

Vol. 772
No. 17



Wednesday
29 June 2016

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

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

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

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness Stowell of Beeston	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, Home Office and Department for Transport
Baroness Anelay of St Johns	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Baroness Altmann	Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Whip
Lord Bridges of Headley	Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office
Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change, Wales Office and Whip
Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen	Whip
Earl of Courtown	Whip
Lord Dunlop	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Whip
Lord Faulks	Minister of State, Ministry of Justice
Lord Freud	Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Deputy Chief Whip and Spokesman for Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Lord Keen of Elie	Advocate-General for Scotland
Lord Nash	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Baroness Neville-Rolfe	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Lord O'Neill of Gatley	Commercial Secretary to the Treasury
Lord Price	Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Lord Prior of Brampton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health
Baroness Shields	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture Media and Sport and Home Office
Lord Taylor of Holbeach	Chief Whip
Baroness Verma	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for International Development
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 29 June 2016

Gifting of Equipment (Syria Civil Defence and the Free Syrian Police)

[HLWS49]

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

It is the normal practice when a government department proposes to make a gift of a value exceeding £300,000, for the department concerned to present to the House of Commons a minute giving particulars of the gift and explaining the circumstances; and to refrain from making the gift until fourteen Parliamentary sitting days after the issue of the minute, except in cases of special urgency.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has today laid a departmental Minute proposing the gifting of equipment to Syria Civil Defence and Free Syria Police teams.

The situation in Syria remains extremely fragile. An estimated 250,000 people have been killed since the war began five years ago, many of them innocent civilians. The Asad regime continues to use the most barbaric military methods and tactics available, including the use of indiscriminate artillery fire, chemical weapons and barrel bombs. The UK remains committed to doing all it can to promote a political settlement to end the conflict, to alleviate the humanitarian suffering, and to protect UK national security through countering terrorist and extremist threats.

In March 2015, I laid departmental minutes before the House and issued Written Ministerial Statements setting out our plans to gift equipment to Syria Civil Defence and the Free Syrian Police teams operating in opposition-controlled areas of Syria. No objections were received to the gifts and the UK distributed the equipment to both sets of teams along with comprehensive training packages. Civil defence teams have now saved over 50,000 lives by rescuing civilians trapped in damaged buildings, fighting fires and providing emergency first aid. The Free Syrian Police continues its valuable work to keep traffic moving, prevent looting and to support the distribution of humanitarian aid. Other international donors have also contributed to both initiatives.

The UK intends to continue its support to these programmes by increasing their communications capability and mobility of the teams, providing more targeted operational equipment – whether for search and rescue, or tracing explosives – as well as build up the capacity of these organisations to deliver on the ground. 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. For Syria Civil Defence, the proposed list of equipment includes cutting and rescue tools, personal

protective gear including helmets, uniforms, communications equipment, medical supplies, equipment for the disposal of unexploded ordinance, office supplies, vehicles and fire fighting equipment. For the Free Syrian Police, the proposed list of equipment includes vehicles, communications kit, traffic signs and cones, uniforms and generators. We expect to spend £23.5m this financial year on both programmes of support in total through the Government's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF).

The use of CSSF funds to cover the costs of the gift has been approved by members of the Middle East and North Africa Strategic Programme Board. The gift is being scrutinised to ensure that the provision of this equipment is consistent with export controls and complies with our international obligations. Recipients have been carefully selected to prevent equipment being given to those involved in extremist activities or human rights violations. The risk of diversion is still a real possibility, but we assess that the considerable benefit this equipment would bring to the moderate opposition in Syria greatly outweigh this risk, which we have plans in place to mitigate. There is constant monitoring of the situation on ground, and all equipment transfers are approved by HMG immediately before delivery. All our assistance is carefully calibrated and legal, is aimed at alleviating human suffering and supporting moderate groups and is regularly monitored and evaluated.

The Treasury has approved the proposal in principle. If, during the period of fourteen parliamentary sitting days beginning on the date on which the departmental minute was laid before the House of Commons, a Member signifies an objection by giving notice of a Parliamentary Question or a Motion relating to the minute, or by otherwise raising the matter in the House, final approval of the gift will be withheld pending an examination of the objection.

