UK exports; inward and outward investment; take-up of UK export finance and promotion of the UK through the GREAT campaign. They will also advise on performance and the effective management of the Department.

These appointments come at the end of a highly-competitive process. We launched our search for NEBMs in July through advertisements on the Centre for Public Appointments and Women on Boards websites. We received 181 applications, including exceptionally well qualified individuals from a wide range of backgrounds,

demonstrating the high level of interest there is in international trade.

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (21/22 November)

[HLWS264]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Karen Bradley) has made the following Statement:

The Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council will take place in Brussels on 21 and 22 November 2016. Shan Morgan, the UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the EU will represent the UK at the Youth section of the Council. I will represent the UK at both the Culture and the Sport sections of the Council.

Youth

The Council will be asked to adopt draft conclusions on promoting new approaches in youth work to uncover and develop the potential of young people. The conclusions will recommend the need to promote effective and innovative cross-sectoral policies that can help young people realise their full potential. The UK intends to support the adoption of the conclusions.

The presentation will be immediately followed by a policy debate on youth engagement

Culture

The Council is expected to present a progress report on the proposals for the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive. The Audiovisual Media Services Directive seeks to ensure the effective operation of the internal market for television broadcasting services by ensuring the free movement of broadcasting services throughout the EU.

This will be followed by first reading on the proposal for a European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018). The objective of this initiative is to raise awareness of the opportunities that cultural heritage bring, mainly in terms of intercultural dialogue, social cohesion and economic growth. At the same time, the European Year aims at drawing attention to the challenges that cultural heritage is facing, including environmental and physical pressure on heritage sites and illicit trafficking of cultural objects. The UK intends to support this proposal.

The Council will then be invited to adopt a proposal to amend the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 to extend the access to EFTA/EEA countries. The UK government is supportive of this proposal.

Finally there will be a public debate, 'towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations'. This will discuss how the EU and its Member States can cooperate to bring about a more strategic approach to culture in external relations.

Sport

The Council will seek adoption of its draft conclusions on sport diplomacy. The conclusions will acknowledge

that sport is a possible tool in supporting intercultural, economic and political cooperation, and that its potential can be part of extending and strengthening contacts between the EU and third countries. The UK intends to support the adoption of these conclusions.

This will be followed by a public debate on the impact of sport on personal development. The UK intervention will be to demonstrate the work the UK is already carrying out in this area through participation, Olympic legacy and the Sport Strategy.

Other business

The French delegation will present information on reform of the European copyright framework. This will be followed by the Croatian and Irish delegations on the European Capitals of Culture 2020. The Italian delegation will then present information on 'Facing crisis in Europe: Investing in Culture'.

The Council will also be presented with information on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) meeting in Glasgow (19-20 November). This information will be provided by the EU Member States representatives in WADA; Belgium, UK and Malta. This will be followed by the French delegation on development and specific features of the organisation of European sport. Finally there will be information from the Maltese delegation on the work programme of their incoming presidency.

Housing Benefit and Universal Credit

[HLWS266]

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

Following the recent Supreme Court judgments relating to the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy, and to ensure the facts of the cases are fully understood, I would draw colleagues' attention to the following entry in Hansard:

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2016-11-14/debates/D5D5E72C-3772-46E6-8A4F-15A8F8EBA19A/Under-OccupancyCharge>

Housing Policy

[HLWS267]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Today, My Hon Friend the Minister of state for Housing & Planning & Minister for London made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

This week it was announced that almost 190,000 new homes were delivered in 2015-16, with over 30,000 of these as a direct result of 'change of use'. This is welcome progress but we know that there is more to do. That is why we are working on a Housing White Paper that will include measures to ensure more land is available in the right places, incentivise and speed up development, encourage a more diverse housing market and deliver support for ordinary working class people.

Government is absolutely committed to building more homes and will be making further announcements in due course.

NHS Professionals Ltd

[HLWS265]

Lord Prior of Brampton: I am today updating the House on the future of NHS Professionals Limited ('The Company').

The Company was set up as a limited company fully owned by the Secretary of State for Health in 2010. Whilst it is the largest single supplier of flexible staffing to the National Health Service, with a bank of over 90,000 workers providing more than 2 million shifts every year, it currently works with only around a quarter of NHS trusts.

The Department of Health has therefore concluded that the Company requires significant investment to enable it to expand, so it can deliver improved services to even more NHS trusts and reduce their reliance on expensive agency staff – the bill for which is currently £3 billion annually, which diverts resources that could be better used for substantive staffing and improved patient care.

At the moment the Company works with 55 NHS trusts. As the largest provider of bank staff to the NHS, the Company is in a prime position to respond to the NHS's need for more cost effective and better planned temporary staffing. It currently saves the NHS approximately £70 million a year by supplying bank staff to hospitals which are more affordable than those staff supplied by expensive agencies. We want to see the Company take advantage of this opportunity to expand its business, acting as a true alternative to expensive agencies. But the Company cannot do this without substantial investment to improve the services it offers.

Over the last year the Department has therefore been exploring a range of potential options to help the Company drive further value for the NHS.

Today I can announce that, following market analysis and a thorough appraisal of a business case, the Department's preferred option is to create a joint venture partnership to bring in the necessary investment and expertise to the business and give the Company greater operational autonomy. The Department will sell a majority shareholding so that the Company is run and controlled by the new partner, which will carry the majority of the finance and operating risks of the business.

