

Vol. 772
No. 31



Thursday
21 July 2016

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements 1

Written Answers.....21

[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 and Department for International Development
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Whip
Lord Bridges of Headley	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Exiting the European Union
Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government, Wales Office
Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen	Whip and Spokesperson on Cabinet Office Business in the House of Lords
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
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 O'Neill of Gatley	Commercial Secretary to the Treasury
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
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Lords 2016

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

Thursday, 21 July 2016

Armed Forces' Pay Review Body

[HLWS109]

Earl Howe: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Defence Personnel and Veterans (Mr Mark Lancaster) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I am pleased to announce that I have invited Tim Flesher CB and Vilma Patterson MBE to continue to serve as Members of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body, for a further three year term of office commencing on 1 March 2017. This appointment has been conducted in accordance with the guidance of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

British Council

[HLWS100]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Alok Sharma), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

Copies of the British Council's Annual Report and Accounts for the 2015-16 financial year have been placed in the libraries of both Houses. The Report can also be found at the British Council's website www.britishcouncil.org

During the period the British Council received £161,650 Grant-in-Aid from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

Cedars Pre-departure Accommodation

[HLWS114]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Minister of State for Immigration (Robert Goodwill) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am today announcing the Government's decision to close Cedars pre-departure accommodation, and replace it with new pre-departure accommodation near Gatwick Airport, as a discrete unit at Tinsley House immigration removal centre. This will maintain the required legal safeguards and focus on welfare for families with children whose return is to be ensured under the family returns process. The new pre-departure accommodation will be operated in line with the statutory framework established by the Immigration Act 2014, specifically in relation to the statutory time limit on stays at the facility and the requirement for the Independent Family Returns Panel to be consulted in advance in each case where it is proposed that a family should be placed there.

The Government met its commitment to end the routine detention of children for immigration purposes by fundamentally changing the way in which it deals with

families that have no lawful basis of stay in the UK, and limiting the detention of unaccompanied children for removal. The new family returns model introduced in 2011 placed the welfare of the child at the heart of the process. Key parts of the family returns process, including the separate statutory status of pre-departure accommodation, were enshrined in the Immigration Act 2014. The new pre-departure accommodation will operate in line with both the statutory requirements and the wider family returns process, which will remain unchanged.

The low level of use of Cedars pre-departure accommodation over the last few years is a testament to the overall success of the family returns process and, in particular, to the fact that more families are accepting voluntary assistance to leave the UK when they no longer have a lawful basis to stay here. Cedars has from the outset only been intended to be used as a last resort, after all voluntary or other return options have failed, and following the advice of a panel of independent child safeguarding experts.

Stephen Shaw's Review into the welfare of vulnerable people in detention, while recognising that Cedars was an exceptional facility, recommended on value for money grounds that the Home Office should draw up plans either to close Cedars or to change its use as a matter of urgency. The Government accepted this recommendation, and has reviewed the most cost-effective way of providing the necessary component of pre-departure accommodation for the family returns process, while ensuring that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children involved remain a key priority.

The Government is committed to safeguarding the health and wellbeing of those detained in its care, some of whom may be vulnerable. It is very grateful to Barnardo's for all its valuable work with families at Cedars and for working with us to ensuring that the new facility continues to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and builds on the learning and experience of Cedars.

Child Abuse and Neglect

[HLWS113]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Home Office (Sarah Newton) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

My hon Friend Edward Timpson, Minister of State at the Department for Education, and I have today launched a public consultation which considers whether statutory measures focused on reporting and acting on child abuse and neglect should be introduced in addition to our wide-ranging reforms.

Social workers, teachers, police officers, doctors and countless others across the country work together every day to protect our children, making difficult judgements under challenging circumstances. The Government is undertaking a comprehensive programme of reform to deliver better outcomes for children in the children's

social care system. We are improving the quality of front line practice so that professionals such as police and social workers can respond effectively to the needs of individual children – and we are legislating through the Children and Social Work Bill to strengthen multi agency arrangements for the protection of children following a review by Alan Wood CBE. We continue to consider what more can be done to protect children from abuse and neglect and the launch of this consultation exercise fulfils the commitments made during the passage of the last year's Serious Crime Act and in the Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation report published in March 2015.

The consultation will run for the statutory maximum of twelve weeks and ends on 13 October 2016. We are seeking responses from anyone with a view on these important issues, from children and families to practitioners, academics and voluntary sector partners.

Copies of the consultation document have been placed in the House Library and are available on the Government's website, at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?department%5B%5D=home-office&publication_filter_option=consultations

Commission for Employment and Skills

[HLWS118]

Lord Nash: My right honourable friend the Minister of State for Education (Robert Halfon) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

As announced in the 2015 Spending Review, in order to prioritise funding to allow the core adult skills participation budgets to be protected in cash terms, Whitehall Departments will be withdrawing their funding for the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) during 2016-17.

UKCES' work over the last parliament has helped in setting the skills agenda for the future and their activities have created the conditions to move to the next phase of more devolution, greater employer ownership and the apprenticeship levy. It is important that we now have new structures to move onto that next phase and we have announced the establishment in England of a new Institute for Apprenticeships.

As a result of these decisions, Whitehall departments have been working with the UK Commission to agree a way forward.

National Occupational Standards (NOS) will be managed by the Devolved Administrations and transferred to another public sector organisation. Decisions on the detail of how NOS will be managed are the responsibility of the Devolved Administrations who are currently considering next steps. The contents of the NOS database will remain publicly available and employers throughout the UK can continue to use NOS if they so choose although they are not a mandatory

requirement in England for either qualifications or apprenticeships.

The management of the Employer Skills Survey, the Employer Perspectives Survey and the LMI (Labour Market Information) for All Portal will be moved into the Department for Education. The Investors in People function will continue and the Government is looking at arrangements to secure its future and growth.

All operational activities of UKCES will be concluded by the end of 2016 and it is expected the organisation will be wound up in line with the end of its financial year, 2016-17.

Conflict Stability and Security Fund

[HLWS119]

Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen: i) I wish to update the House on how the Government has been supporting our national security interests through conflict prevention, peace building, stabilisation, peacekeeping and conflict resolution using the Conflict Stability and Security Fund (CSSF).

ii) The CSSF replaced the Conflict Pool in April 2015, as part of a new, more strategic approach to enhancing the delivery of our national security interests. The CSSF is one of two funding instruments overseen by the National Security Adviser. My Rt. Hon friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury will be providing a parallel update to Parliament today on the Prosperity Fund, which operates on a similar cross-Government basis.

iii) Last year the Government laid a statement before the House announcing the creation of the CSSF. As announced last November in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), for the current financial year CSSF funding has increased to £1.127 billion and it will increase by a further 19% over this spending review period, reaching £1.322 billion a year by 2019. The CSSF is now one of the world's largest mechanisms for addressing conflict and instability. Its programmes deliver against over 40 cross Government strategies set by the National Security Council. Together, these activities help to secure the UK, promote peace and stability overseas and contribute directly to the SDSR's objectives. The CSSF is designed as a flexible resource. It is supporting the peace processes including that in Colombia, tackling organised crime in the Caribbean, helping Ukraine to build its resilience to withstand external threats, funding a doubling of British UN peacekeepers, and has supported reforming the police and militaries in some of the world's most challenging environments. Without the CSSF the UK and our international partners would be less secure.

iv) Parliamentary accountability for taxpayers' money spent via the CSSF is provided primarily through the Joint Committee for the National Security Strategy. Each autumn, the NSC agrees overall annual allocations for the CSSF, though these may change during the year in response to crises. The NSC reviews strategies in the

spring. Regional Boards on which all NSC departments are represented are responsible for overseeing delivery of programmes against these strategies. A joint unit – the NSS Joint Programme Hub – provides the secretariat, advises the NSC on funding and delivery against the strategies, and advises the Regional Boards and programme teams on financial management and monitoring and evaluation.

v) The Government has used the CSSF to mitigate the spill-over of the Syrian conflict into Jordan and Lebanon. We have supported Jordan's security agencies to maintain its stability in the context of an influx of refugees equivalent to 10% of its population. We have also established community police stations in Syrian refugee camps and trained Jordanian community police. This programme (funded initially by the Conflict Pool and now the CSSF) has had a tangible impact: security incidents in the camps dropped by two-thirds between 2013 and 2014. We continue to assist the Lebanese military in securing their border with Syria to prevent Daesh's attempts to infiltrate Lebanon. We have trained 5,782 troops and enabled Lebanon to secure 75% of the border. In Africa we are helping to tackle terrorist groups, including training the Africa Union peacekeepers in Somalia and capacity-building for the Somali military. We have also ensured women's participation in building Somalia's future through its state-building processes. In Nigeria we have used CSSF funds to work with the Nigerian armed forces in tackling Boko Haram.

vi) The Government is using CSSF funds to promote a political process and save lives in Syria. This includes training and equipping over 2700 volunteers across northern Syria to carry out search & rescue, fire-fighting and first aid. These 'White Helmets' have saved over 50,000 lives since March 2013.

vii) Gender equality is embedded throughout the delivery of the CSSF. Last year the CSSF spent £26m explicitly on activities addressing gender equality and a further £159m on programmes with elements which addressed gender equality.

viii) CSSF funding is strengthening the multilateral system, supporting the UN and other international organisations, to develop more effective multilateral responses to instability. The CSSF funds our contributions to the UN peacekeeping budget. We are the sixth biggest contributor, spending over £300 million in 2015. We are also using CSSF funds to help reform the UN and UN peacekeeping, coordinating outreach to Member States to secure pledges of personnel for peace operations and to assist with the transition from pledges to deployments.

ix) The SDSR announced that the CSSF will incorporate additional programmes from 2016/17. These include the Good Governance Fund for the Eastern Neighbourhood and Western Balkans, the North Africa Good Governance Fund, a Migration Fund and a programme for the Overseas Territories.

Conflict Stability and Security Fund resources, FY16/17

<i>CSSF</i>	<i>2016/17 (millions)</i>
Peacekeeping & Multilateral	385.7
Regional/Country Strategies	577.8
Security & Defence	150
Delivery Support, including the Stabilisation Unit & National School of Government International	13.5
TOTAL	1127

The Statement includes the following attached material:

CSSF [WMS - CSSF.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-07-21/HLWS119/>

Correction to Written Statement HLWS49

[HLWS122]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: On 29 June I repeated a written ministerial statement on the gifting of equipment to Syria Civil Defence and the Free Syrian Police (HLWS49). There was an error in that statement. The statement said "The departmental Minute laid today sets out our proposal to gift £4 million in equipment to Syria Civil Defence and £4m in equipment to those operating within the Free Syrian Police". It ought to have said "The departmental Minute laid today sets out our proposal to gift £3.74 million in equipment to Syria Civil Defence and £4m in equipment to those operating within the Free Syrian Police".

