

**Vol. 781
No. 23**



**Monday
20 March 2017**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements 1

Written Answers.....3

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

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

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

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

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness 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 Buscombe	Whip
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Dunlop	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office and Northern Ireland Office
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Goldie	Whip
Lord Henley	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions, Whip
Lord Keen of Elie	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
Baroness Mobarik	Whip
Lord Nash	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Baroness Neville-Rolfe	Commercial Secretary to the Treasury
Lord O'Shaughnessy	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health, Whip
Lord Price	Minister of State, Department for International Trade
Lord Prior of Brampton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Baroness Shields	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office
Lord Taylor of Holbeach	Chief Whip
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Whip
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Lord Young of Cookham	Whip
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Lords 2017

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

Written Statements

Monday, 20 March 2017

ECOFIN: 21 March 2017

[HLWS548]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: My right honourable friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (David Gauke) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

A meeting of The Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) will be held in Brussels on 21 March 2017. EU Finance Ministers will discuss the following items:

Early morning session

The Eurogroup President will brief Ministers on the outcomes of the 20 March meeting of the Eurogroup. Ministers will discuss the current economic situation. The European Commission will present its review of national provisions adopted in compliance with the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (the Fiscal Compact) conducted in accordance with Article 8 of the Fiscal Compact, followed by an exchange of views by Ministers.

Reduced VAT rate for electronically supplied publications (e-Publications)

Ministers will discuss political issues in relation to the proposal for a Council Directive regarding rates of value added tax applied to books, newspapers and periodicals. The Proposal would give Member States the ability to apply a reduced or zero VAT rate to e-publications and physical publications.

General Reverse Charge Mechanism

Ministers will discuss the political issues in relation to the General Reverse Charge Mechanism (GRCM). This is a proposal for an amendment to Council Directive 2006/112/ on the common system of value added tax to allow the temporary application of a GRCM to supplies of goods and services above a certain threshold, with the aim of combatting VAT fraud.

Current financial service legislative proposals

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

European Semester 2017:

a) 2017 Country Reports and In-Depth Reviews

b) Implementation of Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs)

Following a presentation by the Commission, Ministers will discuss the Country Reports published by the Commission on 22 February, including the assessment of CSR implementation and, where relevant, the framework of the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure.

Follow-up to the G20 Meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors on 17-18 March 2017 in Baden-Baden

The Presidency and the Commission will inform Ministers on the outcomes of the G20 meeting.

Any other business

a) European Defence Fund

The Commission will inform Ministers about the Commission's European Defence Action Plan, focusing in particular on the launch of a European Defence Fund. This item was delayed from February ECOFIN.

b) Status of implementation of financial services legislation

The Commission will inform Ministers on the status of implementation of financial services legislation.

Pension Schemes Bill

[HLWS546]

Lord Henley: My honourable Friend The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions (Richard Harrington MP) has made the following Written Statement.

Today I will deposit in the House Libraries a memorandum on the application of Standing Order no 83L of the House of Commons Relating to Public Business to the Pension Schemes Bill, as amended. This memorandum sets out that there has been no material amendment at Commons Committee, i.e. the outcomes of the analysis remain precisely the same as on introduction.

UK Regional Investment

[HLWS547]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Wales (Alun Cairns MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement today:

In March 2016, the Government committed to begin discussions on a City Deal for the Swansea Bay City Region. I can today inform the House that the Government has reached agreement with the Welsh Government and the four local authorities on a Heads of Terms City Deal for the Swansea Bay City Region which will create in excess of 9,000 jobs and bring almost £1.3bn of investment to the region.

The Heads of Terms agreement paves the way for major infrastructure investment in the region, which seeks to support and further build on the area's strengths including health, energy and manufacturing. The deal will help boost economic growth in the region by attracting new investors, giving local business the support they need to grow and increasing the available skills base.

The Deal will deliver almost £1.3bn of investment to the region. Central to this is £115.6m from the UK Government and £125.4m from the Welsh Government. Alongside local public sector funding this is projected to attract £637 million from the private sector. This funding

package will be provided over a 15 year period, subject to the submission of detailed business cases.

The UK Government's contribution to the fund will support investment in digital infrastructure and next generation technology, allowing the area to compete with

some of the world's best cities. It will also support a partnership with Tata Steel to establish an innovation and knowledge centre for steel which will focus on zero carbon steel making and the future sustainability of the industry.

Written Answers

Monday, 20 March 2017

Air Pollution: Urban Areas

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their strategy to reduce urban air pollution; and whether a programme of tree planting in urban areas forms part of that strategy. [HL5898]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government's plans for tackling air quality are set out in the national air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide, which was published in December 2015 and will be revised by 31 July this year. The Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG) is considering the evidence around the potential of trees to contribute to improvements in air quality to inform our further policy development. The AQEG is an Expert Committee to Defra that provides independent scientific advice on air quality.

Asylum

Asked by Lord Ramsbotham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the recommendations by Women for Refugee Women for the use of support and engagement in the asylum process as a means of reducing the use of immigration detention, contained in the report *The Way Ahead*; an asylum system without detention, published on 1 March. [HL5837]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We note the recommendations in the report.

Detention is used sparingly, especially in the case of those who have claimed asylum. The overwhelming majority of asylum claimants remain in the community whilst their cases are considered. Only a very small minority of asylum claimants are detained whilst their case is considered and this is normally where they have claimed asylum after already having been detained for removal.

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what procedures are in place to ensure that Home Office decision-making on asylum cases is not unduly influenced by its target of dealing with 90 per cent of asylum applications within six months. [HL5938]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The service standard that 98% of straight forward asylum cases have an initial decision within 6 months of their date of claim is allowing a more strategic management of the casework process and a clearer level of customer service expectation.

Asylum Operations has clear internal guidance on what factors can lead to a case being classed as non straight

forward and such cases are proactively managed to ensure barriers are cleared and decisions are made as soon as possible.

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase the resources for asylum application processing in order to reduce accommodation requirements. [HL5939]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Asylum Operations has recruited and is training additional decision makers to ensure we manage intake levels and continue to meet our customer service standards.

In the coming months we aim to further reduce the time to initial decision and the overall numbers awaiting a decision.

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve the adjudication of asylum applications so as to reduce the number of overturned judgments on appeal. [HL5940]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: All asylum claims lodged in the UK are carefully considered on their individual merits against a background of relevant case law and up to date country information. We ensure that claimants are given every opportunity to disclose information relevant to their claim before a decision is taken, even where that information may be sensitive or difficult to disclose.

We are working to improve the quality of decision-making to ensure that we properly consider all the evidence provided and get decisions right the first time. UK Visas and Immigration has an internal audit process, consisting of reviews by senior case workers and independent auditors, which assesses whether Home Office policy has been followed.