Contractual mechanisms will be used to ensure that the dual aims of creating a profitable business model whilst meeting the needs of NHS customers - delivering savings and a high quality service - are correctly aligned and fully agreed upon.

The Department's retention of a minority shareholding will also ensure there are no significant changes to the agreed purpose and/or objectives of the Company. This is backed up by the right to take back ownership of the

Company in the event of any serious breach of the agreed main objectives.

A tendering process to find the right partner is being launched through an advert in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). Potential investors will be

subject to detailed evaluation to ensure value for money to the Government.

There will be no immediate impact on the approximately 600 corporate staff who are employed by the Company. The Company's bank workers will also continue to book and work shifts for NHS trusts as usual.

Written Answers

Thursday, 17 November 2016

Aircraft: Air Conditioning

*Asked by **The Countess of Mar***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of reports by the pilot that British Airways Flight BA286 from San Francisco to London was diverted to Vancouver because of "toxic gas-type fumes" in the cabin, whether the Air Accident Investigations Branch intends to investigate this incident; and if not, why not. [[HL2986](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Airways Airbus A380, on a flight from San Francisco to London, diverted to Vancouver because of a strange odour in the cabin. The Air Accidents Investigation Branch were made aware of the event but under international protocol, it was the responsibility of Canada, being the State of occurrence, to carry out an investigation. The Canadian Transport Safety Board, working with British Airways and Airbus technicians carried out an investigation but were not able to determine the cause. The same captain later flew the aircraft to London with the technicians on board, but there was no recurrence. The aircraft returned to service and British Airways continue to monitor key flights. To date no further reports have been made.

Armed Forces Covenant

*Asked by **Lord Kennedy of Southwark***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant by local authorities. [I] [[HL3053](#)]

Earl Howe: The Covenant's principles were enshrined in law in the Armed Forces Act 2011. This Government has demonstrated its commitment to upholding these principles, which is evident in the work reported in each of the four annual reports laid in the House. We will continue to report progress to Parliament. Next month's Annual Report will detail the considerable progress made across government and with wider public, private and third sectors, including in the key areas of education, healthcare, accommodation and access to commercial services.

Every Local Authority in mainland Great Britain and two in Northern Ireland have signed a Community Covenant. We are working with them to help them deliver the support they have promised to the Armed Forces community, with good work in many areas including housing, education, health and social care.

Together we have taken a number of steps forward in this area, such as allocating funding from a £20 million budget to improve childcare facilities for Service families at 40 locations in the UK and Cyprus. In order to help

Service children through local schools' admissions processes, we have changed the Schools Admission Code in England to give them priority by allowing Service families to apply for and be allocated a place before they move into an area.

This year approximately £21 million was allocated in Service Pupil Premium payments for the pastoral needs of almost 70,000 Service pupils in state schools in England. In 2015, £6 million in grants was given to 154 applicants for Education Support Funding, to help UK state schools mitigate issues caused by exceptional mobility and deployment.

Furthermore, we have worked closely with the Department for Communities and Local Government and Devolved Administrations to ensure that Service personnel do not experience any disadvantage as a result of their military service when applying for social housing.

Army: Photographs

*Asked by **Lord Blencathra***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Earl Howe on 2 November (HL2682), in what way they consider that the tweet may have been misinterpreted; and why the Department did not issue an explanation at the time of the tweet's removal in order to ensure public understanding that they did not consider those types of photographs to be racist. [[HL3166](#)]

Earl Howe: Some media reporting and public comments suggested that the picture together with the tag line was racist. In the answer I gave on 2 November 2016 to Question HL2682, it was acknowledged that this could have been open to misinterpretation. This is because such things are a matter of judgement and personal perception. Officials therefore decided that it should be removed, and an apology was issued for any offence which may have been caused.

Astute Class Submarines

*Asked by **Lord West of Spithead***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Earl Howe on 7 November (HL2668), whether the complete orders for boats 6 and 7 of the Astute-class submarines have been agreed and signed; and whether the orders have been placed on a cost plus or other basis. [[HL3105](#)]

Earl Howe: Negotiations are ongoing between the Ministry of Defence and the build contractor, BAE Systems, to put in place the Whole Boat contract for both submarines. As this has not yet been finalised it would be inappropriate to comment on the specifics.

In the meantime, construction of both submarines continues under existing limits of liability contracts.

Care Homes: Nurses

Asked by Lord Lipsey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what will be the cost in a full year of the increase in the rate of NHS-funded nursing care to £156.25 per week. [HL3030]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Department estimates that the total cost of the increase in National Health Service-funded Nursing Care to £156.25 per week in 2016-17, is approximately £190 million.

Councillors: Redundancy Pay

Asked by Baroness Finn

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether exit payments may be made to councillors when a councillor loses office or is no longer required to undertake specific duties within a local authority. [HL2869]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The rules on councillors' allowances are set out in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The rules are clear that allowances are paid on a pro rata basis should a councillor lose office or, is no longer required to undertake a specific duty, during the course of the year. The rules make no provision for allowances to be paid as a result of loss of office or no longer performing specific duties. Any such exit payments would therefore be unlawful. Whilst I am aware that the last Labour Government proposed legislation to facilitate such 'golden goodbyes' (DCLG, *The Government Response to the Councillors Commission*, July 2008, p. 22), we have no plans to amend the law in this respect.