Countering Terrorism

[HLWS111]

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

Keeping our people and interests safe – both here and overseas – is the primary duty of Government. The horrific attack in Nice last week was the latest terrible reminder that the threat from terrorism is more acute and more complex than ever before.

Today I have published the annual report for the Government's counter-terrorism strategy, *CONTEST* (Cm 9310). It covers developments in the terrorist threat and progress made in our counter-terrorism work in 2015. Copies of the report will be made available in the Vote Office.

The threat from terrorism to the UK and our interests continues to be driven by the situation in Syria and Iraq, and, in particular, by Daesh, which has a dedicated external operations structure in Syria. The attacks in Paris in November, in which 130 people were killed, including

one British national, demonstrated its ability to coordinate and direct complex mass-casualty attacks. The attack on tourists in Tunisia last June led to the death of 30 British nationals, the largest single loss of British life to terrorism since the London bombings in 2005. In March this year, 31 people were killed in the attacks in Brussels, including one British national. There have been further attacks in other parts of the world, including in Bangladesh, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Daesh continues to use propaganda to encourage individuals from around the world to travel to the conflict area, including approximately 850 individuals of national security concern who have travelled from the UK. Daesh is not the only terrorist threat we face: the Al Qa'ida grouping in Afghanistan and Pakistan and affiliate groups elsewhere continue to aspire to attack Western interests.

The police and the security and intelligence agencies successfully disrupted six terrorist plots to attack Great Britain in 2015 due to their hard work and commitment to keep us safe. We have continued to ensure they have the powers and capabilities they need to disrupt terrorist threats, through the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and increased investigative and intelligence resources announced in the Strategic Defence and Security Review.

The success of our counter-terrorism effort also depends on a much broader range of domestic and international activity. Through our Prevent and intervention programmes we have worked to safeguard people at risk and challenge the twisted narratives that support terrorism. We have made borders and civil aviation more secure. We have strengthened our existing response to marauding terrorist firearms attacks.

The nature of terrorism in 2015 has underlined the need to look beyond solely domestic solutions. We have worked to ensure that international collaboration on counter-terrorism is matched with coordinated action which has lasting impact.

The CONTEST strategy has proven to be successful over a number of years. But our approach must continue to evolve to deal with the changing threat from terrorism. That is why we are currently reviewing CONTEST – to ensure the highest priorities are given the right resources and that government departments and agencies have a unified approach. We will publish an updated strategy later this year.

Cross Government Prosperity Fund

[HLWS105]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: My right honourable friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (David Gauke) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

In the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) the Prime Minister announced the creation of a new £1.3bn Cross-Government Prosperity Fund. I am pleased to announce the publication on GOV.UK of a short paper that details how the Fund is operating. This

paper can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/cross-government-prosperity-fund-programme/cross-government-prosperity-fund-update

The Prosperity Fund is a key part of our aid strategy. Using primarily Official Development Assistance (ODA) resources the Fund will promote economic reform in developing countries contributing to a reduction in poverty.

The Fund supports global and UK prosperity by removing barriers to trade, building prosperity partnerships, and supporting UK business in seizing new opportunities. It enables the UK to deepen relationships in countries across the globe.

Thematic, country and regional priorities for the Prosperity Fund are determined by a careful design and economic diagnosis process. Project design, management and evaluation ensures a strong focus on results and value for money. The Fund is investing in areas with the highest potential for inclusive growth, strengthening the golden thread of robust institutions, good governance and reduced corruption.

The Fund is accountable to the National Security Council (NSC) and to a Ministerial Board made up of relevant UK government departments. The Fund supports a fully joined up approach to prosperity delivery across departments and through the government's overseas network.

All ODA projects and programmes under the Prosperity Fund comply with the International Development Act, meet the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) ODA criteria, are untied, and meet the UK government transparency commitments on ODA spend.

The Prosperity Fund is one of two cross government funding instruments overseen by the National Security Advisor, Sir Mark Lyall Grant. An update to Parliament on the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) will be provided in parallel.

Diplomatic Immunity

[HLWS106]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My right Honourable Friend, the Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Boris Johnson), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

In 2015, 11 serious and significant offences allegedly committed by people entitled to diplomatic immunity in the United Kingdom were drawn to the attention of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office by Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection of the Metropolitan Police, or other law enforcement agencies. Six of these were driving-related. We define serious offences as those which could, in certain circumstances, carry a penalty of 12 months' imprisonment or more. Also included are drink-driving and driving without insurance.

Around 22,500 people are entitled to diplomatic immunity in the United Kingdom and the majority of diplomats abide by UK law. The number of alleged serious crimes committed by members of the diplomatic community in the UK is proportionately low.

Under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961, those entitled to immunity are expected to obey the law. The FCO does not tolerate foreign diplomats breaking the law.

We take all allegations of illegal activity seriously. When instances of alleged criminal conduct are brought to our attention by the police, we ask the relevant foreign government to waive diplomatic immunity where appropriate. For the most serious offences, and when a relevant waiver has not been granted, we seek the immediate withdrawal of the diplomat.

Alleged serious and significant offences reported to the FCO in 2015 are listed below.

<i>2015</i>	
<i>Driving without insurance</i>	
The Commonwealth Secretariat	1
<i>Causing or permitting the driving of a vehicle without insurance</i>	
St Lucia	1
<i>Driving a vehicle without insurance or a MOT</i>	
Nigeria	1
<i>Driving under the influence of alcohol</i>	
USA	1
Kazakhstan	1
China	1
<i>Actual bodily harm</i>	
Gabon	1
<i>Human Trafficking into the UK for the purposes of exploitation, specifically domestic servitude</i>	
Saudi Arabia	1
<i>Human trafficking; Slavery or Servitude/Forced or Compulsory Labour</i>	
Saudi Arabia	1
<i>Taking an indecent photograph/pseudo-photograph of a child; and using threatening /abusive/insulting words or behaviour to cause harassment/alarm/distress</i>	
Mexico	1
<i>Causing a child aged 13 to 15 to watch/look at an image of sexual activity</i>	
Mexico	1

Figures for previous years are available in the Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs' written statement to the House on 16 July 2015, *Official Report*, column 36WS (HCWS128).

ECOFIN

[HLWS102]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: My right honourable friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (David Gauke) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I attended this meeting in my capacity as the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. A meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council was held in Brussels on 12 July 2016. EU Finance Ministers discussed the following items:

Anti-Money Laundering

The Commission presented their proposals to amend parts of the Fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive (4AMLD), on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing, followed by an exchange of views.

Communication on further measures to enhance transparency and the fight against tax evasion and avoidance

ECOFIN heard a presentation from the Commission on further measures to enhance transparency and the fight against tax evasion and avoidance. This was followed by an exchange of views.

Presentation of the work programme of the Slovak Presidency

The Presidency presented their work programme, this was followed by an exchange of views.

Implementation of the Banking Union

The Commission gave an update on the transposition of several dossiers linked to the Banking Union: the Single Resolution Fund, the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive and the Deposit Guarantee Scheme Directive.

European Semester – Country-Specific Recommendations

The Council adopted the 2016 Country-Specific recommendations as part of the European Semester process.

Implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact

The Council endorsed the draft decisions regarding the performance of Spain and Portugal under the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP), based on recommendations by the Commission. The Council agreed with the Commission's recommendation that Spain and Portugal have not taken effective action against their current targets. As these decisions cover euro area Member States, the UK did not have a vote.

Third pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe – thematic discussions on investment barriers

The Commission presented on the Third Pillar Investment Plan, this was followed by an exchange of views.

Preparation of the G20 Finance Ministers meeting in Chengdu on 23-24 July 2016

The EU Terms of Reference (ToR) were presented to ECOFIN Finance Ministers for endorsement.

Convergence Reports from the Commission and the European Central Bank

There was an exchange of views on the convergence reports which concluded that none of the seven EU member states who are obligated to join the euro fulfil the conditions for adopting the euro.

State of play on finalising the Basel Committee's post-crisis banking reform agenda

Council conclusions were adopted on the Basel Committee's post-crisis banking reform agenda.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Councils

[HLWS99]

Lord Freud: My Honourable Friend The Minister for Employment (Damian Hinds MP) has made the following Written Statement.

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council met on 16 June 2016 in Luxembourg where Lord Freud, The Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions, represented the UK.

Ministers approved this year's Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) under the European Semester and endorsed the joint Social Protection Committee and Employment Committee opinion. In discussion all Member States welcomed the better focus of the CSRs and argued that fewer but more specific CSRs were helpful. The UK welcomed the more focused approach, the importance given to employment policies as well as the recognition that unemployment can be a structural rather than cyclical problem.

Ministers noted progress reports on amending the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive and the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive. The Commission (Thyssen) confirmed its intention to respond to the yellow card on the Posting of Workers Directive during July.

Ministers adopted Council Conclusions on 'Combating Poverty and Social Inclusion: An Integrated Approach', and on 'A New Start for a Strong Social Dialogue' without discussion. Ministers also adopted a package of Council Conclusions on gender and LGBTI equality. While there was some disappointment that the text was not stronger from a number of Member States, the Council's adoption of LGBTI conclusions for the first time was particularly welcomed by the UK amongst others.

The European Commission presented its new Skills Agenda followed by updates on the outcomes of this year's UN Commission on the Status of Women meeting, and on international meetings related to the international dimension of social and employment policies.

The incoming Slovak Presidency gave an outline of its work programme. Progress reports on the Anti-Discrimination Directive; the European Accessibility Act; and the Social Partner Agreement on the ILO Work in Fishing Convention were all noted without discussion. Italy also introduced its proposal for a migration compact.

Over lunch Ministers discussed social protection for the self-employed.

The Informal Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council then met on 14-15 July in Bratislava. Lindsay Fullarton, Deputy Head of EU and International Affairs at the Department for Work and Pensions, represented the UK on the first day. Baroness Neville-Rolfe, Minister of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, represented the UK on the second day.

The Slovak Presidency used the meeting to discuss the social and technological challenges in the future world of work.

The first day involved a plenary session on ageing of populations and the challenges this creates for labour markets and social security systems. The focus of most Member State interventions was on migration, demographics and the scope of social protection systems. There was a strong consensus on the need for life-long learning, flexibility in labour markets and recognition of new patterns of work. There were differing views on whether highly skilled migrants were needed and how new ways of working would be covered by labour law, health and safety and social protection.