An allowed appeal is not in itself an indication that our decision was incorrect at the time it was made though we aim to reduce the allowed appeal rate by analysing the reasons why appeals are allowed and using this to further improve guidance and training.

Asylum: Employment

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to review the restrictions on asylum seekers applying for jobs on the Shortage Occupation List. [HL5941]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We have no plans to review the current policy. It is designed to protect the resident labour market to ensure access to employment is prioritised for British citizens and those lawfully resident here, including refugees.

Bees: Conservation

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they are taking to address declines in the UK bee population and, in view of the efforts of other countries to promote urban beekeeping, whether they will follow that example and support the conservation of all bee species. [HL5909]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Protecting our bee species is a priority for this Government. We all have an important role to play in supporting pollinators. They are an essential part of our environment and play a crucial role in food production.

Defra supports the honey bee population through its Bee Health programme, delivered for England and Wales by the National Bee Unit (NBU). The programme aims to protect honey bees from pests and diseases, including tackling disease outbreaks and monitoring for exotic pests, including the Asian hornet. Inspectors carry out a total of over 6,000 apiary inspections each year during which free training is provided to beekeepers on how to keep their bees healthy.

Although honey bee numbers fell between 1985 and 2005, there is some evidence of a more recent increase as beekeeping has become more popular. In the last five years, activity in the beekeeping sector, and thus honeybee numbers, has appeared to increase. Colonies of honey bees recorded on BeeBase, the voluntary database of the National Bee Unit (NBU), increased from 108,649 in 2009 to 188,143 in 2017.

Trends in UK bee populations, however, are different for managed honey bees and wild bees. Over a similar period populations of wild bees have become less diverse in many areas of Britain, although we do not have data on how their abundance has changed.

In 2014 Defra published the National Pollinator Strategy, which highlights the vital contribution we can all make to support all pollinators, both managed and wild.

The Strategy is a shared plan between the Government, our partners and stakeholders, and builds on policies that support pollinators, including habitat creation, pest and disease management, monitoring and research. The soon to be published National Pollinator Strategy Progress Report will highlight the considerable progress that has been made in the 23 policy and 11 evidence actions contained in the Strategy.

Working with partners, a range of activities has helped to promote pollinators' needs in the urban environment. These initiatives have included Buglife introducing Urban Buzz to four cities, Birmingham, Cardiff, Plymouth and York, resulting in 3,000 volunteers restoring nearly 100 hectares of pollinator habitat across 220 sites. Defra has also funded a number of information sheets, giving tailored information on managing urban landscapes for pollinators.

Additionally, the Strategy is now referenced in planning guidance, supported by the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method, and there is dedicated help available to brownfield users through Buglife's Brownfield Hub.

Some of these initiatives are promoted during "Bees' Needs Week", held annually in the summer, and at the Bee's Needs Champions Awards event, which recognises the efforts of personal and corporate champions.

Brexit

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent proposal by the British Chamber of Commerce that Brexit should be postponed if a trade deal with the EU does not materialise by the end of the negotiation process under Article 50. [HL5858]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The Government strongly believes it is possible to achieve a good deal that works for the EU and the UK. The Government is also committed to providing certainty to business at the earliest opportunity. Article 50 is clear that once a Member State has notified the European Council of their intention to leave, the negotiation process can only be extended with unanimous agreement of the European Council and the Member state concerned.

It is right, however, that the Government should prepare for every eventuality, and as the Prime Minister has made clear, no deal is better than a bad deal.

Cars: UK Trade with EU

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they plan to respond to requests for tariff-free access to the single market for car manufacturers in the UK. [HL5862]

Lord Bridges of Headley: We will pursue a bold and ambitious Free Trade Agreement with the European Union. We want Britain to have the greatest possible tariff and barrier free trade in goods and services with our European neighbours. The UK's automotive sector is world leading and a strong common ground exists between ourselves and other EU member states. It is in our shared interest to reach an ambitious agreement.

Children and Young People: Speech and Language Disorders

Asked by Lord Ramsbotham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to develop a national framework on children's early speech, language and communication needs. [HL5838]

Asked by Lord Ramsbotham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support has been provided since 2014 to children and young people with speech, language and communication needs who (1) have, and (2) do not have, an Education, Health and Care Plan. [HL5839]

Asked by Lord Ramsbotham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve support for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan. [HL5840]

Asked by Lord Ramsbotham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to issue an instruction to local authorities, schools and Clinical Commissioning Groups to commission services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan; and if so, which department will issue that instruction. [HL5841]

Asked by Lord Ramsbotham

To ask Her Majesty's Government which agencies are responsible for commissioning speech and language therapy services for young people aged 18 to 25 who (1) have, and (2) do not have, an Education, Health and Care Plan. [HL5842]

Lord Nash: We are committed to supporting children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and recognise the importance of identifying SLCN early to enable the right support to be put in place and reduce the impact that they may have in the longer term.

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a renewed focus on the early identification of needs and focuses the system on the impact of the support provided to the child, rather than on how children access support according to categories of need.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (EYFS) sets out the key areas of learning which every provider must follow. For communication and language, the EYFS requires practitioners to give children the opportunity to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations. Communication and language is a prime area of learning, within which it is expected that all children attain an expected level in the *listening and attention*, *understanding* and *speaking* early learning goals.

The EYFS profile results tells us that children's development in these areas are improving year on year. In 2016, 81.6% of children achieved at least the expected level in communication and language compared to 72.2% in 2013.

The government recognises that the quality of the workforce has the biggest impact on children's outcomes. We have recently published our workforce strategy which sets out our plans to remove the barriers to attracting, retaining and developing staff in the early years workforce. One of the planned actions is to provide training through voluntary and community sector grants on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), speech and language development and effective business management.

We have allocated £223 million to local authorities (LAs), since 2014 to support them to implement the SEND reforms. We published, in December 2016, seven Invitations to Tender for contracts totalling up to £4.8m to support children and young people with SEND in 2017-18.

One of the resulting contracts will specifically support those with SLCN and comes in addition to £1.7m that has already been invested in SLCN since the implementation of the SEND reforms in 2014. This funding is improving support for children and young people who have SLCN both with and without an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. One of the contract requirements will be to improve the quality of referrals and the effectiveness of commissioning specialist support for children and young people with SLCN, whether or not they have an EHC plan.

We are also delivering, through our strategic partners, a range of support for joint working between LAs and health bodies, including: self-assessment tools to jointly monitor progress with meeting responsibilities and briefings to support commissioning. In addition, from 2017-18, for the first time, NHS provider contracts will include a requirement that health professionals provide input into EHC plans within six weeks. We are working with NHS England (NHSE) to make best use of resources to support joint working, including NHSE-led workshops this spring, and to support the delivery of the Transforming Care Programme to improve services for children, young people and adults.