East Coast Railway Line

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that new trains are introduced on the East Coast line. [HL2990]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Department for Transport is working closely with Virgin Trains East Coast and Network Rail to ensure the timely introduction of 65 new IEP trains to the East Coast Main Line. The first new train on the East Coast Main Line is due to enter service late 2018 and is anticipated to result in greater seating capacity and reduced journey times.

East Midlands Trains

Asked by Lord Mawson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the reliability of the East Midlands Trains service. [HL2989]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: East Midlands Trains were the fourth best performing train company when

compared to other operators, with 93.7% of trains arriving at destination within 10 minutes of their scheduled time for the four week period up to 15 October 2016. Their moving annual average is currently 92.3% (the sixth highest), of which 70.4% arrived at destination on time.

Electric Vehicles

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their policy on charges levied for the use of public charging points for electric cars, and how they intend to ensure that prices are set at a level low enough to incentivise their use. [HL3036]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are committed to supporting electric vehicles and do not want to see prohibitive pricing become a barrier to continued uptake. The Government's view is that pricing and pricing models are ultimately commercial matters for chargepoint network operators or host sites, however we will continue to monitor developments closely.

Public chargepoints play an important role in ensuring drivers can top-up their charge where that is necessary mid-journey. We anticipate that the vast majority of electric vehicle motorists will continue to charge their vehicles at home overnight, so the utilisation of the public network of chargepoints is different to conventional petrol or diesel vehicles' use of petrol stations. Public chargepoints will play an important role in ensuring drivers can top-up their charge where that is necessary mid-journey.

We are currently consulting on a proposal to take powers to enable the introduction of a minimum standard of pricing information for electric vehicle recharging and refuelling. This could make public charging easier for electric vehicle drivers and encourage a more competitive market. The measure is proposed for inclusion in the Modern Transport Bill.

Families: Disadvantaged

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Troubled Families Programme. [HL3174]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Troubled Families Programme, launched in 2012, was the first national and systematic attempt to help families with multiple problems to improve their lives. We have published an overview (attached) of the first programme here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-first-troubled-families-programme-2012-to-2015-an-overview>

More than 116,000 families in the first programme have seen significant improvements; with children back in school for a year, reduced youth crime and anti-social behaviour, and over 18,000 adults into work. Recently published evaluation found that the first programme has positively changed the way local authorities assist

families with complex problems and has been highly appreciated by families themselves. 86 per cent of families surveyed for the programme's evaluation reported that the key worker's involvement had been helpful. Overall, seven in ten (72 per cent) main carer respondents reported feeling better about their future than they had before the involvement of the key worker.

We are absolutely committed to continuing to help vulnerable families through the new Troubled Families Programme. We have already implemented a number of lessons from the first programme in the design of the new programme and a comprehensive national evaluation will report at intervals during its lifetime.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Trobled families programme 2012 - 2015 an overview [161116
The_first_Troubled_Families_Programme_an_overview.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-11-09/HL3174>

Fluoride: Drinking Water

Asked by **Baroness Gardner of Parkes**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Earl Howe on 22 April 2013 (HL372), and in the light of the water supply being fluoridated in Birmingham but not Manchester, on what evidential basis their assessment was made that there are no significant differences in the general health of the populations of Manchester and Birmingham, other than differences in average decayed, missing and filled teeth. [HL2973]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Health profiles maintained by Public Health England (PHE) show that there are no significant differences in the general health of the populations of Manchester and Birmingham that might be attributable to water fluoridation. PHE's *Water fluoridation: Health monitoring report for England 2014* compared a range of dental and non-dental health indicators in fluoridated and non-fluoridated areas in England. The report concluded that water fluoridation is a safe and effective public health measure as there were reduced levels of tooth decay in fluoridated areas and no evidence of potential harm for the health indicators measured. A copy of this report is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Water fluoridation report [Water fluoridation health monitoring for England__full_report_1Apr2014.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-11-03/HL2973>

Health Services

Asked by **Lord Kennedy of Southwark**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the reasons for geographical health inequalities in the UK. [HL3056]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Health inequalities are the result of numerous factors that shape health such as education, employment, housing and living standards, abetted by the effects of unhealthy behaviours. These differences in the 'social determinants of health' are highlighted in *Fair Society, Health Lives: The Marmot Review*. A copy of the review has been placed in the Library.

Hepatitis: Drugs

Asked by **Baroness Randerson**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether NHS England has undertaken procurement exercises in relation to hepatitis C medicines which have enabled those medicines to be obtained at a lower cost than the cost used for the purposes of appraisal by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. [HL3152]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Department's Commercial Medicines Unit (DHCMU), rather than NHS England, is responsible for medicines procurement in secondary care.

DHCMU manages, on behalf of the National Health Service in secondary care, a tender process which establishes price framework agreements for hepatitis C medicines. This programme commenced in August 2015 and has resulted in ongoing price reductions. The six-monthly rolling regional tender programme undertaken on behalf of NHS trusts in England has continued to exert a downward pressure on the prices paid (costs) for the new oral hepatitis C medicines.

The evaluation of hepatitis C products by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is completely separate to the DHCMU tender process. In developing its guidance on several hepatitis C drugs, NICE took into account prices that had been agreed by the DHCMU at the time its guidance was being developed, as the companies provided this information as part their evidence submissions to NICE.