Strategic Defence and Security Review: UK Resilience

[HLWS50]

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

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 2015 set out the need to strengthen the Armed Forces' contribution to UK resilience. To maximise the size of the force available to deliver this task, the Chief of the General Staff has today announced that the Army will in future plan to use Regular and Reserve Phase 1 trained personnel in response to crises within the UK.

This change will increase the utility and the size of force available in the event of a national emergency. It will result in Army personnel contributing more, and earlier in their careers, and therefore feeling more motivated and more valued. For the Regular Army, this will mean the potential deployment of sub-units from training establishments led by their instructors; for

Reserves it will mean that they are able to participate in training and UK deployments with their units at an earlier stage than previously. To prepare for this, all Regular and Reserve Army personnel will now complete the Military Annual Training Tests, which qualify them to assist in UK resilience tasks, during Phase 1 training.

Planning routinely to use Army Phase 1 trained personnel to provide additional support to UK resilience tasks such as flood response, or to backfill for others deployed on such tasks including responding to terrorist attacks, will increase the pool of trained and disciplined manpower available by around 3,000-5,000 Regulars and 1,800 Reserves.

To reflect this, the term 'Trained Strength' will now include all Armed Forces personnel trained in the core function of their Service. The Army will recognise the size of its additional available force by including personnel who have completed Phase 1 training within the Trained Strength. This, however, will not change the manifesto commitment, confirmed in the SDSR, to a Regular Army of 82,000. This will result in the addition

of around 1,800 Reservists to the overall trained Army Reserve: we will now also increase the target for trained Army Reserves to 32,000 by 2025.

This change does not affect the progress made in developing Reserves Phase 2 training. Each of the Phase 2 training establishments will continue to deliver Reserve focused Phase 2 (and Phase 3) training.

Trained Strength numbers for the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force remain unaffected, reflecting the requirement for their personnel to complete Phase 2 to be able to fulfil the core function of their respective Services. This would not preclude Royal Navy or Royal Air Force Phase 1 trained personnel contributing in the support of a UK resilience task in extreme circumstances.

A public consultation will be launched in due course on the inclusion of the revised Trained Strength figures within the Monthly Service Personnel Statistics publication. The revised Future Reserves 2020 strength growth profiles for the Army Reserve will be published following this consultation.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 29 June 2016

Bus Services: Franchises

Asked by Earl Attlee

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the monetary value of the relevant information that a franchising authority may obtain from local bus operators under Clause 5 of the Bus Services Bill [HL]. [HL740]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government has made no assessment of the monetary value of the information that a local authority can obtain under Clause 5. The Government understands that some of the information will be commercially sensitive and it is therefore imperative that authorities treat it with care. The information can be used only in connection with the franchising scheme.

Asked by Earl Attlee

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what basis local authorities are to be given powers under Clause 5 of the Bus Services Bill [HL] to demand relevant information from bus operators, particularly in cases where such relevant information is market-sensitive and providing it to any other party might be contrary to the Competition Act 1998. [HL741]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government wants to ensure that authorities considering franchising can access the information they need to accurately assess their franchising scheme. This will help to ensure that informed decisions can be made on the basis of robust evidence and analysis.

We recognise that some of the information provided by operators will be commercially sensitive. Franchising authorities will need to treat this information with care, and will be able to refuse to release such information by way of the relevant Freedom of Information exemptions. The Bill also makes clear that the information acquired by the franchising authority must only be used in connection with its franchising functions, and not for other purposes.

Asked by Earl Attlee

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether draft regulations will be made available under Clause 5 of the Bus Services Bill [HL] relating to the provision of relevant information that a franchising authority may obtain from local bus operators, and if so, when. [HL742]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government will work closely with both local authority stakeholders and bus operators to develop sensible proposals that both meet the needs of franchising authorities and do not place unnecessary burdens on local bus operators.