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on Clinical Commissioning Groups and LAs to deliver integrated support to improve children and young peoples' outcomes. This means that local governance arrangements must be in place to ensure clear accountability for commissioning services for children and young people with SEND from birth to the age of 25, whether or not they have an EHC plan.

In addition, nurseries, schools and colleges must use their best endeavours to secure the necessary special education provision needed by those with identified SEND, which includes commissioning speech and language therapy services. Local authorities can also use their high needs budget to fund support without the need for an EHC plan if it is appropriate to do so.

Government, local areas and the professionals working with children and young people with SLCN all have their part to play in the commissioning of services and highlighting where challenges remain. To this end, we

have put in place a new Ofsted and CQC inspection framework for assessing local area effectiveness with meeting their SEND responsibilities. We are working closely with the Department of Health and NHSE to respond to findings and support local areas to improve services and build on their strengths.

We expect details of services to meet SLCN, including how they can be accessed, to be included in the local offer, which every LA is required to publish in consultation with children, parents and young people. This enables families to hold LAs to account for any provision they feel has not been available as specified in the Local Offer, and to suggest new services they consider necessary.

Compass Contracts

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what process was undertaken by the Home Office when it decided to extend the Commercial and Operating Managers Procuring Asylum Support contracts with Serco, G4S and Clearsprings. [HL5942]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Commercial and Operating Managers Procuring Asylum Support (COMPASS) contracts with Serco, G4S and Clearsprings for the provision of asylum accommodation and support, commenced in 2012 for an initial term of five years until 2017 with the option to extend them by up to a further two years. The Home Office has exercised its right to extend the contracts from 2017 to 2019 whilst it procures the future provisions from 2019.

Congenital Abnormalities

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what conditions for which there is a high probability that the foetus will die at, during, or shortly after delivery due to serious foetal anomaly are unable to be identified before 24 weeks gestation. [HL5811]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The Department does not maintain a list of fetal anomalies that cannot be identified before 24 weeks gestation.

Customs

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the investment required to extend packing, inspection and storage facilities at ports and airports if the UK leaves the Customs Union. [HL5817]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: Alongside a new arrangement with the EU, the Government will look to ensure that the UK's own customs systems and processes continue to be as effective as possible. The Government has an open mind on how we implement new customs arrangements with the EU and we will work with businesses and

infrastructure providers to ensure those processes are as frictionless as possible, including through the use of digital technologies.

It is not usual to comment on ongoing analytical work being carried out within Government.

Egypt: Christianity

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of Coptic Christian families in Egypt who have been forced to flee North Sinai province following a number of killings in recent weeks by suspected Islamist militants; and what representations they have made to the government of Egypt about those reports. [HL5809]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We deplore all discrimination against religious minorities and constraints on their freedom to practise their faith. The Egyptian constitution contains protections for freedom of religious belief and it is important that these rights are respected.

The UK Government continues to work closely with the Egyptian authorities on security and counter-terrorism, including through training Egyptian officers who operate in areas such as North Sinai to counter improvised explosive devices used by Islamist militants.

We have regularly raised our concerns about the deterioration in the human rights situation with the Egyptian Government, including issues affecting Christians. We have also raised our broader concerns around the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, which are essential to improving the protection of freedom of religious belief in Egypt.

EU Nationals

Asked by Lord Green of Deddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the contribution to gross domestic product since 2010 of non-UK EU nationals living in the UK; and what assessment they have made of that contribution. [HL5996]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: Analysis undertaken by the independent Migration Advisory Committee in 2012 shows that higher levels of net migration will, all else being equal, increase the growth rate of the potential labour supply and therefore the rate of growth of overall GDP.

EU Nationals: Immigration

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they treat an EU citizen who is living in the UK self sufficiently with no recourse to public funds but who does not possess comprehensive sickness insurance as legally resident in the UK. [HL5853]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Under EU law, an EU national may remain in the UK for up to three months unrestricted, provided they do not become a burden on the social assistance system of the UK. EU nationals who wish to stay longer can only do so if they are exercising a Treaty right. This means that they must be a jobseeker, worker, self-employed, self-sufficient or a student. The Free Movement Directive (2004/38/EC) requires self-sufficient people or students to have comprehensive sickness insurance and sufficient resources to support themselves and their families to not become a burden on the UK's social assistance system.

Families: Disadvantaged

Asked by Lord Farmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of how many councils' Troubled Families programmes help parents work through difficulties in their personal relationships as well as their parenting skills. [HL5929]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: A survey of key workers found that 82 per cent provide support to address parenting difficulties and issues with their clients at least once a week. Much of the work done with families supports the family, as a whole, to function.

Financial Services

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government which Minister is responsible for Britain's financial services during the Brexit negotiations; whether there has been a recent change in the allocation of ministerial responsibilities in this regard; and if so, when this was announced. [HL5896]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The Chancellor is responsible for all HM Treasury business relating to EU exit, including financial services. When I was appointed as Commercial Secretary the Chancellor asked me to take on responsibility under him for EU exit for financial services in addition to a number of other duties. My full portfolio was formally published on gov.uk on 31 January.

Financial Services: Greater London

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they plan to ensure that London remains an important financial centre in the European market. [HL5861]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: We are absolutely clear that the UK maintaining its position as an important financial centre in European markets is in the interest of the UK, the EU and the rest of the world. Currently, 60% of all European capital markets business is conducted through the UK and in 2015 our firms provided more than £1.1 trillion of lending to the EU. In addition to a world-class legal system and expertise in other associated professional

services, the UK is home to leading regulators and hosts financial markets of breadth, depth and concentration.

Therefore, an enduring relationship in financial services is in the mutual interest of both the EU and the UK. This is one of the areas where a bold and ambitious agreement will be sought. We want to ensure that British companies have the maximum freedom to trade with and operate within European markets – and to agree mutual arrangements that let European businesses do the same in Britain.

As we prepare to leave the EU, we are determined to preserve our status as a financial centre and to reach an agreement that will allow the UK to provide the finance that helps the European economy grow and create jobs, just as it does now. Working with industry we will act to maintain and grow the UK's position as a major European financial centre, but also as a gateway to the rest of the world. London will continue to represent an attractive place to do business, and will continue to be a world-leading, global financial centre.

Firearms: Licensing

Asked by The Earl of Shrewsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what procedures are in place to ensure that applications for the grant or renewal of a firearm or shotgun certificate which are submitted correctly and in time are renewed within the recognised timeframe in order to avoid the certificate holder committing an offence. [I] [HL5919]

Asked by The Earl of Shrewsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what procedures are in place to issue temporary firearm, shotgun or cotermious certificates when renewals are not completed within the recognised timeframe. [I] [HL5920]

Asked by The Earl of Shrewsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what procedures are in place financially to compensate certificate holders who are obliged to lodge their firearms with a registered firearms dealer due to a late renewal of their certificate. [I] [HL5921]

Asked by The Earl of Shrewsbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government how long each firearms licensing department takes to (1) grant, and (2) renew, (a) firearm, (b) shotgun, and (c) cotermious, certificates. [I] [HL5922]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Under the Firearms Act 1968, firearm and shotgun certificate administration is a matter for the chief officer of police for the area in which the applicant lives. The time taken to process a firearm or shotgun application can vary between forces as the respective chief officer must take into account the need to manage risk and ensure public protection in their respective force area.