In common with other medicines, where new competing products become available, procurements managed by the DHCMU may secure reduced prices in the years following NICE's decisions. As with other medicines, NHS England has taken account of the prices DHCMU procurements achieve for hepatitis C medicines to inform the additional investment required in meeting its commitments to roll out the new treatments.

Holiday Accommodation

Asked by Baroness Gardner of Parkes

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have plans to (1) give local authorities permission to hold a register of properties available for short-term let by Airbnb and similar platforms, and (2) enable local councils to check that (a) such properties are suitably sized for the number of persons to whom they will be let, and (b) such properties are not illegally sublet in a manner which is contrary to the terms of their leases. [HL2975]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government currently has no plans to provide for local authorities to hold registers or enable inspections in respect of short term lettings. Local authorities have powers to address overcrowding where they consider action would be appropriate. Whether a property is sublet in a manner which is contrary to the terms of a lease is a matter to be resolved between the leaseholder and the freeholder.

Housing Estates: Regeneration

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what they consider to be the key drivers of successful council housing estate regeneration. [I] [HL3179]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: There are a number of important elements upon which successful estate regeneration relies. These include having a supportive and engaged local community, the backing of the local authority, and a plan to ensure schemes are financially viable. Strong partnerships are essential between councils and scheme stakeholders, including developers, housing associations and the community. The Government intends to publish a National Strategy on Estate Regeneration shortly. Development of the strategy has been informed by the work of the Estate Regeneration Advisory Panel, co-chaired by my Noble Friend, the Rt. Hon. Lord Heseltine and Gavin Barwell, the Housing & Planning Minister, and engagement with estate regeneration schemes from across the country.

Housing: Construction

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth on 1 November (HL2418), what is their assessment of the role of lighting levels and the preservation of the night sky in new housing developments. [HL3100]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Artificial light provides valuable benefits to society, including through extending opportunities for sport and recreation, and can be essential to a new development. Equally, artificial light is not always necessary, has the potential to become what is termed 'light pollution' or 'obtrusive light' and not all modern lighting is suitable in all locations.

The National Planning Policy Framework expects the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The Government is clear that planning decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. The Framework must be taken into account when preparing a Local Plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they are making in building homes on public land. [I] [HL3178]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government is determined to play its part in increasing the number of homes by freeing up its unused or under-utilised land for housing. Up to March 2015, the Government disposed of surplus public sector land with the capacity to deliver 109,000 new homes. Over the course of this Parliament, we are committed to releasing surplus public sector land with capacity for an additional 160,000 homes.

We are committed to transparency and are planning to provide initial figures on the numbers of homes built on this land in the first annual report for the Programme due to be published by the end of the year.

Macular Degeneration

Asked by The Earl of Dundee

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of current progress in treating age-related macular degeneration, what levels of improved funding they will provide to enable hospital eye services to meet demand. [HL3175]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Hospital services for ophthalmic conditions are funded from local National Health Service commissioners' general recurrent revenue allocations, in common with most other elements of health care. General allocations are not attributed to specific services centrally. Individual commissioners decide the distribution of resources, after taking account of local and national priorities.

Mayors: Elections

Asked by Lord Shipley

To ask Her Majesty's Government which elections for mayors of combined mayoral authorities will definitely take place in May 2017 and which others may take place in May 2017 depending on the progress of legislation. [HL3158]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Legislation has been made for combined authority mayoral elections to take place in May 2017 in Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Sheffield City Region, Tees Valley and the West Midlands. In addition, with certain other areas the Government has agreed devolution agreements, the

implementation of which would include the holding of mayoral elections in May 2017; these areas are Greater Lincolnshire, the West of England, and East Anglia, where in this last case local leaders are evolving the agreement into two distinct deals – one for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and one for Norfolk and Suffolk.

Military Bases: USA

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Damer

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by Earl Howe on 7 November (HL Deb, cols 941–43), whether they have recently had, or intend to have, discussions with the government of the United States on the future of RAF bases in the UK which are primarily or exclusively used by American service personnel. [[HL3150](#)]

Earl Howe: The United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) have routine discussions regarding the United States Visiting Forces (USVF) in the UK. The future of the RAF bases in the UK that are used by the USVF remains unchanged since the statement I made on 7 November 2016. This followed the publication in January 2015 of the outcomes of the US 'European Infrastructure Consolidation Review', which included an announcement of the intention to withdraw from RAF Alconbury, Mildenhall and Molesworth.

Military Bases: Wales

Asked by Lord Jones

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many defence establishments there are in Wales, and what are their approximate locations. [[HL3111](#)]

Earl Howe: There are 30 Defence establishments in Wales, which are listed below by constituency. It should be noted that the list does not include the Volunteer Estate, Army Career and Information Offices, Armed Forces Careers Offices or Service Family Accommodation.