Policy discussions with key stakeholders were started in May, and policy scoping notes, setting out the policy intent of each of the regulations, were circulated to Noble Peers on 15th June. Our intention is to continue to engage with bus operators and local authorities to produce draft regulations for consultation in the autumn.

Children's Centres: Closures

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many county councils have closed down their children's centres. [HL551]

Lord Nash: Local authorities have a duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to ensure sufficient children's centres to meet the needs of local families. Local authorities must also consult fully before any significant changes are made to children's centre services.

All 27 county councils in England have children's centre sites open to families and children providing children's centre services as part of a network.

According to data supplied to the department by local authorities, at end May 2016, eight county councils had closed some sites within their children's centre networks.

An independent survey carried out by the national children's charity, 4Children (published October 2015) estimated more than a million children and families were using children's centres.

Devolution: Finance

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the devolved administrations are permitted to re-allocate funds provided by HM Treasury for capital expenditure purposes for resource expenditure purposes. [HL738]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: Devolved administrations may not switch provision from Capital to Resource, except where bespoke arrangements have been agreed with Treasury ministers.

The annual 'Consolidated Budgeting Guidance', published by the Treasury, sets out the budgeting framework for expenditure control for devolved administrations.

Grammar Schools: Buckinghamshire

Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will take action in response to the recent report by Local Equal Excellent that children with a Pakistani background sitting the 11-plus entrance examination in Buckinghamshire are only half as likely as their white classmates to secure a place at one of the grammar schools in that area. [HL739]

Lord Nash: The School Admissions Code requires school admission arrangements to be 'fair, clear and

objective'. It further requires that 'admission authorities must ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group'.

Those who consider an admission policy, including a selection test, to breach the School Admissions Code can submit an objection to the independent Schools Adjudicator. If the Adjudicator agrees that the policy is unfair or otherwise breaches the Code she can require schools to amend their admission arrangements.

Police: Per Capita Costs

Asked by Lord Dear

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the average cost of a police constable with four years service in (1) the Metropolitan Police Service, (2) a police force in the Home Counties, and (3) a police force elsewhere in England and Wales. [HL737]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Home Office has calculated the total salary costs of constables on the pay scale in place since April 2013. These include the employers' portion of National Insurance and pension contributions and the London Weighting payment where applicable. At pay point 4, which typically approximates to four years service, the cost would be £36,900 in London and £33,700 in other forces.

Police officers may receive other allowances and overtime which are not captured in these costs. These include London and South East Allowances which may be paid annually to officers in London and some South East forces at a level set by the relevant chief officer, to meet recruitment and retention needs. These allowances are capped at the following levels: In London, at a maximum of £4,338 per officer; in Bedfordshire, Hampshire and Sussex at a maximum of £1,000 per officer; and in Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey and Thames Valley at a maximum of £2,000 per officer.

Four years' service may not be equivalent to being at pay point four. The general expectation is that officers will progress up the scale by one pay point every 12 months subject to satisfactory performance, but there may be variations to this. A constable with four years service is likely to fall between pay point three and pay point five. These are shown in the table below:

Salary costs (rounded to the nearest £100)

<i>Pay point</i>	<i>London (includes a London Weighting payment at £2,349 per officer)</i>	<i>All other forces (including forces in the South East)</i>
0	28,600	25,400
1	32,700	29,600
2	34,100	30,900
3	35,500	32,300
4	36,900	33,700

Salary costs (rounded to the nearest £100)

<i>Pay point</i>	<i>London (includes a London Weighting payment at £2,349 per officer)</i>	<i>All other forces (including forces in the South East)</i>
5	39,700	36,500
6	45,300	42,100
7	52,900	49,800

Notes:

(1) The employers' portion of pension contributions has been calculated at a rate of 21.3%.

(2) The employers' portion of National Insurance contributions has been calculated at a rate of 13.8% on earnings above the secondary threshold. NI employer contribution has been calculated using the new contribution due to the Single Tier Pension (Introduced in April 2016).

(3) London Weighting is a pensionable payment, and applies to all officers working in London forces.