Whilst Section 7 of the Firearms Act 1968, allows the police to issue a temporary permit for the continued possession of firearms and ammunition, the use of this power was not used consistently by police forces. The Government has therefore taken steps to assist forces with the administration of the firearms licensing system through changes made under the Policing and Crime Act 2017. Section 131 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 automatically extends the validity of firearm and shotgun certificates past their expiry date for a limited period of up to eight weeks where a timely application for renewal has been made prior to the expiry of the certificate. This will give police the extra time needed to complete outstanding checks without this impacting on a licence holder's activities through the expiry of the certificate prior to renewal. This provision will be implemented later this year.

Any requests for compensation by licence holders whilst their renewal applications are being considered is a matter for them to raise with the police.

We do not collect data centrally on the performance of individual forces in respect of firearms licensing.

*Asked by **The Earl of Shrewsbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the groups which make up the total of section 5 authority holders under the Firearms Act 1968; and how many persons fall into each group. [HL5982]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government carried out a consultation on the implementation of new fees for applications for section 5 licences from 12 January to 9 March. The impact assessment accompanying the consultation, available on www.gov.uk, sets out the estimated number of holders for the most common types of section 5 licence, based on the number of applications made between January 2013 and December 2015. In the case of an exhibitors at the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) exhibition (which are issued on a temporary basis), the figure provided is the number of holders in 2015. The figures in the impact assessment are set out in the following table:

<i>Type of section 5 licence</i>	<i>Estimated number of holders</i>
Firearms dealer	587
DSEI Exhibitor	36
Firearms carrier	321
Private Maritime Security Company	12 (with 322 vetted guards)

Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence

*Asked by **Lord Pearson of Rannoch***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the Metropolitan Police Service and other police forces properly investigate and take action in cases of forced marriage and honour

based violence; and what assessment they have made of whether police officers, such as DS Pal Singh, who make allegations of inaction by the police should be protected by whistleblowing legislation. [HL5953]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: So-called 'Honour-based' violence (HBV), including forced marriage, is a terrible form of abuse, and this Government is clear that we will not allow political or cultural sensitivities to get in the way of tackling it. No-one should suffer because of who they are or what community they are born into.

Ending these brutal practices in all their forms is a key priority for this Government and HBV is a key part of our violence against women and girls strategy published in March 2016.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's recent report into HBV found some areas of good practice. However, it also raised some serious concerns about the police's handling of these issues. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that the police response is as good as it can be, and we want to see more victims coming forward. We have significantly strengthened the law on forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation, our Forced Marriage and FGM Units are carrying out ongoing programmes of outreach for professionals and communities, including the police, and the Home Secretary is chairing a National Oversight Group to drive progress against HMIC's recommendations.

We know there is more to do and we will continue to work with the police, Crown Prosecution Service and others to drive progress, including hosting a Ministerially chaired roundtable on HBV on 15 March.

The Government is committed to ensuring that those working for the police have the confidence to come forward to report concerns of malpractice and misconduct in their own forces. This includes ensuring that measures are in place to protect and support police "whistle-blowers" when they come forward, and that the systems for reporting and investigating their concerns are effective.

In 2015 the Government made changes to the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012 to give police whistle-blowers further express protection from unfair disciplinary action or repercussions. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 further increase protections for whistle-blowers providing an additional avenue for individuals in the police to raise concerns with confidence, free from any fear of a detrimental effect on their career or reputation.

Fracking: Protest

*Asked by **Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many arrests were made in relation to the Barton Moss protest in Salford, Greater Manchester between November 2013 and April 2014 as part of the police operation codenamed Operation Geraldton; how many of those arrested were charged with an offence; and how many

of those individuals were subsequently convicted of an offence. [[HL5852](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government has not centrally collated any information relating to Operation Geraldton on the number of arrests or subsequent charges or convictions of individuals made at Barton Moss between November 2013 and April 2014.

Honey: Fraud

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 1 March (HL5492), what action they are taking to investigate potential fraudulent practice, as is reported to be taking place in relation to Manuka honey. [[HL5857](#)]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: Under the General Food Law Regulation (EC) 178/2002 and the Food Information for Consumers Regulation (EU) 1169/2011, food labelling must not mislead the consumer. The Honey Regulations 2015 lay down compositional requirements for honey and require that when the floral origin of a honey is given, such honey must come wholly or mainly from that plant. Establishing the authenticity of Manuka can be challenging, however, as there is no common standard for the product. It can also be hard, from a scientific perspective, to distinguish one pollen type from another.

The Government has also set up the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) to identify and instigate action where fraud (rather than regulatory) offending is taking place. The NFCU currently has no intelligence to suggest organised criminal exploitation of the lack of clarity around Manuka authenticity or intentionally misleading health or therapeutic claims. The likely appeal to the criminal of capitalising on price differentials between standard and Manuka honey, however, remains substantial.

Immigrants: France

Asked by Baroness Smith of Basildon

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many personnel from the UK have been relocated to France for the specific purpose of assisting with programmes which support migrants; and when those personnel are expected to return to the UK. [[HL5843](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government have a number of staff supporting programmes related to migrants, including specialist social workers and interpreters, as well as officials seconded to the French Interior Ministry. These officials include members of Border Force, immigration Enforcement and UK Visas & Immigration. These roles are ongoing.

Immigration Controls

Asked by Baroness Afshar

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Anelay of St Johns on 27 February (HL Deb, col 575), what measures they have taken to ensure that, at the point of entry into the UK, passport controllers focus on the legitimate passports presented by passengers and do not ascribe an assumed identity to visitors in terms of their dress code, nationality or religion. [[HL5805](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Border Force officers undertake mandatory checks on all passengers arriving in the United Kingdom. Checks include conducting an examination of the person's passport or other documents to establish their right to enter the United Kingdom. Border Force officers receive training and have access to comprehensive guidance to ensure the correct right of entry to the United Kingdom is applied. Border Force also employs a robust assurance programme to ensure passengers are dealt with correctly, consistently and without unlawful discrimination.

Immigration Controls: EU Nationals

Asked by Lord Paddick

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, following the UK's exit from the EU, EU citizens will be questioned about the purpose of their visit at the UK border; and whether they intend to increase resources at border posts as a result. [[HL6023](#)]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government's White Paper, "The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with European Union" published on 2 February makes clear that Brexit must mean control of the number of people who come to Britain from Europe. We will continue to attract the brightest and the best to work or study in Britain but there must be control.