The second day involved a plenary session on how to address the impact of technological development on the quality of jobs and future skill needs. The UK intervened to highlight the importance of improving digital skills at all levels and the need for policies to address the difficulties of those left behind in society. Baroness Neville Rolfe explained that the UK's flexible labour market aimed to not exclude these people and ensure their rights regardless of hours worked. Baroness Neville Rolfe's intervention was echoed and supported by many Ministers who also noted that more needed to be done to ensure that new ways of working had full social, health and safety and labour law protection.

English Language Requirement

[HLWS121]

Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen: My honorable friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General (Ben Gummer) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The Government believes that the public should expect that all those with whom they interact, within the sphere of public services, have the language abilities required to respond to their needs.

A clear commitment in our Manifesto was to ensure that all public sector workers in customer-facing roles can speak fluent English. I am delighted to announce that this manifesto commitment has now been fulfilled, with the Immigration Act 2016 receiving Royal Assent on 12th May 2016.

Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016 places a duty on all public authorities in scope to ensure that their customer-facing staff can speak fluent English, or in Wales fluent

English or Welsh. This will assure citizens that there is not a language barrier that might prevent them from contacting or using public services or inadvertently put them at risk.

It is a clear priority for the Government to ensure public services are delivered to a high standard in spoken English, or in Wales in English or Welsh.

In support of this aim, the Government is today publishing:

- A draft Statutory Code of Practice which is intended to support public sector employers in complying with this new duty, whilst ensuring minimal burden. It provides principles and examples for public authorities to consider when fulfilling their legal duties and obligations. It will also be available in Welsh.
- A final Impact Assessment is available, which evaluates the impact of this duty. It details the problem under consideration, the rationale for intervention and the policy objective. It also evaluates the monetised and non-monetised costs and benefits of the preferred option, as well as considering risks and possible wider impacts of the policy.

The Government has worked with relevant employers throughout the development of the draft Code of Practice and will continue to do so to ensure that the duty is implemented in a way which ensures a positive impact for employees and service users in front line organisations.

The Code will be laid before Parliament and issued in October but the early publication of the document is intended to support organisations to be ready to adhere to the statutory duty once it comes into force.

All publications will be available on GOV.UK.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

WMS - English Language Requirement [WMS - English Language Requirement.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-07-21/HLWS121/>

First World War Centenary Repairs Fund

[HLWS117]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: I am today publishing the list of successful bidders to the First World War Centenary Cathedral Repairs Fund.

Cathedrals are powerful symbols of Britain's shared history and are important not only for their architecture, history and religious learning but also as a place for local communities to come together. This fund is helping to ensure that they are in a good state of repair and preserved for future generations.

Decisions on funding allocations are taken by an expert panel, which considers the grant applications against the published criteria for the scheme and decides which cathedrals should receive funding. The panel is chaired by Sir Paul Ruddock and includes senior figures from

English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Church of England and the Catholic Church, as well as church architects, architectural historians and grant giving experts.

I am pleased to confirm that the panel has today decided to allocate funding of almost £14.5million to 39 cathedrals. These are as follows

Results of the meeting of the Expert Panel, 23 June 2016

<i>Cathedral</i>	<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>AWARD</i>
Bradford	CofE	Heating system & asbestos removal	£127,000
Canterbury	CofE	Library corridor roof	£250,000
Carlisle	CofE	Nave and nave aisle roof	£400,000
Chester	CofE	Repairs to flooring and emergency lighting	£120,000
Chichester	CofE	Cloister repairs	£160,000
Clifton	RC	Internal repairs and infrastructure	£700,000
Coventry	CofE	Chapel of Unity exterior slate	£870,000
Derby	CofE	Nave roof repair	£750,000
Durham	CofE	Belfry repairs	£599,000
Ely	CofE	Emergency rewiring	£150,000
Exeter	CofE	N side drainage and W front apron	£170,000
Gloucester	CofE	High level repairs	£486,000
Guildford	CofE	Quire/presbytery roof, repointing, asbestos removal	£499,000
Hereford	CofE	North aisle roofs	£420,000
Leicester	CofE	South face stonework	£300,000
Lichfield	CofE	Chapter House stonework and roof	£690,000
Lincoln	CofE	Triforium roof and NW Transept	£480,000
Liverpool	CofE	Nave roof phase 2	£460,000
Liverpool Met	RC	Repairs to approaches and main entrance	£369,000
Newcastle	CofE	Crypt and east end damp investigation	£25,000
Norwich	CofE	Electrical infrastructure	£190,000
Nottingham	RC	Phase 2 drainage	£115,000
Peterborough	CofE	Repairs to four windows	£15,000
Plymouth	RC	Stonework and window repairs	£644,000

<i>Cathedral</i>	<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>AWARD</i>
Portsmouth	CofE	North side windows and other works	£240,000
Ripon	CofE	Presbytery stonework repairs	£398,000
Rochester	CofE	Eastern roof repairs	£460,000
Salford	RC	High level repairs and access	£373,000
Salisbury	CofE	Trinity Chapel stonework	£500,000
Sheffield	CofE	Nave, South and North aisle roofs	£480,000
Sheffield	RC	Spire repairs - phase 2	£189,000
Southwell	CofE	South quire aisle roof	£291,000
St Albans	CofE	External stonework	£230,000
St Pauls	CofE	Stone Gallery repairs	£200,000
Wakefield	CofE	Nave windows	£456,000
Westminster	RC	Organ chamber roofs	£300,000
Winchester	CofE	Repair and conservation of major windows	£500,000
Worcester	CofE	Great West Window repairs	£390,000
York Minster	CofE	Quire south side and Lady Chapel stone repairs	£500,000
Total			£14,496,000

The panel will meet again on 17 October 2016 to take decisions on applications to the final round of the First World War Centenary Cathedral repairs fund.

Foreign Affairs Council

[HLWS123]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My Right Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Alan Duncan), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs attended the Foreign Affairs Council on 18 July. The Foreign Affairs Council was chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini. The meeting was held in Brussels.

Foreign Affairs Council

A provisional report of the meeting and Conclusions adopted can be found at:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2016/07/18/>

The Foreign Secretary made clear to his counterparts that while the UK is leaving the EU, we have no intention of turning our back on Europe and will not any way be abandoning our leading role in European cooperation.

In the aftermath of the attack in Nice, Ministers discussed the fight against terrorism. They observed a minute of silence at 12:00 to pay tribute. The agenda for the Council was adjusted to allow time for Ministers to discuss counter-terrorism in the aftermath of the Nice attack and recent events in Turkey.

Fight against Terrorism

Ministers expressed their condolences following the Nice attack and underlined their determination to tackle terrorist threats and their readiness to continue supporting France. The Foreign Secretary emphasised his solidarity with France and made the argument for terrorism to be tackled at source across the globe. He confirmed that the UK would consider what further support could be offered in response to French requests.

Turkey

Ministers discussed the recent events in Turkey. The Council adopted Conclusions.

EU Global Strategy

Ministers discussed the EU Global Strategy which was presented by HRVP at the European Council on 29 June. The Foreign Secretary set out the Government's view that the strategy correctly identifies a number of important priorities, including the central role of NATO in providing European security. Ms Mogherini confirmed that the EU External Action Service would produce a written proposal on the implementation of the strategy. Options would be presented to Member States in the autumn.

China

Ministers discussed the EU's strategy towards China following the recent EU-China Summit; and adopted Council Conclusions. The Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Mr Johannes Hahn, reported that the EU had conveyed clear messages to China on over-capacity and the need to improve access to the Chinese market for EU companies. The Chinese side had raised Market Economy Status. Member States welcomed the strategy.

Latin America

Ministers discussed EU relations with Latin America, focusing on Venezuela, Colombia and Cuba. Ms Mogherini underlined the importance of the forthcoming EU-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Foreign Ministers meeting that will take place in the Dominican Republic on 25 – 26 October. She also welcomed the finalisation of the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA). The Council also took note of recent positive developments in the Colombian peace process. Council Conclusions were adopted on Venezuela.

Migration

Due to time constraints, Ms. Mogherini informed Ministers that she would provide an update in writing on the implementation of the migration partnerships envisaged in the Conclusions of the June European Council.

Ministers agreed without discussion a number of measures:

- The Council adopted Conclusions on Somalia.
- The Council adopted Conclusions on Afghanistan.
- The Council adopted Conclusions on Pakistan.
- The Council adopted Conclusions on the recent outbreak of violence in South Sudan.
- The Council adopted the agenda for the EU-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting, held after the Foreign Affairs Council.
- The Council approved two decisions on the conclusion of a protocol to the EU-Lebanon Euro-Mediterranean agreement to take account of the accession of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania.
- The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of a protocol to the EU-Lebanon Euro-Mediterranean agreement which enables Lebanon to participate in EU programmes.
- The Council adopted a common position in view of the eighth meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Council with Albania, to take place in Brussels on 8 September 2016.
- The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of a protocol which enables Azerbaijan to participate in EU programmes such as Creative Europe and Horizon 2020.
- The Council adopted EU priorities for the 71st United Nations General Assembly (September 2016 – September 2017).
- The Council adopted amending legal acts which transpose into EU law the recent UN Security Council Resolution renewing UN sanctions on the Democratic Republic of Congo until 1 July 2017.
- The Council extended the mandate of European Conference on Antennas and Propagation (EUCAP) Sahel Niger until 15 July 2018 and agreed a budget of €26.3 million for the period 16 July 2016 to 15 July 2017.
- The Council adopted a decision on the EU position on the EU-Central America Association Council.
- The Council adopted a code of conduct and discipline for EU civilian CSDP missions.
- The Council adopted a decision concerning the staff regulations of the European Union Institute for Security Studies.
- The Council approved a decision for a temporary relaxation of the rules of origin under the EU-Jordan-Euro-Mediterranean agreement so as to enhance Jordan's exports to the Union and create additional employment opportunities, especially for Syrian refugees.
- The Council approved a decision on the signing and provisional application of a protocol to the EU-Egypt

Euro-Mediterranean agreement to take account of the accession of Croatia to the EU.

- The Council adopted the EU and its Member States' position for the Ministerial Conference of the Union for the Mediterranean on Employment and Labour, which will take place in Jordan on 27 September.

Healthcare Education

[HLWS125]

Lord Prior of Brampton: My hon. Friend the Minister of State for Health has made the following written statement:

I am publishing today, following a twelve week public consultation, a government response on how we will implement the healthcare education funding reforms. A copy is attached.