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Location by Constituency</i>
Brecon Barracks	Brecon and Radnorshire
Caerwent Training Area	Monmouth
Capel Curig Training Camp	Aberconwy
Castlemartin Training Area	Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
Cawdor Barracks	Preseli Pembrokeshire
Cwrt-y-Gollen Camp	Brecon and Radnorshire
Defence Training Estate HQ Wales	Brecon and Radnorshire
Defence Training Estate Kinnel Park	Vale of Clywd

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Location by Constituency</i>
Defence Training Estate Llansilin Rifle Range	Montgomeryshire
Brecon Barracks	Brecon and Radnorshire
Caerwent Training Area	Monmouth
Capel Curig Training Camp	Aberconwy
Castlemartin Training Area	Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
Cawdor Barracks	Preseli Pembrokeshire
Cwrt-y-Gollen Camp	Brecon and Radnorshire
Defence Training Estate HQ Wales	Brecon and Radnorshire
Defence Training Estate Kinnel Park	Vale of Clywd
Defence Training Estate Llansilin Rifle Range	Montgomeryshire
Fairbourne Resource Initiative Training Centre	Dwyfor Meirionnydd
Hightown Barracks	Wrexham
Infantry Battle School (IBS) Brecon	Brecon and Radnorshire
Joint School for Adventurous Training Llanrwst	Aberconwy
Joint Service Mountain Training Centre (JSMTC) Indefatigable	Ynys Mon
Maindy Barracks	Cardiff Central Boro
Manorbier Ranges	Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
MOD Range Aberporth	Ceredigion
MOD Range Pendine	Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
Mona Airfield Anglesey	Ynys Mon
Penally (Camp and Ranges)	Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
Pwllholm Training Area	Monmouth
RAF Pembrey Sands	Llanelli
RAF Valley	Ynys Mon
Rogiet Moor Ranges	Newport East
Sennybridge Training Area	Brecon and Radnorshire
St Athan	Vale of Glamorgan
St Athan West Camp	Vale of Glamorgan
Templeton Training Area	Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
Ty Isaf Base Camp Talybont	Brecon and Radnorshire
Ynys Gaint, Menai Bridge	Ynys Mon

Ministry of Defence: Staff

Asked by Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the National Security Strategy and the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, how the Ministry of Defence plans to reduce its civilian staff to 41,000 by the end of this Parliament. [HL3161]

Asked by Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the need to recruit consultants to advise the Ministry of Defence following the cuts in civilian staff. [HL3162]

Asked by Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their response to the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy on the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 (1st Special Report, HL Paper 56), whether they intend to consider the core role of civil servants within defence before or after the planned reduction in civilian staff. [HL3163]

Asked by Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their response to the conclusion in paragraph 64 of the report by the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 (1st Special Report, HL Paper 56), how the work outlined will constitute a review of the impact of the proposed 30 per cent reduction in civilian headcount by 2020. [HL3164]

Earl Howe: The 30 per cent reduction in Ministry of Defence (MOD) civilian headcount will be achieved by making Defence significantly more efficient overall. A Future Defence Civilian Programme (FDCP) has been set up to identify and deliver the reductions; its first priority is to ensure that military capability and other key Defence outputs are not adversely impacted by these changes.

We do not anticipate an increased requirement for consultants to advise the MOD following the reduction in civilian headcount.

The Department is developing a Civilian Workforce Strategy for 2020 and beyond. This will set the vision for creating the future shape of the civilian workforce and for civil servants working at the MOD, and will be published before the end of the year. This Strategy is informing our initial study to scope a range of Departmental functions and activities that present opportunities for greater efficiency and productivity, smarter working within and across organisational boundaries, improved exploitation of technology, and better delivery models. The initial scoping study is due to conclude in early 2017.

Non-domestic Rates

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of revaluation and the introduction of a new system for managing business rate appeals on expected income levels for local authorities from business rates. [HL3173]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The revaluation will have effect from 1 April 2017 and is intended to be fiscally neutral. The multiplier will be adjusted to take account of changes in total rateable values and changes to top-ups and tariffs will minimise changes in retained business rate income for individual local authorities.

The business rates appeals reforms, which will also take effect from 1 April 2017, will provide a more streamlined and transparent appeals system and greater certainty in terms of local authority income.

Pakistan: Religious Freedom

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have raised with the government of Pakistan their duties under Articles 22 (1) and 25 (1) of the Constitution of Pakistan concerning freedom of religion in schools and equality, and whether British aid to Pakistan is being used to strengthen these legal protections for minorities. [HL2963]

Lord Bates: The UK Government strongly condemns the persecution of all minorities, including the targeting of innocent people based on their beliefs. The UK Government raises human rights issues and the rights of religious minorities on a regular basis at the highest levels in Pakistan and we ensure our development assistance targets poor women, men and children, regardless of race, religion, social background, or nationality. One of the four principles set out in the Partnership Principles Assessment is a commitment by Pakistan to respect human rights, including the provisions of non-discrimination and protection for freedom of religion as laid out in its own constitution. The Assessment provides the basis for regular bilateral assistance talks between the UK and Pakistan. DFID's education programmes in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces support the implementation of Pakistan's 2006 reformed curriculum which teaches religious tolerance and respect for diversity.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Pakistan is a signatory to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; whether they consider that the government of Pakistan is fulfilling its duties under Article 18 of that Declaration; what role British aid to Pakistan plays in promoting respect for diversity and difference; and whether they will reconsider their policy

of making none of the British aid programme to Pakistan available for the promotion of Article 18 obligations. [HL2964]

Lord Bates: The UK Government remains firmly committed to promoting and protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief, as set out in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We are concerned about reports of abuses against religious minorities in Pakistan. The UK Government strongly condemns the persecution of all minorities, including the targeting of innocent people based on their beliefs. The UK's concerns are reflected in the latest update to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's annual Human Rights Report, which is publicly available. The UK raises human rights issues and the rights of minorities on a regular basis at the highest levels in Pakistan and we ensure our development assistance targets poor women and men, regardless of race, religion, social background, or nationality. Although DFID does not fund programmes that directly promote Article 18, we do help to foster tolerance and social cohesion between different religious groups through our AAWAZ voice and accountability programme.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Anelay of St Johns on 16 September (HL1729), whether the Department for International Development is planning to fund any programmes that directly promote freedom of religion or belief in Pakistan. [HL3014]