We are working across Government to identify and develop options to shape our future immigration system. As part of that it is important that we understand the impacts of different options on different sectors of the economy and the labour market.

Parliament will have an important role to play in this and we will ensure businesses and communities have the opportunity to contribute their views.

The Prime Minister has also underlined that it would not be right for the Government to give a running commentary on negotiations. It is about developing our own British model so we will not make decisions until we are ready. We will work hard to get the right deal as we conduct our exit negotiations.

In Vitro Fertilisation

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord O'Shaughnessy on 28 February (HL5495), whether, and if so when, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) directly requested any evidence from Dr Valery Zukin or members of his team since publishing its report on 30 November 2016; what assessment it has made of that evidence; whether it has received any evidence from other researchers on pronuclear transfer as specifically applied to patient treatments in a clinical context, and if so, from whom; or if no evidence has been sought from individuals with clinical experience of pronuclear transfer, why the HFEA has not taken into consideration the arguments of those known to have such experience. [HL5812]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) has advised that the work of the expert panel was to consider evidence relating to the use of mitochondrial donation techniques for the prevention of serious mitochondrial disease. Dr Zukin's work relates to the use of the pronuclear transfer donation technique for fertility reasons only and is, therefore, of limited relevance to the techniques permitted by The Human Fertilisation and Embryology (Mitochondrial Donation) Regulations 2015. For that reason, neither the expert panel nor the HFEA have requested evidence directly from Dr Zukin.

As the most recent expert panel report has made clear, the panel did consider an article reporting a pregnancy derived from human zygote pronuclear transfer published in Reproductive BioMedicine Online in August 2016.

Individual Savings Accounts

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the amount of tax that is not paid on (1) income, or (2) capital gains, arising from (a) cash ISAs, and (b) other forms of ISA. [HL5888]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The estimated cost of tax relief to the Exchequer from all Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) was £2.6bn in 2015-16 and is projected to be £2.8bn in 2016-17.

Published estimates of the costs of principal tax reliefs can be found on the GOV.UK website.

ISA statistics published by HM Revenue and Customs give further information on subscriptions and market values.

Insolvency

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will review pre-pack administration, in the light of reports that the system is being abused in relation to creditors and commercial property owners. [HL5833]

Lord Prior of Brampton: In 2014, the independent Graham Review into pre-pack administration commissioned by Government found that pre-packs were a useful business rescue tool but that there was evidence of less successful outcomes where the pre-pack sale was to a connected party. A voluntary, industry-led package of reforms to pre-pack administration based on the Graham Review's recommendations commenced in November 2015.

The Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 created a power for Government to make regulations to impose conditions on property sales to connected parties in administration (including via a pre-pack). This power expires in May 2020. Government will assess the impact of the voluntary package of reforms and consider whether further regulation is needed prior to the power's expiration.

Iraq: Internally Displaced People

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the 45,000 people who fled west Mosul are now homeless; what steps they are taking to improve conditions in the Internally Displaced Persons camp at Hamam al-Alil; and whether they will make representations to the UNHCR about increasing the size of that camp. [HL5974]

Lord Bates: The UK is closely monitoring the humanitarian response for the estimated 76,000 residents of West Mosul who are currently displaced. The majority of people displaced from West Mosul are being accommodated in camps or emergency sites, but some are also choosing to stay with relatives or in local host communities.

Hamam al-Alil is the first stop for displaced people fleeing West Mosul, where Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are security screened by the Government of Iraq before moving on to camps or other accommodation. The UN has set up temporary accommodation for IDPs waiting overnight at the screening site. The camp at Hamam al-Alil is now at full capacity but more spaces are currently under construction by UNHCR and the Government of Iraq. In the meantime, IDPs are being transferred to other camps east and north of Mosul where there is space available. In order to improve the living conditions of IDPs UKAid has helped provide them with food, shelter, water and sanitation assistance as well as cash assistance through funding partners in camps across Ninewa. The UK has ongoing discussions with UNHCR on the need to improve conditions and increase capacity at all camps.

Israel: Bedouin

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they plan to take following the reported issuing on 5 March

of demolition orders by the government of Israel relating to buildings at al Khan al Ahmar. [\[HL5831\]](#)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK Government is gravely concerned about demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities, including plans to demolish the Bedouin village of Khan al Ahmar. The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) raised UK concerns over demolitions with Prime Minister Netanyahu during his visit to Israel on 8 March. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood) raised this issue with the Israeli Ambassador to London on 1 March. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv last raised our concerns with the Israeli authorities on 28 February.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel with regard to the abuse of, denial of human rights to, and denial of due process of law for, Palestinian children resulting from action taken by Israeli security forces. [\[HL5850\]](#)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK continues to have strong concerns about reports of ill treatment of Palestinian minors, particularly those in Israeli military detention. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv meet with the Israeli authorities on a regular basis to advocate for improvements to the practices surrounding Palestinian children in detention in Israel and have most recently done so on 19 January. The UK is firmly committed to the protection of human rights and compliance with international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the one state solution for Israel-Palestine proposed by Knesset member Miki Zohar. [\[HL5851\]](#)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: Any one-state solution is incompatible with the national aspirations of both peoples. The Government is strongly committed to a two-state solution as the only way to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, once and for all. We continue to encourage direct negotiations towards a secure Israel, the homeland of the Jewish people, standing alongside a sovereign Palestinian state, the homeland of the Palestinian people.

Israel: West Bank

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel following reports that Israeli military bulldozers have destroyed a drinking water pipeline that was

funded by the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the Central Plains of the occupied West Bank. [\[HL5846\]](#)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: While we have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities, we continue to raise strong concerns about demolitions in the West Bank with the Israeli authorities.

Israeli Settlements

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel with regard to continued illegal construction in settlements and outposts across the West Bank. [\[HL5848\]](#)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We regularly raise our grave concerns on this issue and strongly urge the Government of Israel to reverse its policy of settlement expansion. The Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) and the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) both expressed strong concerns about settlement activity when they met Prime Minister Netanyahu in London on Monday 6 February. The Foreign Secretary reiterated the UK's support for a two-state solution and our concerns about settlement activity to Prime Minister Netanyahu during his visit to Israel on 8 March. Since January 2017, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood) has issued three statements condemning Israeli government plans to build over 6,000 settlement units in the West Bank including East Jerusalem. He also issued a further statement on 3 February condemning the passage of the Land Regularisation Bill, which seeks to retroactively legalise outposts.