The reforms, which are for England only, will mean that from 1 August 2017, all new undergraduate nursing, midwifery and allied health professional students on pre-registration courses will receive their student support through the standard student support system for fee loans and living costs support, rather than course fees and NHS bursaries for living costs paid by Health Education England. These students will therefore be subject to the same general student finance arrangements that apply to other undergraduate students in 2017/18.

Overall, the government response will set out that the majority of these students, including those with children, will have access to more funds under the student loans system while at university; they will have access to at least 25% more living cost support and we are making additional offers on childcare, travel, dual accommodation and provision, in appropriate circumstances, for exceptional hardship funding.

The government response also sets out transitional arrangements for pre-registration part time students, pre-registration postgraduate courses and dental hygiene and therapy courses applicable for new students commencing their studies in the academic year 2017/18.

The changes will mean we are able to accept more applicants for pre-registration nursing, midwifery and allied health degree courses who get the right grades than we have in the past. Currently two thirds of people who apply to university to become a nurse are not offered a place for training.

We have responded to feedback from key stakeholders, who took part in a constructive consultation, by providing extra funding to help cover additional expenses like travel and more support for students with children. We will work with nursing bodies, universities, hospitals and other partners in taking this forward.

These changes are only part of our plan to expand the NHS workforce – we are also opening up new routes into nursing support roles through apprenticeships for example, the new Nursing Associate role to widen access further to these professions. The Government is determined to ensure the NHS can adapt to the changing

needs of our population, train more nurses in England and reduce the reliance on agency and overseas staff

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Government Response [Govt Response - Reforming healthcare education funding.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-07-21/HLWS125/>

Higher Education Student Finance

[HLWS126]

Lord Nash: My right honourable friend the Minister of State for Universities and Science (Joseph Johnson) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I am today announcing student finance arrangements for higher education students undertaking a course of study in the 2017/18 academic year beginning in August 2017.

Teaching Excellence Framework.

As stated in the Government's White Paper "Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice", published on 16 May 2016, from 2016/17 the Government is introducing a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) to provide clear information to students about where the best provision can be found and to drive up the standard of teaching in all higher education providers.

In Year One of TEF (2016/17), all higher education providers who have met the eligibility criteria set out in the Government's White Paper will receive a rating of Meets Expectations. This TEF award will carry financial incentives, as detailed below, for 2017/18 which will last for one year only. A provisional list of providers achieving this rating in Year One was published on 07 July 2016 on Gov.uk[1].

The following sections provide details on the maximum tuition fee and fee loan caps in 2017/18 for higher education courses at providers that have been awarded a rating of Meets Expectations in TEF Year One (2016/17).

Tuition fees and fee loans for full-time higher education courses.

For all new students and eligible continuing students who started their full-time courses on or after 1 September 2012 and are undertaking courses at publicly funded higher education providers that have achieved a TEF rating of Meets Expectations, maximum tuition fee caps will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) in 2017/18. For publicly funded providers that have achieved a TEF rating of Meets Expectations and have an access agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), the maximum tuition fee cap for full-time courses will be £9,250 in 2017/18. For publicly funded providers that have achieved a TEF rating of Meets Expectations but do not have an access agreement with OFFA, the maximum tuition fee cap for full-time courses will be £6,165 in 2017/18. For publicly funded providers that have not

achieved a TEF rating of Meets Expectations, maximum tuition fee caps for full-time courses in 2017/18 will be £9,000 and £6,000, the same as in 2016/17.

Maximum fee loans for all new students and eligible continuing students who started their full-time courses at publicly funded providers on or after 1 September 2012 will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) to £9,250.

Maximum tuition fee and fee loan caps for students undertaking a work placement year of a Sandwich course either in the UK or abroad will remain at 20% of the maximum applicable full-time fee and fee loan caps in 2017/18. Maximum tuition fee and fee loan caps for students undertaking an Erasmus study or work placement year or a period of study at an overseas provider that is not an Erasmus year will remain at 15% of the maximum applicable full-time fee and fee loans in 2017/18.

For continuing students who started their full-time courses before September 2012, maximum tuition fee and fee loan caps at publicly funded providers in 2017/18 will be £3,465, the same as in 2016/17.

Tuition fees and fee loans for part-time higher education courses.

For all new students and eligible continuing students who started their part-time courses on or after 1 September 2012 and are undertaking courses at publicly funded higher education providers that have achieved a TEF rating of Meets Expectations, maximum tuition fee caps will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) in 2017/18. For publicly funded providers that have achieved a TEF rating of Meets Expectations and have an access agreement with OFFA, the maximum part-time tuition fee cap will be £6,935 in 2017/18. For publicly funded providers that have achieved a TEF rating of Meets Expectations, but do not have an access agreement with OFFA, the maximum part-time tuition fee cap will be £4,625 in 2017/18. For publicly funded providers that have not achieved a TEF rating of Meets Expectations, the maximum tuition fee caps for part-time courses in 2017/18 will be £6,750 and £4,500, the same as in 2016/17.

Maximum fee loans for all new students and eligible continuing students who started their part-time courses at publicly funded providers on or after 1 September 2012 will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) to £6,935.

Tuition fee loans for higher education courses at private providers.

For all new students and eligible continuing students who started their full-time courses on or after 1 September 2012 and are undertaking courses at private higher education providers that have achieved a TEF rating of Meets Expectations, the maximum fee loan will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) to £6,165 in 2017/18. For private providers that have not achieved a TEF rating of Meets Expectations, the maximum fee loan for full-time courses will be £6,000, the same as in 2016/17.

For all new students and eligible continuing students who started their part-time courses on or after 1

September 2012 and are undertaking courses at private providers that have achieved a rating of Meets Expectations, the maximum fee loan will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) to £4,625 in 2017/18. For private providers that have not achieved a TEF rating of Meets Expectations, the maximum fee loan for part-time courses in 2017/18 will be £4,500, the same as in 2016/17.

Loans for living costs for new full-time students and continuing full-time students starting their courses on or after 1 August 2016.

Maximum loans for living costs for new full-time students and eligible continuing full-time students starting their courses on or after 1 August 2016 will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) in 2017/18.

For students living away from home and studying outside London, the maximum loan for living costs for 2017/18 will be £8,430. I can confirm that the equivalent loan rates for students living away from home and studying in London will be £11,002; for those living in the parental home during their studies, £7,097; and for those studying overseas as part of their UK course, £9,654.

Loans for living costs for new full-time students and continuing full-time students starting their courses on or after 1 August 2016 who are entitled to certain benefits.

Maximum loans for living costs for new full-time students and eligible continuing full-time students starting their courses on or after 1 August 2016 and who are entitled to benefits will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) in 2017/18.

For students who are entitled to benefits who are living away from home and studying outside London, the maximum loan for living costs for 2017/18 will be £9,609. I can confirm that the equivalent loan rates for students who qualify for benefits who are living away from home and studying in London will be £11,998; for those living in the parental home during their studies, £8,372; and for those studying overseas as part of their UK course, £10,746.

Loans for living costs for new full-time students and continuing full-time students starting their courses on or after 1 August 2016 who are age 60 or over at the start of their course.

The maximum loan for living costs in 2017/18 for new full-time students and eligible continuing full-time students starting their courses on or after 1 August 2016 who are age 60 or over on the first day of the first academic year of their course, will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) to £3,566.

Maintenance grants and special support grants for full-time students who started their courses before 1 August 2016.

The maximum maintenance grant and special support grant for eligible continuing full-time students who started their courses on or after 1 September 2012 but before 1 August 2016, will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) in 2017/18 to £3,482.

The maximum maintenance grant and special support grant for eligible continuing full-time students who started their courses before 1 September 2012, will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) in 2017/18 to £3,197.

Loans for living costs for full-time students who started their courses before 1 August 2016.

Maximum loans for living costs for eligible students who started their courses on or after 1 September 2012 but before 1 August 2016, will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) in 2017/18.

For students who are living away from home and studying outside London, the maximum loan for living costs will be £6,043. I can confirm that the equivalent loan rates for students living away from home and studying in London will be £8,432; for those living in the parental home during their studies, £4,806; and for those studying overseas as part of their UK course, £7,180.

Maximum loans for living costs for eligible students who started their courses before 1 September 2012 will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) in 2017/18.

For students who started their courses before 1 September 2012 and are living away from home while studying outside London, the maximum loan for living costs will be £5,440. I can confirm that the equivalent loan rates for students living away from home and studying in London will be £7,611; for those living in the parental home during their studies, £4,217; and for those studying overseas as part of their UK course, £6,475.

Long Courses Loans.

The maximum long courses (living costs) loans for new and continuing students who are attending full-time courses that are longer than 30 weeks and 3 days during the academic year will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) in 2017/18.

Dependants' grants.

Maximum amounts for dependants' grants (adult dependants' grant, childcare grant and parents' learning allowance) will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) in 2017/18 for all new and continuing full-time students.

The maximum adult dependants' grant payable in 2017/18 will be increased to £2,834. The maximum childcare grant payable in 2017/18, which covers 85% of actual childcare costs up to a specified limit, will be increased to £159.59 per week for one child only and £273.60 per week for two or more children. The maximum parents' learning allowance payable in 2017/18 will be increased to £1,617.

Part-time grants and loans.

For those students who started part-time and full-time distance learning courses before 1 September 2012 and who are continuing their courses in 2017/18, maximum fee and course grants will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) in 2017/18. Maximum fee grants will be increased to £879, £1,054 or £1,321, depending on the intensity of study of the course. Maximum course grants will be increased to £288.

Disabled Students' Allowance.

Maximum grants for full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students with disabilities will be increased by forecast inflation (2.8%) in 2017/18.

Student support for part-time students starting a second degree course in STEM subjects.

Most students who hold a higher education qualification are currently not entitled to apply for additional fee loan for a second course if that course leads to a qualification that is equivalent or lower in level (ELQ) than their previous Higher Education qualification.

The Government has previously relaxed ELQ rules in order to help people who already hold an honours degree qualification but who wish to retrain in some science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects. Students studying second degree courses on a part-time basis can already apply for fee loans for part-time second degree courses in engineering, technology or computer science.

I can confirm today that ELQ rules are being further relaxed to allow students wishing to start a second honours degree course on a part-time basis from 1 August 2017 onwards to apply for fee loans towards degree courses in the following additional STEM subjects: subjects allied to medicine; biological sciences; veterinary sciences, agriculture and related subjects; physical sciences and mathematical sciences.