Lord Bates: Through our AAWAZ voice and accountability programme (aawaz means "voice" in Urdu), DFID works to foster tolerance and social cohesion between different religious groups in 4,500 villages across 45 districts of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It reaches directly over 3 million poor men, women and minority groups including religious minorities (Christian, Sikh, Hindu and others) to address issues of inequality and discrimination, and to prevent violence. Communities identify potential sectarian and inter-faith based conflicts, mapping out where and when they might take place and identifying who is best at a local level to pre-empt or resolve conflict. This has enabled communities to work across sects and faiths to prevent 193 interfaith/sectarian conflicts and resolve 1,097 community conflicts (water/land and other disputes) through negotiation and compromise, benefitting 4,314,685 people. A successor programme to Aawaz is planned for 2018 onwards, building on successes and learning lessons from this programme.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of studies, including those undertaken by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom and the Catholic Church's National Commission for Justice and Peace, which have highlighted material in Pakistani text books portraying

negative views toward other religions and countries. [HL2965]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role played by Pakistani textbooks in promoting extremism and intolerance against minority faiths such as the Christian, Hindu and Sikh religions and minorities such as Ahmadis not considered to be Muslims. [HL2966]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what Department for International Development funds are currently being provided to improve educational standards in Pakistan, including the Punjab Education Support Programme; and whether the support given to the Punjab Curriculum Text Board to ensure positive gender portrayal can be expanded to include positive portrayal of Pakistan's minorities. [HL2967]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they last discussed with the government of Pakistan the inclusion of religious hate material in Pakistani text books. [HL3010]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision of the Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board of Lahore to include positive affirmations of the role of minorities in the creation of Pakistan and the 1947 speech of the founder of Pakistan, and of the extent to which affirmation of the rights and equality of minorities is being replicated in other provinces across Pakistan. [HL3013]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what mechanisms and safeguards the Department for International Development has in place to ensure that British aid distributed in Pakistan is not used by provinces or schools to purchase textbooks which contain material indoctrinating against minorities. [HL3077]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Education Fund for Sindh takes into account the curricula being taught to students when making funding decisions, and what steps they are taking to ensure that children supported by the Fund are not taught an intolerant view of religious and non-religious minorities through the textbooks used in schools. [HL3078]

Lord Bates: The UK Government remains firmly committed to promoting and protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief, as set out in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We are concerned about reports of abuses against religious minorities in Pakistan. The annual report of US

Commission on International Religious Freedom identified 'discriminatory' content against minorities in provincial textbooks in Pakistan as a particular concern but did not note the progress made where DFID is providing provincial governments with support.

Since 2011, UK aid has benefited more than 6.8 million children in primary school education. The programme is an £800 million investment from 2011 to 2020 undertaken in partnership with the provincial governments in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and focussed on the poorest, especially girls. Our investments support improving access to education and raising quality, improving learning outcomes, increasing teacher and student attendance and improving school facilities. We are providing £420.5 million from 2013 to 2019 to the Punjab Education Support Programme II, working with the provincial government to ensure more children in Punjab have access to a good quality education.

The UK has worked alongside these two provincial governments including through supporting the Punjab Curriculum Textbook Board which have taken significant steps to update textbooks and replace any content that promotes prejudice and discrimination against religious or other minorities. Independent evaluations in 2007 and 2013 confirmed this curriculum to be based on values of democracy, pluralism and peace aimed at educating students to be able to think critically about these issues. This has included introducing girls as central characters, showing girls participating in stereotypically male roles, and making the illustrations more representative. They have also worked to remove any overt bigotry linked to minority groups and continue to consider these issues.

The pilot Education Fund for Sindh (EFS) programme came to an end in 2016. The new Sindh Education Non State Actors (SENSA) Programme is following on from EFS. School providers in both EFS and now SENSA follow the 2006 Pakistan national curriculum. Independent evaluations of the reformed curriculum have confirmed it to be based on values of democracy, pluralism, and peace. All textbooks which enter into schools have to be approved by the provincial government, in this case the Sindh Textbook Board, to ensure they meet the requirements of the 2006 National Curriculum. This is a legal requirement.

Public Spaces Protection Orders

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) can be made to include the space above the designated area of the PSPO in such a way as to control the operation of objects such as drones. [HL2977]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Public Spaces Protection Orders are designed to ensure that public spaces are not affected by anti-social behaviour so that the law-abiding majority can use and enjoy them.

These powers are local in nature, and it is for local councils (or designated bodies) to determine whether a Public Spaces Protection Order is an appropriate response to any specific anti-social behaviour that may be associated with the use of drones and satisfies the relevant legal tests.

An order may only be imposed where the council (or designated body) is satisfied that the relevant statutory conditions have been met and after the necessary consultation and publicity has been carried out. Furthermore, any interested person may challenge the validity of a Public Spaces Protection Order in the High Court.