Juhel Miah

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what explanation they have received from the US authorities for the refusal to allow British citizen Juhel Miah to fly to New York on 16 February. [\[HL5897\]](#)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The US authorities do not comment on individual cases but have confirmed the incident was not related to President Trump's January 27 Executive Order, which had been suspended. We have provided Mr Miah with consular support and will continue to offer assistance to British nationals but we cannot influence US immigration decisions.

Leila de Lima

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will make representations to the government of the

Philippines for a judicial hearing to be held relating to the arrest of Senator Leila de Lima. [HL5893]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We are aware of the ongoing cases involving Senator Leila de Lima and understand the next lower court hearing will be on 21 April. The British Embassy in Manila is following developments closely. We continue to underline the need for due legal process to be followed and for the right to a fair trial to be upheld. Our position on the rule of law is consistent and well known in the Philippines.

Mental Hospitals

Asked by Baroness Smith of Basildon

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many delayed discharges of mental health hospital patients there were in each year since 2010, broken down by categories of reasons for the delay. [HL5845]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: This information is not collected in the format requested. Although NHS England does publish snapshot data each month showing the number of patients that had a delayed discharge on one particular day that month, it is not possible to extrapolate accurate yearly data from these reports.

Metals

Asked by Baroness Browning

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to enhance police inspection powers in respect of mobile scrap metal dealers and collectors. [HL5887]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The police have powers to check and inspect scrap metal dealer sites and to verify mobile collectors' licenses. We do not have any plans to change these powers, although we shall continue to work with the police and other partners through the National Metal Theft Working Group to ensure that the police and local authorities have the powers they need to ensure that those who trade and deal in scrap metal are fully compliant with the legislation.

Metals: Licensing

Asked by Baroness Browning

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for standardising licence and fee arrangements across England and Wales applying to dealers in scrap metals. [HL5886]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The licensing fee charged to scrap metal dealers is set by each local authority on a cost recovery basis, to provide them with the funding they need to administer their licensing arrangements and to ensure compliance. While we are looking at the issue of licensing as part of the current review of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013, it will be important to ensure that the arrangements continue to

meet the costs of local authorities in administering their licensing arrangements.

Metals: Payments

Asked by Baroness Browning

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how the enforcement rules preventing cash payments for scrap metal might be improved. [HL5885]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: It is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap metal for cash and this is an important part of the regulatory regime for the scrap metal industry. We shall continue to work with the police and other partners through the National Metal Theft Working Group to see what further action can be taken to deal with those rogue dealers who flout the law and pay cash for scrap metal.

NATO

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to making representations to NATO to (1) widen its role and membership, (2) develop a homeland security-type function, (3) create a counter-terrorist command to work in conjunction with the security services of member states, (4) develop a new vision based on combating Islamist terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and (5) invite Israel, India, Japan, Australia and New Zealand to join. [HL5819]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: At its Summit in Warsaw in 2016 NATO reaffirmed its commitment to its three core tasks - collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security - as set out in the 2010 Strategic Concept. NATO's Open Door Policy, a founding principle of the Washington Treaty, remains in place and we hope to see Montenegro join the Alliance shortly. The North Atlantic Treaty does not make provision for non-European states to join the Alliance.

At its Defence Ministerial Meeting in February 2017, NATO restated the need to continue to adapt to address 21st Century threats. It is already involved in international efforts to counter terrorism. There are, however, no plans to create a counter terrorism command.

North Korea: Diplomatic Relations

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the remarks by David Slinn, the former UK Ambassador to North Korea on 24 January, concerning the difficulties of negotiating with Kim Jong-un. [HL5987]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We remain open to dialogue with the government of the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea (DPRK) on the issue of denuclearisation. However, the DPRK regime must give the international community a credible signal that it is prepared to discuss our significant concerns about their nuclear and ballistic missile programme. This includes respecting UN Security Council Resolutions and international law.

North Korea: Human Rights

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Anelay of St Johns on 28 February (HL Deb, col 714), whether at the 34th session of the UN Human Rights Council they will support recommendations (1) to establish an ad hoc tribunal, or (2) to refer North Korea to the International Criminal Court. [HL5807]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK welcomes the recent UN Group of Independent Experts report on accountability for those who commit human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK). We support further work on their recommendations by the Special Rapporteur on DPRK Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure the most effective framework for accountability can be established.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have discussed with the European Union and individual EU member states (1) the use of North Korean labour, (2) the use of European bank accounts by North Korean nationals in the EU, and (3) a united response to the report by the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; and if so, when those discussions last took place. [HL5990]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We are engaged in a dialogue with European partners about strengthening EU measures towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2321, including the issue of North Korean labourers and the use of European bank accounts by North Korean nationals. We are committed to ensuring that sanctions measures are robust and effective at limiting the DPRK's ability to fund its nuclear and ballistic missile programme.

The UK holds regular discussion with EU partners on DPRK human rights, including how best to take forward the recommendations of the UN Commission of Inquiry report. We are currently working with EU partners at the UN Human Rights Council to achieve a strong resolution on DPRK human rights which draws on the conclusions of the recent Group of Independent Experts report on accountability.

Palestinians: Visas

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of reports that visas have been denied to Palestinians, what representations they will make to the government of Israel to ensure that Palestinian visa applications are dealt with in the same manner as those for their Israeli counterparts. [HL5847]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities, as they are not under an obligation to explain their immigration policies to third parties such as the United Kingdom. The Government is not able to interfere or intervene in another state's immigration policies and procedures.

Peers: ICT

Asked by Lord Laird

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what arrangements for IT training have been made for Members of the House in the last three years; and how that training is accessed. [HL5914]

Lord Laming: The Senior Deputy Speaker has asked me, as Chairman of the Services Committee, to respond on his behalf.

Previously Parliamentary ICT, and now the Digital Service, has provided IT training and coaching for Members. Training is provided on request and can be accessed via the Support Desk, Drop-in Centre, Digital Support Online and Head of Member Services. More specifically, to enhance the service for Members, since October 2015 the Digital Service has employed an IT coach with a primary focus on House of Lords Members.

Over the course of the last year, the Digital Service received and acted upon 92 requests for training from House of Lords Members.

Since the Digital Service was created, it has recruited 13 User Engagement Officers and Leads, and appointed a third party training contract, to ensure sufficient end-user training and coaching is offered and available for the rollout of new and updated member services, including Microsoft Office 365 and Skype for Business. The Digital Service is also planning on recruiting additional staff to strengthen the facilitation and delivery of IT coaching to customers.

Asked by Lord Laird

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker whether he has any plans to improve the repair and maintenance regime for desktop computers issued to Members of the House. [HL5915]

Lord Laming: The Senior Deputy Speaker has asked me, as Chairman of the Services Committee, to respond on his behalf.