Student support for new students starting courses in nursing, midwifery and the allied health professions on or after 1 August 2017.

I can confirm today that from 1 August 2017, all new undergraduate nursing, midwifery and allied health professional students on pre-registration courses will receive support for fee loans and living costs through the standard student support system, rather than through course fees and NHS bursaries for living costs paid by Health Education England (HEE). These students will therefore be subject to the same general student finance arrangements that apply to other undergraduate students in 2017/18.

I can also confirm today that students already holding an honours degree who want to start a second honours degree course in nursing, midwifery and the allied health professions from 1 August 2017 onwards will be able to apply for fee loans and living costs support for their course.

Further details on the undergraduate student package and support arrangements for postgraduate pre-registration nursing, midwifery and allied health professional students from 1 August 2017 onwards will be set out in the Government's consultation response which is being published in due course.

These changes will enable universities to provide up to 10,000 additional nursing, midwifery and allied health training places by 2020, giving more applicants the opportunity to become a health professional.

Student support for armed forces personnel serving overseas and their families.

Students who are undertaking a full-time or part-time distance learning course with a UK provider qualify for loans, and where applicable, disabled students' allowance if they were undertaking their courses in England on the first day of the first academic year of their course and are living in the UK. Students do not qualify for support for a distance learning course if they are undertaking their course outside the UK. This rule currently places armed forces personnel serving overseas and their families who wish to undertake a higher education course by distance learning at a disadvantage as a result of their service.

I can confirm today, that from 1 August 2017, UK armed forces personnel serving overseas, and family members living with them will, for the first time, qualify for fee loans for full-time and part-time undergraduate distance learning courses with UK providers. They will also qualify for postgraduate master's loans for full-time and part-time master's degree distance learning courses with UK providers. Those students with disabilities will qualify for disabled students' allowance. This change will apply to students starting or continuing distance learning courses in 2017/18.

I expect to lay regulations implementing changes to student finance for undergraduates and postgraduates for 2017/18 later this year which will be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. More details of the 2017/18 fees and student support package will be published by my Department in due course.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-excellence-framework-year-1-list-of-eligible-providers>

Informal Competitiveness Council

[HLWS127]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The Informal Competitiveness Council, chaired by the Slovak Presidency, took place in Bratislava on 18–19 July 2016. Baroness Neville-Rolfe represented the UK on day one (internal market and industry) with David Wilson, Deputy Director, International Knowledge and Innovation Directorate, on day two (research). There were major contributions from Günther Oettinger, Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society on the digital economy, and by Peter Ziga, the Slovak Economy Minister on the priorities of the Slovak Presidency, including the Digital Single Market and principles of better regulation. In a break out session on digital skills, the UK highlighted the importance of working on digital skills in schools, in the workplace and in society, and of bridging the gap on expert skills. The UK confirmed that it would continue to play a full and constructive role in the Council while it remained a member of the EU.

On the second day, Member States supported the general principles of the declaration to support young researchers. The UK underlined the value of increased cooperation, but also the need to respect the autonomy of national education systems. Collaboration and regulatory

simplification were among the issues that were strongly supported in creating an ecosystem to support innovative SMEs. The UK joined a number of member states in emphasising the importance of further simplification of support programmes and following up on existing commitment to create a more innovation friendly environment.

International Criminal Justice: UK Support

[HLWS110]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My right Honourable Friend, the Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Boris Johnson), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

Sunday 17 July marked the Day of International Criminal Justice, a perfect opportunity to look at the UK's support of the principles of international justice and its various institutions.

International criminal justice and accountability is a fundamental element of our foreign policy. We continue to voice our support for this principle, and are committed to working with the International Criminal Court (ICC) and international tribunals. This work helps to strengthen the rules-based international system, reduce conflict and promote stability. We firmly believe that there must be no impunity for the most serious international crimes.

In 2015 we showed our commitment to International Justice by contributing £7.6m to the ICC, £3m to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), £1.4m to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and £1.8m to the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals which has taken on the residual functions of the former Rwanda tribunal and will do the same for the former Yugoslavia Tribunal when it closes. Furthermore, in financial year 2015-16 we made voluntary contributions of £1m to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and contributed £225,000 to the international component of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). The UK also provides practical support for the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone (RSCSL) as former Liberian president Charles Taylor is serving his sentence for war crimes in a British prison. In 2015, the UK worked with partners to secure United Nations authority to commit \$12.1million and \$2.44million to supplement voluntary contributions to the ECCC and RSCSL respectively in 2016. This work helps place the voluntary funded tribunals on a more secure financial footing.

The support we have offered the ICC and the other tribunals has contributed towards their valuable work in entrenching the rule of law, fighting impunity for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, including the use of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence as weapons of war and the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Their work acts as a deterrent to atrocities, placing a spotlight on individual responsibility, supporting victims and helping to establish an historical narrative of accountability.

The ICC opened their new premises in The Hague in April this year – giving this permanent institution a permanent home. In these new premises, the ICC sentenced Jean-Pierre Bemba (Democratic Republic of the Congo) to 18 years in prison, following its first conviction of rape as a crime against humanity and war crime, on the basis of command responsibility; this also marked the first time in the history of international criminal law that sexual violence against men was charged as the crime of rape.

The ICTY delivered its verdict this year on Radovan Karadžić who was found guilty on one count of genocide, five counts of crimes against humanity and four counts of violations of the laws or customs of war; and was sentenced to 40 years in prison. Karadžić was one of the highest ranking officials to be tried by the Tribunal and his trial marked the biggest war crimes trial in Europe since Nuremberg. The judgment was long-awaited following a trial that lasted over four years.

The ICTR finished its judicial work at the end of 2015. The ICTR's work over the last twenty years has been instrumental in developing international law and making sure that those most responsible for the genocide in Rwanda are held accountable. Its remaining functions were transferred to the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals.

The FCO's support for international criminal justice requires close cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders including Partners Across Government, law enforcement bodies, international organisations and non-government organisations. Over the next 12 months we will continue to work closely with these partners to ensure that our assessed and voluntary contributions to the ICC and other tribunals are used for maximum effect in the fight against impunity.

This is the fourth annual update to Parliament on the FCO's work to support international justice.

Machinery of Government Change

[HLWS124]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: My Rt Hon. Friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement to the House of Commons:

This written ministerial statement confirms the following Machinery of Government change.

The functions of the Office for Civil Society (OCS) have been transferred from the Cabinet Office to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The transfer will include responsibility for youth policy and the National Citizen Service. It will integrate OCS's work to grow a stronger civil society with DCMS's existing work to enrich lives. It will also simplify sponsorship responsibilities for the lottery providers.

OCS will continue its cross-government work in support of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector and their important contribution to public services

and the social economy; and its work to promote social and community action, social investment, mission-led business and mutuals.

OCS's functions relating to policy innovation (the Policy Lab) will remain in the Cabinet Office.

A Cabinet Office note setting out further detail on this change has been placed in the Library of both Houses.

Members' Correspondence

[HLWS115]

Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen: I am today publishing a report on the performance of Departments and Agencies on handling correspondence from Members and Peers during the calendar year 2015. Details are set out in the table below. Correspondence statistics for 2014 can be found on 3 June 2015, *Official Report*, column 15WS.

Departmental figures are based on substantive replies unless otherwise indicated. The footnotes to the table provide general background information on how the figures have been compiled.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Handling Members' Correspondence in 2015 [Correspondence Table.doc]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-07-21/HLWS115/>

National Crime Agency/UK International Crime Bureau

[HLWS112]

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

The NCA was established to lead the fight to cut serious and organised crime, and to focus on the relentless disruption of serious and organised criminals. It has the power to task other law enforcement and a capability that reaches from local to international serious and organised crime impacting on the UK.

HMIC have conducted two inspections; the first, a re-inspection of the NCA following its 2014 inspection whereby HMIC carried out a review into the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Crime Agency. The second report focuses on the work of UK's International Crime Bureau (UKICB) and its activities relating to identifying fugitives and extradition.

I have placed a copy of both reports in the Library of the House. I have asked HMIC to publish both reports on my behalf. They are available online at www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk.

HMIC find in relation to its re-inspection of the NCA, that the NCA's approach to prioritising, supervising and managing investigations is rigorous, but that they could support their officers better by investing in more

sophisticated equipment. They found that the NCA had an effective leadership approach to build systems and processes, and that while strategic governance arrangements for threats are at an early stage of development, there is a clear commitment from the NCA and its partners to work together on shared priorities.

HMIC's second report examines the work of UKICB and its activities relating to identifying fugitives and extradition. This inspection, conducted between September and November last year and, picks up on themes from the last NCA report, focusing on the management of risks and the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the UKICB. Overall the report is very positive. HMIC find that UKICB are well led, that risks are assessed in a timely and prioritised manner, there are appropriate measures to mitigate the identified risks, and there is good and improving efficiency and effectiveness in the unit.

HMIC note that the work of UKICB is dependent on interactions with a wide range of stakeholders and that some matters are out their direct control. However, the report identifies a series of recommendations, many of which are in regard to better information gathering/sharing and building on improving/changing relationships with stakeholders all of which should lead to better risk management and efficiencies in the extradition process.

Both reports note a number of areas for improvement (where the NCA already has action underway to improve its capabilities and effectiveness) and makes several recommendations. It is for the Director General to respond to these recommendations, in line with the requirements of the Crime and Courts Act 2013.

Outstanding National Non-domestic Rates Bills

[HLWS104]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My right Honourable Friend, the Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Boris Johnson), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

The majority of diplomatic missions in the United Kingdom pay the National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) due from them. Diplomatic missions are obliged to pay only 6% of the total NNDR value of their offices. This represents payment for specific services received such as street cleaning and street lighting.

Representations by Protocol Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to missions in 2016 led to the settlement of outstanding debts by a number of missions.

As at 27 June 2016, the total amount of outstanding NNDR payments, due before 31 December 2015, owed by foreign diplomatic missions as advised by the Valuation Office Agency is £907,976, an increase of 22% over the 2014 figure, as reported in the 2015 WMS (£743,858). However, £40,838 of this outstanding debt is owed by Syria – which is not currently represented in the UK and we have therefore been unable to pursue this

debt. A further £87,020 is owed by Iran, the majority of which was accrued during its Embassy's closure between 2011 and 2015. The Iranian Embassy has now reopened and the FCO will be requesting payment of what is owed. Four missions are responsible for just over a third of the remainder. We shall continue to urge those with NNDR debt to pay their dues.

Missions listed below owed over £10,000 in respect of NNDR.