Radio Frequencies

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of live events that it would not be possible to stage in their current form should no audio Programme Making and Special Events (PMSE) equipment be available for use in the 960–1164MHz band by Q2 2020 when the 700MHz band is cleared of PMSE users. [HL3041]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: DCMS has not made any formal assessment but has noted the analysis published by Ofcom in May 2014, and that since May 2014 additional spectrum has been made available for audio PMSE in the 800 MHz and 1800 MHz duplex gaps, for which equipment is already available.

Ofcom is working with manufacturers to encourage development of PMSE audio equipment for use in the 960-1164 MHz band.

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential financial cost to the UK creative industries and wider economy should no audio Programme Making and Special Events (PMSE) equipment be available for use in the 960–1160MHz band by Q2 2020 when the 700MHz band is cleared of PMSE users. [HL3042]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: DCMS has not made any formal assessment beyond noting Ofcom's published analysis.

Asked by Baroness Benjamin

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Ofcom about contingency plans for the audio Programme Making and Special Events (PMSE) sector should no audio PMSE equipment be available for use in the 960–1164MHz band by Q2 2020 when the 700MHz band is cleared of PMSE users. [HL3043]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: Ofcom provides monthly updates to DCMS on its work to encourage development of equipment for use in the 960-1164 MHz band. DCMS

and Ofcom are also holding meetings with PMSE representatives and equipment manufacturers.

*Asked by **Baroness Benjamin***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Ofcom about the decision against allocating the 1525–1559MHz band for audio Programme Making and Special Events use. [[HL3044](#)]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: The Government has heard Ofcom's reasons for allocating the 960-1164 MHz band for PMSE rather than the 1525-1559 MHz band, as set out in Ofcom's decision published on 10 March 2016. Ofcom's assessment shows that the 960-1164 MHz band offers a better option for sharing spectrum as well as more long-term stability to PMSE users than the 1525-1559 MHz band.

*Asked by **Baroness Benjamin***

To ask Her Majesty's Government which European administrations or regulators have expressed an intention to allocate the 960–1164MHz band of spectrum for use by audio Programme Making and Special Events. [[HL3045](#)]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: Ofcom has been very active in making representations to other administrations and regulators about the opportunities for utilising the 960-1164 MHz band. Ofcom has shared its analysis with the European Commission and the Conference of European Post and Telecommunications (CEPT) as well as making direct contact with spectrum regulators in France, Germany, Greece, The Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden.

*Asked by **Baroness Benjamin***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to other European administrations about allocating the 960–1164MHz band of spectrum for use by audio Programme Making and Special Events. [[HL3046](#)]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: DCMS has not made representations.

Ofcom has been very active in making representations to other administrations and regulators about the opportunities for utilising the 960-1164 MHz band. Ofcom has shared its analysis with the European Commission and the Conference of European Post and Telecommunications (CEPT) as well as making direct contact with spectrum regulators in France, Germany, Greece, The Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden.

Railways: Fares

*Asked by **Lord Mawson***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they assess the value for money of train tickets sold in the UK. [[HL2987](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Passenger numbers are at record high levels and this growth is expected to continue. We are undertaking the biggest rail modernisation programme for over a century, in the five years to 2019, Network Rail is spending more than £40 billion to maintain and improve the network. Rail fares will continue to play a role in this and help deliver massive benefits for passengers, including relief from crowding on some of the nation's busiest routes.

Fares revenue is crucial to funding day-to-day railway operations and the massive upgrade programme we are delivering, all of which benefit passengers. However, the Government recognises the serious concern consumers have around the cost of rail fares. That is why in order to continue to deliver value for money for passengers Government regulates many fares including commuter fares; other fares are a matter for the train operating companies to decide. We have committed to capping regulated rail fares at RPI+0% for the term of this Parliament from 2016 to 2020. This extends the cap on rail fares put in place for 2014 and 2015. This will benefit over a quarter of a million annual season ticket holders, providing an average saving of £425 in the five years to 2020.

*Asked by **Lord Mawson***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the average price of train tickets in the UK compared to the average price of train tickets in Europe. [[HL2988](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Great Britain has one of widest ranges of fare prices in Europe making assessments on the "average price" difficult. While we have some fares that are more expensive than our European neighbours, we also have some fares types for which we are among the cheapest – particularly when booked in advance. Many long distance walk up day returns for travel within specified times and cheap Advance single fares are low when compared to equivalent European fares. It is also important to put the price of fares into context against the service provided, including aspects such as flexibility and speed. In this respect, the UK has some of the most frequent services in Europe for commuters.

Refugees: Syria

*Asked by **Lord Greaves***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether accommodation provided for refugee families settled directly from Syria is equipped with television sets and access to UK channels. [[HL2775](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government provides funding to local authorities for accommodation to be provided to refugees resettled in the UK under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme.

This covers the provision of food storage, cooking and washing facilities. We do not collect information on equipment such as television sets.

Regional Planning and Development: North of England

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the role of business partners in the Northern Powerhouse; what contributions, financial and otherwise, they are expected to make; what responsibilities are placed upon them in their role as partners; and whether they are entitled to representation of any kind in the decision-making processes of the Northern Powerhouse, or access to Ministers and other decision-makers, that is not available to other businesses. [HL2976]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The high level aim of our partnership programme is to jointly promote the key strengths and areas of development across the North, in particular focusing on:

- 1) Connectivity and transport
- 2) Skills, science and innovation
- 3) Quality of life and culture, and
- 4) Devolution.