All Digital Service supplied desktop computers for House of Lords Members are covered by a 3 year manufacturer's warranty for hardware faults and are repaired or replaced accordingly. Beyond the 3 year warranty the Digital Service will repair or replace the equipment if it fails. The Digital Service provides 24 hour support. Digital Service support staff resolve 92% of calls logged within 24 hours. The Digital Service has established a new Live Services team with a new structure for front-line support. This has a focus on continual learning and upskilling and includes more specialist support, which will deliver a number of operational improvements and efficiencies to the support customers receive.

All Digital Service issued IT equipment comes with a lifecycle of 4 years, after which equipment is available for replacement. The replacement and repair policy will be reviewed by the Services Committee during 2017.

Asked by Lord Laird

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker whether he intends to obtain feedback from Members of the House who have requested repairs to their parliamentary IT equipment; if so, whether the results of that feedback will be published; and if so, how often. [HL5916]

Lord Laming: The Senior Deputy Speaker has asked me, as Chairman of the Services Committee, to respond on his behalf.

Every logged call with the Support Desk results in a "closure" email, inviting the customer to leave feedback about the service received from the Digital Service. During the period 13th March 2016 to 13th March 2017, Lords Members raised 4,217 tickets via the Support Desk. Questionnaires were issued to the originator of each closed ticket. Of the 402 questionnaires completed by Lords Members, 85.8% of respondents rated the service a 7 on a scale from 1 to 7, with 7 being the highest score. The total average score from all respondents was 6.79.

Performance statistics are reviewed and discussed on a fortnightly basis at the Digital Service's Senior Management Team meetings, and annual performance statistics are published in the Digital Service Business Plan available on the intranet.

Pension Funds: Israeli Settlements

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to take action to ensure that British pension funds are not used to support companies that do business with the Israeli settlements in the West Bank. [HL5849]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: Investment decisions are the responsibility of the pension scheme trustee. The Investment Regulations require trustees to prepare a Statement of Investment Principles, including the extent to which social, environmental or ethical considerations are taken into account when making investment decisions.

The Law Commission in 2014 concluded that trustees should consider long term financially material factors when considering the schemes investment objectives for their members; and where long-term environmental, social or governance (ESG) factors are financially material these should be taken into account.

Personal Independence Payment

Asked by Baroness Thomas of Winchester

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultations they conducted in response to the decision of the UK Upper Tribunal on 28 November 2016 in *MH v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (PIP)*, prior to the introduction of the relevant amending regulations laid before Parliament in February 2017. [HL5960]

Lord Henley: The Department for Work and Pensions continues to have regular discussions with disability organisations on a range of issues related to Personal Independence Payment. As part of this on-going engagement and consultation Ministers have been in contact with a number of stakeholders, including disability charities, to discuss and explain the changes that we have introduced.

Prior to its introduction, the PIP assessment criteria were developed in collaboration with a wide range of experts and through comprehensive public consultation.

Philippines: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of reports of extra-judicial killings in the Philippines, whether they will take advice on the means by which President Duterte and Ronald dela Rosa, Chief of the Philippine National Police, may be brought to justice. [HL5894]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK remains open to working with all partners to promote and protect human rights. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Reading West (Mr Sharma) urged the Philippine government Ministers to respect human rights and uphold the rule of law in their campaign against illegal drugs during his visit to Manila last December. Most recently he also raised this in his opening statement at the 34th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Planning Permission

Asked by Lord Hunt of Chesterton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that, where an application for temporary planning permission is made in respect of planning activity which may have a significant impact on the local environment beyond the area to which the

application relates, the application is dealt with appropriately. [HL5827]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The weight to be given to other material considerations, which may include the impact on the local environment beyond the application site, is a matter for the decision maker to determine in each case.

Police: Biometrics

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many complaints they have received in the last three years regarding the retention of (1) biometric details, and (2) custody images. [HL5956]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: During the last three years, the Government has not received any complaints about the retention of biometrics and has received one complaint about the retention of custody images.

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many cases regarding the retention of (1) biometric details, and (2) custody images, have been settled out of court over the last three years. [HL5957]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government is not aware of any such cases which have been settled out of court in the last three years.

Prison Accommodation

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of (1) the current capacity of the prison system, and (2) the current number of prisoners. [HL5832]

Lord Keen of Elie: As of Friday 17 March, the latest published data, the prison population was 85,501 and useable operational capacity was 86,585, indicating headroom of 1,084 places.

We will always have enough prison places for those sent to us by the courts and will aim to deal with the prison population in a way that gives the taxpayer the best possible value for money. The Justice Secretary has launched wholesale reforms to transform all prisons into places of safety and reform where offenders are supported to turn their backs on crime for good.

Public Sector: Pensions

Asked by Lord Hutton of Furness

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they have given, or plan to give, to the Local Government Pension Scheme and similar public sector

pension schemes, concerning the scope of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. [HL5932]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Local Government Pension Scheme is the only major public sector pension scheme which maintains independent investment funds out of which member benefits are paid. Investment decisions are the responsibility of scheme administering authorities.

Refugees: Families

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will provide basic legal advice to refugee children already in the UK who wish to sponsor close family members to join them here; and what assessment they have made as to whether the admission of such relatives would reduce the costs to local authorities of providing care. [HL5828]

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to expand the definition of refugee family for the purposes of family reunions, beyond its present meaning of partner or dependent child, so that more members of family units may enter the UK and become self-supporting. [HL5829]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government does not intend to extend the provisions of the family reunion Rules. The policy meets our international obligations and we do not believe that widening the criteria to include extended family members, or allowing children to sponsor parents, is appropriate. We must do all we can to encourage those who need protection to seek asylum in the first safe country they reach and to support those countries hosting large numbers of refugees.

We believe that allowing children to sponsor family members would create perverse incentives for them to be encouraged, or even forced, to leave their family, risk hazardous journeys and seek to enter the UK illegally in order to sponsor relatives, rather than claim asylum in the first safe country they reach. This plays into the hands of criminal gangs who exploit vulnerable people and goes against our safe guarding responsibilities.

Legal aid is paid for by tax payers and resources are not limitless. It is therefore provided to those who most need it, including those who claim asylum. For those eligible to sponsor and apply for family reunion, we have already improved our guidance to caseworkers to ensure that applicants better understand the process and what is required of them so the provision of legal aid is not necessary.

Refugees: Europe

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will fund interpretation and advice services in France, Italy

and Greece, so that refugees who are eligible to enter the UK are supported in safely doing so. [\[HL5830\]](#)

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The primary responsibility for unaccompanied children in Europe lies with the State in which they are present. However, the UK has established a £10 million Refugee Children's Fund to support the needs of vulnerable refugee and migrant children arriving in Europe. The fund prioritises the needs of unaccompanied and separated children travelling through Greece and the Balkans. Support includes specialised shelters which offer 24 hour care, including psychosocial support, educational activities and legal assistance.