High Commission for the People's Republic of Bangladesh	£100,762
Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan	£81,419
Sierra Leone High Commission	£62,478
Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe	£57,636
Uganda High Commission	£36,885
Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria	£35,257
High Commission for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan	£30,154
Embassy of the Republic of Liberia	£27,170
Malaysian High Commission	£26,917
High Commission for the Republic of Zambia	£25,886
Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia	£22,924
Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	£22,688
Kenya High Commission	£21,352
Embassy of the Republic of Albania	£21,258
High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon	£19,281
High Commission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	£15,765
Embassy of Ukraine	£15,675
Embassy of the Republic of Angola	£12,719
Embassy of the Gambia	£12,210
Embassy of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire	£11,987

Figures for previous years are available in the Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs' written statement to the House on 16 July 2015, *Official Report*, column 43WS (HCWS133).

Parliamentary Questions and Westminster Hall Debates: Corrections

[HLWS120]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Tobias Ellwood), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has recently reviewed all correspondence and parliamentary proceedings on the subject of allegations of breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL) in Yemen by the

Saudi-led Coalition. During this exercise it became clear that the drafting of answers to four written questions and two responses given in debates relating to allegations of breaches of IHL did not fully reflect HMG's policy as set out in numerous other written questions and debates on this topic. I would like to clarify these.

The responses given on 12 February to Question 24770 (<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-01-28/24770/>) and on 15 February to Questions 24769 (<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-01-28/24769/>) and 24771 (<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-01-28/24771/>) stated "we have assessed that there has not been a breach of IHL by the coalition". However, these should have stated, as in previous PQs such as 27085 answered on 24 February, "we have not assessed that there has been a breach of IHL by the coalition".

The response given on 4 January to Question 15523 (<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-11-09/15523/>) stated "I regularly review the situation with my own advisers and have discussed it on numerous occasions with my Saudi counterpart. Our judgement is that there is no evidence that IHL has been breached, but we shall continue to review the situation regularly". However, this should have stated "I regularly review the situation with my own advisers and have discussed it on numerous occasions with my Saudi counterpart. Looking at all the information available to us, we have been unable to assess that there has been a breach of IHL by the Saudi-led Coalition. The situation is kept under careful and continual review".

During the Westminster Hall debate on Human Rights and Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia on 8 June (HC Deb, col WH138), the former Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr Lidington) said, "In respect of the allegations about breaches of international humanitarian law, the Ministry of Defence makes assessments of how the Saudis are acting and whether the coalition is observing international human rights obligations. The MOD assessment is that the Saudi-led coalition is not targeting civilians that Saudi processes and procedures have been put in place to ensure respect for the principles of international humanitarian law; and that the Saudis both have been and continue to be genuinely committed to compliance with international humanitarian law." This should have said, "In respect of the allegations about breaches of international humanitarian law, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) analyses how the Saudis are acting and whether the coalition is observing international humanitarian law. The MOD has not assessed that the Saudi-led coalition is targeting civilians. We have assessed that Saudi processes and procedures have been

put in place to ensure respect for the principles of international humanitarian law; and that the Saudis both have been and continue to be genuinely committed to compliance with international humanitarian law.”

During the Westminster Hall debate on War in Yemen: First Anniversary from 22 March (HC Deb, col WH518), I stated that, “we make it clear that we are doing our own assessments to understand whether the equipment we sell has any participation in that and indeed whether the breaches are by the Houthis or the Saudi Arabians.” This should have stated “we make it clear that we are doing our own analysis. We encourage the Saudis to conduct their own investigations to understand whether the equipment we sell has any participation in that and indeed whether the breaches are by the Houthis or the Saudi Arabians.”

These corrections ensure the answers given in all written questions and debates now accurately reflect HMG policy in this area and consistent with other statements and questions answered.

The MOD monitors incidents of alleged IHL violations using available information. This is used to form an overall view on the approach and attitude of Saudi Arabia to IHL. This, in turn, informs the risk assessment made under the Consolidated Criteria (i.e. whether there is a clear risk that it might be used in the commission of a serious violation of IHL). We are not acting to determine whether a sovereign state has or has not acted in breach of IHL, but instead - as Criterion 2(c) requires - we are acting to make an overall judgement.

It is important to make clear that neither the MOD nor the FCO reaches a conclusion as to whether or not an IHL violation has taken place in relation to each and every incident of potential concern that comes to its attention. This would simply not be possible in conflicts to which the UK is not a party, as is the case in Yemen.

We regularly encourage Saudi Arabia to investigate any allegations of breaches of IHL which are attributed to them; and for their investigations to be thorough and conclusive. Saudi Arabia has publicly stated that it is investigating reports of alleged violations, and that any lessons learned will be acted upon. We continue to believe that they have the best insight into their own military procedures, allowing them to understand what went wrong and apply the lessons learnt in the best possible way, if required. This is the standard we set ourselves and our allies. For example, when allegations have been made against us in Afghanistan and Iraq we have investigated these claims ourselves. We did not expect other states to do this and form judgements on our behalf.

Questions for Written Answer: 2015/16 Session

[HLWS128]

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: In line with the practice established by my predecessor in the last session I am today publishing data on departmental performance

in answering Questions for Written Answer for the 2015/16 session.

Written questions are an important way in which Members hold the Government to account, and the House has agreed that they should be answered within 10 working days (Procedure Committee, 3rd Report, Session 2009-10). I take very seriously my responsibility as Leader of the House to ensure that responses are timely and accurate. I am pleased, therefore, that overall 93% of Questions for Written Answer were answered within 10 working days in the last session. Although there was a 40% increase in the number of questions tabled compared to the 2014/15 session, the proportion of timely responses has also increased by 2%.

I will continue to publish data on an annual basis to allow for proper scrutiny of departmental performance and to allow analysis over time.

Due to size constraints, full details are set out in the attached table.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Questions for Written Answer - 2015/16 session [20160721 - Questions for Written Answer - 2015 - 16 session.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-07-21/HLWS128/>

Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association

[HLWS107]

Earl Howe: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Michael Fallon) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I have today placed in the Library of the House a copy of a report into the condition of the Reserves and delivery of the Future Reserves 2020 programme compiled by the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association External Scrutiny Team. This is the second report to be published under the statutory obligation imposed by the Defence Reform Act 2014.

I am most grateful for the work of Lt Gen Brims and the other members of the Team. I will take some short time to consider the report's findings and recommendations and will provide a full response to the Team in due course.

Schools Funding

[HLWS101]

Lord Nash: The Government is firmly committed to introducing fairer funding for schools, high needs and early years. This is an important reform, which will fairly and transparently allocate funding on the basis of schools' and children's actual needs, rather than simply on historic levels of funding tied to out of date local information. Along with the record levels of funding for schools announced at the spending review, and our commitment to the pupil premium for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, a fairer funding system will set a common

foundation that will enable schools – no longer held back by a funding system that is arbitrary, out of date and unfair – to maximise the potential of every child. It will provide a crucial underpinning for the education system to act as a motor for social mobility and social justice.

The first stage consultations on national funding formulae for schools and high needs, which were published in March, have been met with an overwhelmingly positive response from headteachers, teachers, governors and parents.

There is also a strong sense in the response to the first stage of the consultation that this is a once in a generation opportunity for an historic change and that we must get our approach right. I will therefore publish the government's full response to the first stage of the schools and high needs consultations and set out my proposals for the second stage once Parliament returns in the autumn. We will run a full consultation, and make final decisions early in the new year. Given the importance of consulting widely and fully with the sector and getting implementation right, the new system will apply from 2018-19. I will set out our full plans for a national funding formula for early years shortly.

In the meantime, I understand the need for local authorities to have sufficient information to begin to plan their schools and high needs funding arrangements for 2017 to 2018. Many of those who responded to the first stage national funding formula consultations emphasised that schools and local authorities need stability, and where there are changes need early notice, as well as a fair system.

In that context, I am confirming that in 2017-18 no local authority will see a reduction from their 2016-17 funding (adjusted to reflect authorities' most recent spending patterns) on the schools block of the dedicated schools grant (per pupil funding) or the high needs block (cash amount). As usual, we will apply an uplift for high needs later in the year. I am also publishing today detailed funding tables so that authorities can see exactly how this funding has been calculated.

Final allocations for schools and high needs blocks will follow in December on the basis of pupil numbers recorded in the October census.

I am setting this out now so that local authorities can begin the process of setting the budgets of schools in their area and that this can be concluded in time for the start of the coming financial year.

I am also confirming that, for 2017-18, we will retain the current minimum funding guarantee for schools, so that no school can face a funding reduction of more than 1.5% per pupil next year in what it receives through the local authority funding formula. To ensure that local authorities can start planning their budgets for next year with certainty, I do not intend to proceed, for 2017-18, with proposals to create a new central schools block, allow local flexibility on the minimum funding guarantee or to ring-fence the schools block within the dedicated schools grant. These will be covered, for 2018-19 and

beyond, in my response to the first stage consultation in the autumn.

I will shortly publish the Education Funding Agency's operational guide to schools funding in 2017-18, and send the draft Authority Proforma Tool to authorities.

UK Presidency of the Council of the European Union

[HLWS116]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The UK had been scheduled to host the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2017. On Tuesday 19 July the Prime Minister confirmed to President of the European Council Donald Tusk that the UK would be relinquishing the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, noting that we would be prioritising the negotiations to leave the EU.

President Tusk welcomed the Prime Minister's swift decision which would allow the Council to put alternative arrangements in place. The Council Secretariat will now put in motion the arrangements to allocate the Presidency to an alternative Member State.

The Prime Minister and President Tusk concluded by looking forward to a strong working relationship.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

UK Presidency of the Council of the European Union [WMS UK Presidency .doc]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-07-21/HLWS116/>

Unpaid London Congestion Charge Bills and Fines

[HLWS103]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My right Honourable Friend, the Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Boris Johnson), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

The value of unpaid Congestion Charge debt incurred by diplomatic missions and international organisations in London since its introduction in February 2003 until 31 December 2015 as advised by Transport for London was £95,811,650. The table below shows those diplomatic missions and international organisations with outstanding fines of £100,000 or more.