This Government wants to promote and celebrate major projects in the North and showcase the tangible growth of the Northern economy. Partners will be representative of the whole of the North and will cover different institutions, businesses and sectors. At no stage are partners asked to make a financial contribution or commitment to become a partner.

The Government will offer partners:

- 1) The opportunity to champion the North's strengths, and promote new and exciting local developments across transport, skills and innovation, culture, and devolution.
- 2) Access to a network of like-minded partners who are promoting the North, with the opportunity for collaboration.
- 3) Support from Government on partnering with the Northern Powerhouse across all our channels, and the opportunity to support and participate with Government events when appropriate.

Roads: Abnormal Loads

Asked by Earl Attlee

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much money has been spent to date developing and operating (1) the Electronic Service Delivery of Abnormal Loads system operated by Highways England, and (2) any other commercial software systems which are designed to perform a similar task; and what proportion of abnormal load notifications received by Network Rail have been generated by each system in the last two months. [HL2969]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Electronic Service Delivery for Abnormal Loads (ESDAL²), operated by Highways England, has cost £3.9million to develop and operate to date.

There are commercial systems that perform some elements of ESDAL², but do not offer the same end-to-end service. These have been financed through private concerns and no public money has been used to develop or operate them.

For the period 1st September to 31st October 2016, Network Rail has received a total of 11,308 notifications through ESDAL² from 361 companies. In the same period, it has received 6,834 notifications from 87 companies who have used a commercial software platform (or 29% of total notifications received in the period) with approximately half of these being from a single company. There have been 5,149 notifications from other forms received by Network Rail, which equates to 22% of total notifications received.

Single Source Regulations Office

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the Single Source Regulation Office plays its role in ensuring Ministry of Defence procurement treats UK small and medium-sized enterprises fairly and provides value for money. [HL3051]

Earl Howe: The Single Source Regulations Office (SSRO) has a range of functions, including arbitrating between the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and industry on matters relating to qualifying single source defence contracts. In reaching a conclusion on these matters, the SSRO must ensure that good value for money is obtained in Government expenditure and that parties to those contracts are paid a fair and reasonable price. This applies equally to all parties that contract with the MOD, including small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

The Department has worked closely with SMEs on the implementation of the reforms and will continue to engage on specific issues. The Secretary of State for Defence is required under part two of the Defence Reform Act 2014 to review the legislation by the end of 2017. The MOD will ensure that the impact of any changes on SMEs is properly taken into account.

Universal Credit: Refugees

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what evidence they have of problems faced by asylum seekers granted refugee status when they first claim universal credit; and what steps they are taking to address such problems. [HL3147]

Lord Freud: People who have been granted limited or indefinite leave to remain as a refugee, or have discretionary leave to remain or humanitarian protection,

are entitled to claim Universal Credit in the areas of the country where the full service for all claimant types is available, whilst their leave to remain in the country is valid.

Outside these areas they are entitled to claim other benefits such as Job Seekers Allowance.

Universities: Freedom of Speech

Asked by Baroness Deech

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the attempt by protesters to disrupt a talk by an Israeli speaker at University College London on 27 October, what steps they are taking to ensure freedom of speech. [HL2972]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Open and robust debate is how students should challenge those they disagree with. There is no place for students that use intimidation or violence to attempt to shut down the free and open exchange of ideas.

Universities have a legal duty to secure freedom of speech for their members, students, employees and visiting speakers, and must have clearly set out policies for how they will ensure that this can happen. Universities also have a clear responsibility to provide a safe and inclusive environment and no staff or student should ever feel threatened or intimidated. It is also essential that they have clear policies and procedures to ensure that all students and staff can live and work without discrimination, intimidation or harassment. We expect universities to demonstrate how they will act swiftly to investigate and address hate crime, including anti-Semitic related incidents, reported to them.

We have asked the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), in their role as regulator, to engage with University College London (UCL) to ensure that their policies and procedures for events with external speakers are fit for purpose and were implemented appropriately in this instance. UCL have issued a statement on 11 November 2016 regarding the incident, which sets out that they have launched an immediate investigation.

In September 2015 we asked Universities UK (UUK) to set up a Harassment Taskforce. The Taskforce has

recently published a report which sets out that universities should adopt a zero-tolerance approach to harassment and hate crime. The report has been attached to this answer. We must now ensure that the work of the Taskforce goes on to make a real difference to students across the country. The Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation has asked UUK to survey progress in six months and make sure universities are doing all they can to protect the safety and security of their students. We hope that the new guidelines for universities issued alongside the UUK Taskforce report will help universities in effectively tackling incidents such as these.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UUK_Changing_The_Culture [Changing-the-Culture.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-11-03/HL2972>

Visas: Overseas Students

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the claim that only one per cent of international students break the terms of their visa by refusing to leave after their course ends. [HL2678]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The independent Office for National Statistics has confirmed that the International Passenger Survey continues to be the best source of information to measure long-term international migration.

Data collected at the border does not record passengers' onward travel plans or duration of stay, so cannot be used to measure migration figures. Over time the data obtained through exit checks will contribute to the statistical picture and the ONS data on net migration figures, but it will not replace the current IPS survey.

We do not recognise the 1% figure as the proportion of international students that overstay. The Home Office is continuing to assess and analyse elements of the exit check data collected in relation to specific cohorts to understand the extent to which estimates provided are statistically robust. This level of detail is not yet available.

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