(4) An officer may be appointed at pay point 1 rather than pay point 0 if they possess a Policing Qualification or relevant experience. An officer appointed at pay point 0 will move to pay point 1 on completion of initial training.

Police: Public Records

Asked by Lord Hennessy of Nympsfield

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recommendation of the report of the Hillsborough Independent Panel in September 2012 that police records in England and Wales should come under the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967; and whether they intend to implement that recommendation through the current Policing and Crime Bill. [HL647]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is considering the options for achieving greater transparency and accessibility of police records in England and Wales, including whether to extend the Public Records Act 1958 to include police records.

No decision about implementation has been taken at this time, while careful consideration is given to potential administrative and cost burdens.

Poverty

Asked by Lord Bird

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the Office for National Statistics report on the levels of (1) persistent, and (2) overall, poverty rates in the United Kingdom, what new actions they intend to take to eradicate poverty and the causes of poverty in this Parliament. [HL720]

Asked by Lord Bird

To ask Her Majesty's Government what amount and proportion of funding from their poverty prevention programmes currently in operation has been allocated to (1) preventing the underlying causes of poverty, (2) dealing with emergency effects of poverty, (3) managing the ongoing effects of poverty, and (4)

alleviating the effects of poverty, in (a) each of the last five years, and (b) to date in 2016. [HL721]

Lord Freud: This Government's welfare reforms are focused on supporting people to find and keep work whilst ensuring that we are protecting the most vulnerable. At the end of the Parliament we will be spending over £60bn – 3% of GDP – supporting people on low incomes.

We know that work is the best route out of poverty. Evidence shows that almost three-quarters of poor workless families who found full employment escaped poverty; and that the highest poverty exit rate of 75% was for families that moved from part to full employment. The number of children living in workless households is down by 449,000 since 2010

Our new life chances approach to poverty and disadvantage will include a set of indicators to measure progress in tackling the root causes of poverty such as worklessness, educational attainment and family stability.

Soil: Research

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what surveys of earthworm populations and diversity in arable soils in England have been carried out since 1996, and for each project what was the contractor's budget, and where the final report can be found on the gov.uk website. [HL722]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Defra has not carried out any surveys of earthworm populations and diversity specifically in arable soils.

However, Defra carries out research on earthworms as part of a wider programme of research on sustainable land management because of their important role in developing soil structure, water movement, nutrient dynamics, and plant growth.

Defra has contributed funding to the Open Air Laboratory (OPAL) Soil and Earthworm Survey in England launched in 2012. Two technical reports detailing the analysis of the first set of results of the Soil and Earthworm Survey are publicly available on the website of Imperial College London.

Defra's delivery partner Natural England has previously funded the London Natural History Museum to survey earthworms in a number of semi-natural sites across England and Scotland, but also included sampling from 6 arable sites. This work was captured in a report published by Natural England in April 2014 entitled "*Earthworms in England: distribution, abundance and habitat*". The report is available on Natural England's website, reference NECR145.

In 2014 Defra funded the establishment of the Sustainable Intensification Research Platform (budget £4,111,184), supporting research into sustainable productive farming techniques, which includes current

assessment of earthworm abundance under contrasting arable systems at the Allerton Project at Loddington.

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current health and status of earthworm populations in English arable soils, and based on research and surveys carried out by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' commissioned research and research of other organisations, what trends they have identified in the last two decades. [HL723]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Defra is working closely with the research councils and is funding research to improve our understanding of the role of soil biodiversity in contributing to soil condition. This research includes a Defra-funded review of the current available UK-affiliated evidence base. The Report of the review was published in March and has been placed in the House Library.

We are looking closely at its findings, including whether there is a need to carry out analysis of trends in biodiversity in order to understand better how the functions it supports, such as soil structure, water movement, nutrient dynamics and plant growth, contribute to soil condition across a range of ecosystem services and management practices.

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many soil research projects have been completed for which it has provided funding, and how the findings were translated into practical measures that could be applied at farm level, in each year since 1997. [HL726]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Since 1997, Defra and its predecessors have funded 445 soil research projects, the findings of which are translated into practical measures that can be applied at farm level in a number of ways, including testing of measures as part of the research, reviews of the evidence base feeding into the development of farmer guidance or direct knowledge transfer as part of the research project.