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF FINES	TOTAL OUTSTANDING
Embassy of the United States of America	89,308	£10,626,970
Embassy of Japan	59,533	£7,072,020
High Commission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria	50,952	£6,045,440

<i>COUNTRY</i>	<i>NUMBER OF FINES</i>	<i>TOTAL OUTSTANDING</i>	<i>COUNTRY</i>	<i>NUMBER OF FINES</i>	<i>TOTAL OUTSTANDING</i>
Embassy of the Russian Federation	46,894	£5,485,360	Embassy of the Slovak Republic	5,394	£629,100
Office of the High Commissioner for India	36,984	£4,489,825	High Commission of the Republic of Malawi	5,220	£617,700
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany	35,706	£4,147,600	Botswana High Commission	5,070	£609,330
Embassy of the Republic of Poland	29,304	£3,533,290	Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	4,900	£565,310
Office of the High Commissioner for Ghana	26,482	£3,186,530	High Commission for the Republic of Namibia	4,886	£564,620
Embassy of the People's Republic of China	24,002	£3,016,760	High Commission for the Republic of Mozambique	4,713	£553,885
Embassy of the Republic of Sudan	24,466	£2,830,520	Kingdom of Swaziland High Commission	4,739	£545,395
Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan	21,849	£2,665,255	Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe	4,816	£539,290
Kenya High Commission	19,497	£2,276,815	Embassy of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire	4,254	£500,510
Embassy of France	16,639	£1,970,090	Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea	4,204	£489,065
Embassy of Spain	15,246	£1,811,520	Malta High Commission	4,050	£486,065
High Commission for the United Republic of Tanzania	15,020	£1,744,075	Embassy of Austria	4,021	£479,410
High Commission for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan	14,204	£1,740,700	Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania	3,832	£468,765
Embassy of the Republic of Korea	13,418	£1,631,700	Mauritius High Commission	3,971	£462,535
Embassy of Romania	12,812	£1,511,410	Uganda High Commission	3,707	£441,615
Embassy of Greece	11,820	£1,396,627	High Commission of the Kingdom of Lesotho	3,754	£436,210
Embassy of the Republic of Cuba	11,435	£1,387,155	Embassy of the Republic of Turkey	3,411	£415,035
People's Democratic Republic of Algeria	11,659	£1,366,765	Embassy of the Republic of Liberia	3,396	£410,100
Embassy of Ukraine	11,503	£1,346,455	Embassy of Belgium	3,430	£408,035
South African High Commission	11,556	£1,345,310	Embassy of the Czech Republic	3,432	£396,385
Sierra Leone High Commission	11,081	£1,283,745	Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam	3,140	£368,420
Embassy of Hungary	8,680	£1,033,295	Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	3,072	£366,690
High Commission for the Republic of Cyprus	8,247	£986,445	Embassy of the Republic of Guinea	2,994	£345,870
Embassy of the Republic of Yemen	7,032	£831,735	Royal Danish Embassy	2,890	£344,395
High Commission for the Republic of Zambia	7,069	£828,520	Jamaican High Commission	2,700	£319,485
Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria	6,667	£772,275	Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo	2,559	£315,380
Embassy of the Republic of Belarus	5,646	£661,180	Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco	2,164	£274,320
High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon	5,594	£649,760			

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF FINES	TOTAL OUTSTANDING
High Commission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	2,102	£263,795
Embassy of Portugal	2,139	£260,900
Embassy of the Republic of Latvia	2,111	£253,710
Embassy of the Republic of South Sudan	1,962	£252,535
Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia	2,037	£252,368
Embassy of Finland	2,095	£250,300
Embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	2,130	£243,340
Embassy of Tunisia	1,953	£240,380
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt	2,281	£240,320
Embassy of Luxembourg	1,909	£228,575
High Commission for Antigua & Barbuda	1,770	£210,385
Embassy of the Republic of Iraq	1,579	£199,490
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia	1,727	£188,250
Embassy of Estonia	1,342	£164,755
Belize High Commission	1,201	£149,420
Embassy of the Dominican Republic	1,139	£135,315
Embassy of the State of Eritrea	1,120	£131,710
High Commission for Guyana	1,010	£118,035

Figures for previous years are available in the Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs' written statement to the House on 16 July 2015, *Official Report*, column 39WS (HCWS134).

Unpaid Parking Fines

[HLWS108]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My right Honourable Friend, the Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Boris Johnson), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

In 2015, 4,858 parking fines incurred by diplomatic missions and international organisations in London were brought to our attention by local councils, Transport for London and the City of London. These totalled £477,499.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has held meetings with a number of missions about outstanding parking fine debt. In addition, in May this year we wrote to diplomatic missions and international organisations concerned giving them the opportunity to either pay their

outstanding fines or appeal against them if they considered that the fines had been issued incorrectly.

Subsequent payments (including amounts waived by the above authorities) totalled £161,328. There remains a total of £316,171 in unpaid fines for 2015.

The table below details those Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations that have outstanding fines from 2015 totalling £1,000 or more, as of 21 June 2016.

Diplomatic Mission/International Organisation	Amount of Outstanding Fines (excluding congestion charge) £
Embassy of the Republic of South Sudan	£53,708
High Commission for the Federal Republic of Nigeria	£41,531
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia	£20,692
High Commission for the Republic of Zambia	£18,212
Embassy of the Republic of Liberia	£13,795
Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan	£13,429
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	£11,885
Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan	£10,950
Embassy of the United Arab Emirates	£8,425
Embassy of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire	£7,421
Embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	£7,305
High Commission for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan	£6,292
Embassy of Tunisia	£6,020
Embassy of the Republic of Angola	£5,775
Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman	£5,415
Embassy of Georgia	£4,871
Malaysian High Commission	£3,705
Embassy of France	£3,669
Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	£3,352
Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	£3,255
Sierra Leone High Commission	£3,091
People's Democratic Republic of Algeria	£2,935
High Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania	£2,460
Embassy of Libya	£2,457
Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria	£2,095
Embassy of the State of Qatar	£2,065

<i>Diplomatic Mission/International Organisation</i>	<i>Amount of Outstanding Fines (excluding congestion charge) £</i>	<i>Diplomatic Mission/International Organisation</i>	<i>Amount of Outstanding Fines (excluding congestion charge) £</i>
High Commission of the Republic of South Africa	£2,062	Embassy of the People's Republic of China	£1,490
Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo	£1,965	Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	£1,255
Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco	£1,944	Embassy of Greece	£1,250
Embassy of the Republic of Iraq	£1,929	Commonwealth Secretariat	£1,235
Embassy of the Republic of Yemen	£1,920	Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt	£1,150
Embassy of the Gabonese Republic	£1,910	Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan	£1,142
Embassy of the Russian Federation	£1,887	Embassy of the Republic of Guinea	£1,020
Embassy of Brazil	£1,827		
Kenya High Commission	£1,822		

Figures for previous years are available in the Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs' written statement to the House on 16 July 2015, *Official Report*, column 42WS (HCWS131).

Written Answers

Thursday, 21 July 2016

Afghanistan: Minerals

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to assist the government of Afghanistan in preventing any illegal trade in lapis lazuli and other minerals. [HL1059]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK supports the Afghan Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP) including through strengthening the Ministry's capacity to detect and report illegal activity such as the illegal trade in Lapis Lazuli and other minerals.

However, because most of this illegal activity occurs in insecure areas where there is little or no government control, the UK is supporting Afghanistan's long term security and stability; including through providing additional troops to assist the Afghan Forces boost security in the country, and providing £178m aid per year to 2017 to support Afghanistan's economic growth and development.

Afghanistan: Natural Resources

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to support the government of Afghanistan in strengthening its capacity to control the exports and supply chains of the extractive industries in accordance with OECD due diligence guidelines. [HL1060]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK is supporting the Afghan government to responsibly develop its mineral wealth in accordance with OECD guidelines.

Through the Extractives Sector Support Programme (ESSP), the UK supports the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP) to review the legal framework governing extractives and to build a transparent and disciplined fiscal regime. Through the Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) the UK is supporting the transparent development of the sector, including through supporting Afghan civil society to bring clarity to the informal mining sector.

The UK is supporting President Ghani's anti-corruption initiatives, including his commitment that the beneficial ownership of mining companies will be disclosed as part of Afghanistan's implementation of the EITI. The UK is also helping the Afghan government implement and enforce these policies through supporting the MoMP to develop its capacity in contract management and inspectorate functions.

Afghanistan: Rural Areas

Asked by The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to ensure that the National Solidarity Programme in Afghanistan receives adequate support and delivers the necessary assistance to the most deprived rural areas. [HL1061]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK supports the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). The UK is one of the largest donors to the ARTF which supports the Afghan government to deliver basic services across the country. UK officials will continue to meet regularly with the World Bank, who are the ARTF administrators, and the Afghan Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development, who manage the NSP, to discuss the delivery of these important programmes and ensure that they reach the most vulnerable people in Afghanistan.

Asylum: Children

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many unaccompanied minors seeking asylum have been successfully transferred to the UK in each month since the introduction of Dublin III in January 2013, and from which countries those transfers were made. [HL976]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Data on cases progressed under the Dublin III Regulation is recorded on the main immigration database. However, this data is not held in a way that allows it to be reported on automatically and is therefore not currently available.

Bangladesh: Religious Freedom

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what portion of the Department for International Development funds provided to Bangladesh are used to promote freedom of religion and belief and the protection of minorities. [HL1225]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: As part of UK's development priority to leave no-one behind, the Department for International Development supports a number of activities in Bangladesh to safeguard and promote the rights of minority groups. Since 2010, this has included community action and national advocacy to defend the rights of over 200,000 people in ethnic and religious minorities to land, services and safety nets. DFID has also provided livestock, poultry, and other assets to 32,470 poor families in minority communities. These activities make up approximately 1.2% of DFID funds to Bangladesh between April 2013 and March 2016.

In addition, DFID has provided technical support to the Government of Bangladesh to review and revise its primary education curriculum, including to emphasise respect for all of the main religions in the religious studies curriculum.

Belfast Agreement

Asked by Lord Laird

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the concept of parity of esteem, as outlined in the Belfast Agreement 1998, will be involved in any way in the arrangements for withdrawal from the EU, and if so, how. [HL1016]

Lord Dunlop: The people of the United Kingdom have voted to leave the European Union and their will must be respected and delivered. The interests of all parts of our United Kingdom must be protected and advanced. As we prepare for a new negotiation with the European Union, we will fully involve the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland governments.

The Government remains fully committed to the Belfast Agreement, its fundamental principles, and its successors and to the institutions they establish.

Bus Services Bill (HL)

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Competition and Markets Authority about the potential contents of secondary legislation and guidance needed to complement the Bus Services Bill [HL]. [HL1198]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have worked closely with the Competition and Markets Authority in developing the Bill and will continue to do so as we prepare guidance and secondary legislation. We have received several recommendations from the Competition and Markets Authority and we are currently reflecting on these and will respond in due course.