During the first five months of operation 534 safe spaces for unaccompanied children were created or maintained with DFID funding. 1476 children accessed protection or legal support, 294 have been referred to long term alternative care and 168 are undergoing asylum processes.

Religious Freedom

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Anelay of St Johns on 1 March (HL5421) stating that it is their policy to promote freedom of religious belief, why there was no mention of freedom of religion or belief in the UK's opening statement at the 34th session of the UN Human Rights Council. [\[HL5808\]](#)

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK's opening statement at the 34th session of the UN Human Rights Council did not provide an exhaustive list of our priorities for the session. During the current session the UK has however, underscored its commitment to promoting freedom of religion or belief by participating in the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur, where we expressed concerns about the situation of religious minorities in the Middle East, including Christians, Yazidis, the Baha'is, and some Muslim minority groups.

Schools: Standards

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the final report by the outgoing Head of Ofsted which singled out the exemplary leadership of Simon Elliott, headmaster of Forest Gate Community School, what lessons they have learned from the methods adopted at that school; and whether they plan to use this as a model for other schools. [\[HL6008\]](#)

Lord Nash: Under the exceptional leadership of Simon Elliott and the excellent teaching of his staff, Forest Gate Community School has been transformed from a poorly performing school to an outstanding one. The academies programme is predicated upon using our best leaders to support other schools to improve.

I am delighted that the school has established a multi-academy trust and is approved to sponsor other schools in the region. Discussions are underway with the Regional Schools Commissioner for the East of England and North East London to identify the schools that would benefit most from Simon Elliott's leadership and the methods adopted at Forest Gate School.

Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

Asked by Baroness Browning

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the review of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013, what action they intend to take. [\[HL5883\]](#)

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are currently considering the responses submitted by a range of interested partners to inform our review of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013. We will publish a report with our findings shortly.

Asked by Baroness Browning

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to ensure that local authorities submit accurate, up-to-date information to the Environment Agency on licence holders subject to the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013. [\[HL5884\]](#)

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The role of the Environment Agency is to publish the information supplied by local councils in the public register, as required by the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013. The Environment Agency aims at making it as simple as possible for councils to provide that information, including engaging with them on how to best submit data to the public register.

The Electronic Public Register currently hosts data for 310 of 326 local councils across England.

Shoplifting

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of reports that some police forces will not send an officer to investigate in cases of shoplifting of goods worth less than £100, whether they intend to legislate to confer the full powers of a police constable on private security guards in retail premises. [\[HL6009\]](#)

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We do not have any plans to legislate to confer the full powers of police constables on private security guards working in retail premises. However, we recognise the valuable role that the private security industry and others, such as locally employed business wardens, can have in helping to prevent and deter shoplifting.

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they will give to shopkeepers from whom goods worth less

than £100 are stolen, in cases where direct police support is not provided. [HL6010]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government recognises the impact that all forms of retail crime, including shoplifting has on its victims. We encourage all retailers to continue to report these crimes to the police.

We are working closely with the police and the retail sector through the National Retail Crime Steering Group to understand better the crime issues that affect the sector and how we can best work together to prevent and respond to these crimes.

Turkey: Kurds

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what reports they have received from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on alleged massacres by the Turkish army and gendarmerie in Cizre, Sur, Nusaybin and villages in South-East Turkey; and what is their response. [HL5892]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We are aware of reports of civilian casualties and a worsening humanitarian situation in certain areas of south east Turkey. We believe Turkey has a legitimate right to defend itself against the PKK, whose attacks we condemn. As in any conflict, it is vital that civilian casualties are avoided and human rights fully protected. We urge the Turkish authorities to engage with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

USA: Foreign Relations

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Foreign Secretary discussed (1) the US administration's immigration and refugee policies, and (2) relations with Russia, during his meeting with the US Secretary of State in February. [HL5900]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South

Ruislip (Boris Johnson), met US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in Bonn on 16 February. During the meeting they reaffirmed our two countries shared goals and agreed to work together on a range of global issues including Russia.

Waste Management: Fees and Charges

Asked by Baroness Parminter

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the appropriateness of the charging regime for DIY waste made by some councils, such as Wokingham. [HL5836]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Local Authorities (prohibition of Charging Residents to Deposit Household Waste) Order 2015 prevents local authorities from charging their residents to dispose of household waste and recycling at household waste recycling centres. Furthermore, Government has been clear that DIY waste should be classed as household waste if it results from work a householder (living within the authority area) would normally carry out, and that this should be disposed of at household waste recycling centres for free.

Wines: Testing

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord O'Shaughnessy on 28 February (HL5553), what were the risk factors and intelligence received which led the Food Standards Agency to sample (1) in 2015, 100 bottles of Italian wine and 12 bottles of UK wine, and (2) in 2016, 72 bottles of Italian wine and 6 bottles of UK wine; which wines were sampled; and what were the results of the sampling. [HL5818]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The information on the risk factors and intelligence received by the Food Standards Agency on each of the wines sampled in 2015 and 2016 could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The information on wines sampled in 2015 and 2016 could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1	Israeli Settlements..... 11
ECOFIN: 21 March 20171	Juhel Miah 11
Pension Schemes Bill1	Leila de Lima..... 11
UK Regional Investment1	Mental Hospitals..... 12
Written Answers.....3	Metals 12
Air Pollution: Urban Areas.....3	Metals: Licensing 12
Asylum3	Metals: Payments..... 12
Asylum: Employment.....3	NATO 12
Bees: Conservation.....4	North Korea: Diplomatic Relations 12
Brexit4	North Korea: Human Rights..... 13
Cars: UK Trade with EU4	Palestinians: Visas 13
Children and Young People: Speech and Language Disorders.....4	Peers: ICT 13
Compass Contracts6	Pension Funds: Israeli Settlements 14
Congenital Abnormalities.....6	Personal Independence Payment 14
Customs6	Philippines: Politics and Government 14
Egypt: Christianity.....6	Planning Permission 14
EU Nationals6	Police: Biometrics..... 15
EU Nationals: Immigration6	Prison Accommodation 15
Families: Disadvantaged7	Public Sector: Pensions 15
Financial Services.....7	Refugees: Families 15
Financial Services: Greater London7	Refugees: Europe..... 15
Firearms: Licensing7	Religious Freedom..... 16
Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence8	Schools: Standards..... 16
Fracking: Protest.....8	Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 16
Honey: Fraud.....9	Shoplifting 16
Immigrants: France.....9	Turkey: Kurds..... 17
Immigration Controls9	USA: Foreign Relations..... 17
Immigration Controls: EU Nationals.....9	Waste Management: Fees and Charges 17
In Vitro Fertilisation10	Wines: Testing..... 17
Individual Savings Accounts.....10	
Insolvency10	
Iraq: Internally Displaced People10	
Israel: Bedouin10	
Israel: Palestinians11	
Israel: West Bank11	