The table below denotes the number of completed soil research projects funded by Defra and its predecessors in each year since 1997:

1997	40
1998	44
1999	26
2000	28
2001	34
2002	22
2003	26
2004	21

2005	18
2006	29
2007	15
2008	23
2009	24
2010	29
2011	17
2012	18
2013	12
2014	10
2015	9

In addition since 2005-6, the first year for which data is available, Research Councils have funded 614 soil research projects.

The table below denotes the number of soil research projects funded by the Research Councils that have completed, by financial year, going back to 2005-06. Data for before that year is not available as the information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

2005-6	59
2006-7	62
2007-8	92
2008-9	57
2009-10	68
2010-11	82
2011-12	70
2012-13	26
2013-14	45
2014-15	29
2015-16	24

Tobacco: Smuggling

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Ashton of Hyde on 14 June (HL Deb, col 1099), what action they are taking in response to the practice by some companies of supplying low-tax foreign markets with more tobacco than they are capable of consuming, thereby facilitating their products being brought back to the UK and depriving HM Revenue and Customs of revenue. [[HL710](#)]

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress HM Revenue and Customs has made in investigating in the UK tobacco companies that over-supply low tobacco-tax foreign countries, and what action has resulted from those investigations. [[HL712](#)]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: The UK introduced stringent rules in 2006 requiring all UK Tobacco Manufacturers (TMs) to control their supply chains. These rules required them to take steps to avoid supplying cigarettes and/or HRT (hand rolling tobacco) to persons who are likely to smuggle them into the UK or resupply them to other persons who are likely to do the same.

Tobacco manufacturers can face penalties of up to £5m for failing to comply with the rules. HMRC action, in monitoring TM's compliance, is reflected in a reduction in supplies of UK brand cigarettes to high risk markets of 20% since 2010. At the same time, supplies to those markets of UK brand Hand Rolling Tobacco (HRT) has reduced by 36%.

Despite this success HMRC is not complacent. They continue to closely monitor the illicit market in the UK, which today is made up of a mix of unregulated brands, non UK brands, and counterfeit as well as genuine UK brands, to ensure the legislation is working. HMRC also robustly challenge TM's supply chain policies and procedures to ensure their continued compliance with the rules.

HMRC cannot comment on the progress of individual investigations but it is a matter of public record that one manufacturer has been subject to a supply chain penalty. This penalty is currently under appeal.

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their current estimate of the loss of tax revenue each year owing to tobacco smuggling. [[HL711](#)]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: The 2014/15 tax revenue loss associated with illicit tobacco, including both cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco, is estimated to be £2.1 billion.

Estimates of UK tax revenue losses are published every year. The latest estimates, for the years 2006/7 to 2014/15, are published in 'Tobacco Tax Gap estimates 2014-15'.

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to further reduce the capacity for tobacco wholesalers and retailers to supply illicit tobacco. [[HL713](#)]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: The Government currently has no plans to introduce new measures specifically applicable to wholesalers and retailers to tackle the supply of illicit tobacco. However, HM Revenue and Customs has undertaken a public consultation on the implementation of Article 6 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Illicit Trade Protocol, part of which is concerned with consideration of the licensing of the supply chain for tobacco products. The consultation sought views from a wide range of stakeholders to help assess the potential benefits and impacts of introducing a scheme to help establish a clear evidence base for any decisions. The results of the

consultation and the proposed next steps will be announced in due course.

WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Asked by Lord Rennard

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to ratify the WHO protocol on the illicit trade in tobacco. [[HL714](#)]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: The Government is fully committed to implementation and ratification of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Illicit Trade Protocol. The majority of the requirements of the Protocol are already in place in the UK. HM Revenue and Customs has recently consulted on the implementation of Article 6 of the Protocol, which includes the requirement to license tobacco manufacturing machinery. The Government will ratify the Protocol once we are satisfied that the legislation is in place to meet this requirement.

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