Council Tax: Arrears

Asked by Lord Ramsbotham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Citizens Advice Bureau report *Catching Up: improving council tax arrears collection* published on 8 July, and of why that report does not refer to the guidance to local councils on good practice in the collection of council tax arrears in respect of vulnerable people published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in June 2013. [HL1131]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government made its position clear in our 'Guidance to Local Councils on Good Practice in the Collection of Council Tax Arrears',

June 2013. This highlights the importance of councils being sympathetic to those in genuine hardship and that they are proportionate in their enforcement action, as well as noting the support that should be provided to vulnerable people.

Cycling

Asked by Baroness Barker

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employers offered a package the value of which was above that normally permissible under a Cycle to Work Scheme in circumstances in which an employee had specific needs that required a specialist cycle due to a recognised disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 in (1) 2013–14, and (2) 2014–15. [HL1177]

Asked by Baroness Barker

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employers refused to offer a package the value of which was above that normally permissible under a Cycle to Work Scheme under circumstances in which an employee had specific needs that required a specialist cycle due to a recognised disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 in (1) 2013–14, and (2) 2014–15. [HL1178]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As this is not a Government scheme the Department for Transport does not collect data on how many employers offered or refused to offer, a package the value of which was above that normally permissible under a Cycle to Work Scheme under circumstances in which an employee had specific needs that required a specialist cycle due to a recognised disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 in (1) 2013–14, and (2) 2014–15.

This is because the Cycle to Work scheme is an employee benefit covered by an exemption and therefore employers do not have to make an annual tax return regarding the benefit; meaning the Department does not collect the data.

Asked by Baroness Barker

To ask Her Majesty's Government what provision they have made to include disabled cyclists within the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. [HL1180]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government will work to increase awareness of both the use of cycles as a mobility aid and the need for discretion when implementing 'cyclist dismount' regulations in public areas, including stations.

We recently consulted on the draft Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and as part of the consultation sought views on how to increase cycling and walking in typically under-represented groups, including disabled people. The Government is in the process of analysing responses to the consultation and will publish a Government Response later this summer.

Ferries: Isle of Wight

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 6 May (HL7878), when the Marine and Coastguard Agency will institute a prosecution of those responsible for that incident. [HL1261]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) will not be instituting any prosecution following the collapse of the mezzanine deck on the ST HELEN ferry at Fishbourne, Isle of Wight.

Before a prosecution is commenced the matter must pass the two stage test as outlined in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. The MCA has confirmed that it will not pass both stages and have decided that it would not be in the public interest to pursue this further at this time.

Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Baroness Walmsley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the advice by Professors Stanley, Lawler, Graham, and others, to extend HPV vaccinations to boys to curb the spread of throat and other cancers. [HL1165]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, the expert committee that advises Ministers on immunisation related issues, is currently in the process of considering the impact and cost-effectiveness of extending the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccination to adolescent boys. This includes assessing all the necessary evidence and information on the potential impact of a boys vaccination programme on non-cervical cancers caused by HPV.

Low Incomes: Statistics

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the Department for Work and Pensions report of the Household Below Average Income Statistics was over 100 pages in length in previous years and this year is 13 pages in length; and why this year's report contains details published in Excel tables only. [HL1296]

Lord Freud: The change in publication format for the 2014/15 Households Below Average Income (HBAI) National Statistics release was made to bring this report into line with the new standard DWP Statistics template, with the aim of giving more focussed and accessible publications, without sacrificing the breadth of statistical analysis previously published.

No information has been lost from this publication, rather this restructuring is intended to allow the lay user to better understand these important statistics.

This approach is in line with the UK Statistics Authority's "Better Statistics, Better Decisions" strategy

and the specific change in format for HBAI was trailed in a Statistical Notice released in April 2016.

Ministers: Twitter

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government which ministers have official ministerial Twitter accounts; and whether they have plans to close those accounts. [HL1280]

Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen: Civil servants manage departmental social media accounts, but not individual MP Twitter handles.

Road Signs and Markings

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government who is responsible for ensuring that road signs on Highways England and local authority roads are visible, clean and not obscured by foliage; and how members of the public can report signs that fail to meet those standards. [HL1206]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Highways England is responsible for maintaining the road traffic signs on the Strategic Road Network (SRN). This duty is discharged through contractors who maintain the signs in accordance with Highways England standards.

Any defects can be reported via the Highways England Customer Contact Centre info@highwaysengland.co.uk or by telephone on 0300 123 5000.

Local highway authorities have a duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highways network, including traffic signs, in their area.

The Department for Transport encourages local highway authorities to provide facilities, through their websites or mobile phone apps, for members of the public to report defects on the highway they are responsible for.

Social Security Benefits

Asked by Baroness Hollins

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cumulative impact of housing benefit cuts, benefit caps and council tax on the health of benefit claimants, both those in work and unemployed, since 2008, taking into account the impact of debt on mental health and the need for women to receive a healthy diet before they conceive and while they are pregnant if they are to give birth to healthy babies. [HL1171]

Lord Freud: Impact assessments published for welfare changes, for example those relating to the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, are available on www.gov.uk.

Published impact assessments not available on www.gov.uk may be available at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk.

We already have cumulative distributional analysis published by HMT that is the most comprehensive available covering not only the effects of direct cash transfers between households and government but also the effects of frontline public service provision.

Our welfare reforms since 2010 are intended to incentivise work and make work pay. There is a strong evidence base showing that work is generally good for physical and mental health and wellbeing. We recognise that not everyone can work and therefore we provide financial assistance.

The employment rate remains at 74.4 per cent which is the highest since comparable records began. In addition the number and rate of workless households are both at a record low.

St Helena: Aviation

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proposal by the Namibia Atlantic Aero Partnership for an air service from Namibia to St Helena. [HL1169]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The air service proposal from the Namibia Atlantic Aero Partnership has been assessed and was not considered a viable option.

St Helena: Transport

Asked by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have received about transport services to St Helena. [HL1168]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: Representations have been received from the Elected Councillors of the Legislative Council of St Helena as well as from a number of potential providers of a scheduled air service to St Helena.

Sterling

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to strengthen the British pound in the light of the result of the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. [HL1066]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: The UK does not have an exchange rate target. The UK's monetary policy framework gives operational responsibility for monetary policy to the independent Monetary Policy Committee (MPC). The MPC has the primary objective of maintaining price stability, defined as an inflation target of 2 per cent as measured by the twelve month increase in the Consumer Prices Index. Under the Government's macroeconomic framework, the exchange rate is allowed to adjust flexibly, and movements in sterling are determined by market forces.

Action by the government and the Bank of England over the last six years has substantially strengthened the resilience of the financial system. The contingency plans that the Treasury, Bank and Financial Conduct Authority put in place prior to the referendum have proved effective to date, and we will continue to monitor financial markets closely.

Territorial Waters: Security

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are investigating the use of University Royal Naval Unit craft and the Maritime Volunteer Service to increase the number of platforms available for security of UK territorial seas. [HL1092]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Border Force and its partner organisations are well prepared to counter attempts by migrants to use small boats to circumvent border security and enter the UK illegally. A number of counter-measures have been put in place to detect and deter this activity, including the coordination of maritime security assets, so that maximum coverage at sea is delivered that ensures assets are in the right place at the right time.

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the National Maritime Intelligence Centre has any command and control authority over assets available for security of UK territorial seas. [HL1093]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The National Maritime Information Centre (NMIC) facilitates information exchange between government departments and agencies. Command and control of assets is administered by the respective organisations that are represented in the NMIC.

UK Withdrawal from EU

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the economies of the Caribbean and British Overseas Territories of the result of the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. [HL1051]

Earl of Courtown: We are already engaged with the Overseas Territories to capture the full range of interests they have in the EU, including the potential economic impact of any change in their relations with the EU. We will fully involve the devolved administrations, Gibraltar, the Crown Dependencies, the other UK Overseas Territories and all other regional centres of power, in accordance with their various constitutional relationships with the UK, to ensure that all of their interests are taken properly into account. In the meantime, the UK remains a member of the EU, and the full range of rights and obligations afforded under the Treaties still apply.

Voluntary Work: Young People*Asked by Baroness Royall of Blaisdon*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to encourage young people to serve in their community through supporting full-time, long-term volunteering. [HL1058]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: Government is committed to ensuring young people, from all backgrounds, have the opportunity to engage in meaningful social action,

creating a lifelong habit and developing skills for work. We support Step Up to Serve's #iwill campaign which is backed by a wide coalition of organisations offering a range of opportunities including full-time volunteering. We have also committed to expanding National Citizen Service (NCS) to reach 360,000 places per year by 2020. Since 2011, over 200,000 have participated in NCS and delivered an estimated eight million volunteer hours. The Government's pledge to the #iwill campaign is to continue to invest in youth social action and share evidence and best practice.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1	Written Answers 21
Armed Forces Pay Review Body1	Afghanistan: Minerals 21
British Council1	Afghanistan: Natural Resources 21
Cedars Pre-departure Accommodation.....1	Afghanistan: Rural Areas 21
Child Abuse and Neglect.....1	Asylum: Children 21
Commission for Employment and Skills.....2	Bangladesh: Religious Freedom 21
Conflict Stability and Security Fund2	Belfast Agreement 22
Correction to Written Statement HLWS493	Bus Services Bill (HL) 22
Countering Terrorism3	Council Tax: Arrears 22
Cross Government Prosperity Fund4	Cycling..... 22
Diplomatic Immunity4	Ferries: Isle of Wight..... 23
ECOFIN.....5	Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination..... 23
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Councils6	Low Incomes: Statistics..... 23
English Language Requirement6	Ministers: Twitter 23
First World War Centenary Repairs Fund.....7	Road Signs and Markings..... 23
Foreign Affairs Council.....8	Social Security Benefits..... 23
Healthcare Education.....9	St Helena: Aviation 24
Higher Education Student Finance10	St Helena: Transport..... 24
Informal Competitiveness Council.....12	Sterling..... 24
International Criminal Justice: UK Support13	Territorial Waters: Security 24
Machinery of Government Change13	UK Withdrawal from EU..... 24
Members' Correspondence.....14	Voluntary Work: Young People 25
National Crime Agency/UK International Crime Bureau14	
Outstanding National Non-domestic Rates Bills 14	
Parliamentary Questions and Westminster Hall Debates: Corrections15	
Questions for Written Answer: 2015/16 Session16	
Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association.....16	
Schools Funding.....16	
UK Presidency of the Council of the European Union.....17	
Unpaid London Congestion Charge Bills and Fines17	
Unpaid Parking Fines19	