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**Tuesday
25 October 2016**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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

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

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 25 October 2016

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

[HLWS218]

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

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council met on 13th October 2016 in Luxembourg. Damian Hinds MP, Minister of State for Employment at the Department for Work and Pensions, represented the UK.

The Council reached a General Approach on the proposal to amend the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive, which protects workers from the risk of exposure to carcinogens and mutagens in the work place. The UK, along with all Member States and the Commission, supported the proposal.

The Council also reached Political Agreement on the Directive to implement the Social Partner Agreement on the ILO Work in Fishing Convention. The UK supported the proposal but also submitted a minute statement which outlined reservations on its application to the self employed and competence.

There was a policy debate on the Commission's New Skills Agenda proposal and an endorsement of the Employment Committee (EMCO) opinion on it. The UK intervention set out the UK's Skills Plan and apprenticeship reforms, emphasising the importance of putting employers at the heart of the system. The UK welcomed the EMCO opinion, including recognition that many of these issues were Member State competence.

The Council endorsed the Social Protection Committee (SPC) and the EMCO reports on the European Semester. The Commission noted and endorsed the streamlining of the European Semester process.

There was an exchange of views, followed by a lunch time discussion, on youth employment. The Commission highlighted the tools and funding the Commission has made available to fight youth unemployment. There was then an exchange of views on long term unemployment.

The Presidency outlined the agenda for the Tripartite Social Summit on 19 October.

The Council adopted Council Conclusions on the Court of Auditors Report on Roma Integration. Introducing the item, the Presidency noted that six million Roma living in the EU still faced discrimination and disadvantage. It would bring a second, broader, set of conclusions to Council in December.

The Council generally endorsed the joint EMCO/SPC opinion on the Social Pillar. The Presidency and the Commission confirmed this would not pre-empt member

state government responses to the on-going Commission consultation.

Under any other business, the Presidency provided information on the revision of the Blue Card Directive, the Action Plan on Integration of third country nationals, and the collaborative economy. The Greek Delegation provided an update on labour market reforms in Greece.

European Maritime Safety Agency

[HLWS216]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Transport (John Hayes) has made the following Ministerial Statement.

The Government welcomes the efforts of the Commission to address the ongoing migration crisis, but has decided not to opt in to the JHA content in the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No. 1406/2002 establishing a European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).

The proposal – which has now been adopted – forms part of a wider package of measures by the Commission to ensure the protection of the EU's external borders.

The Commission has taken the view that the challenges which have arisen from the recent migratory crisis cannot be adequately dealt with by Member States acting in an uncoordinated manner and that integrated border management should be a shared responsibility of a new European Border and Coast Guard into which national authorities with coastguard and border control responsibilities, the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) can provide additional resources and contribute to better, more effective co-ordination and co-operation.

The core tasks of EMSA currently deliver a high, uniform and effective level of maritime safety and prevention of pollution within the EU, achieved by ensuring a consistent application of EU maritime law.

The amendments to the EMSA founding Regulation will have the effect of immediately expanding EMSA's role and responsibilities beyond its current core tasks of managing maritime pollution and safety. It will formally establish co-operation for the prevention, detection and investigation of criminal offences by enabling EMSA to make available information with other national authorities with coastguard and border control responsibilities, the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, which is currently accessible through ship reporting and other information exchange systems.

Such co-operation is indirect (EMSA itself will have no role to play in the exchange or analysis of such information between the agencies), and there is little practical or operational benefit for the UK from this measure. The Government maintains that the effect of the measure amounts to an obligation that falls within the scope of the JHA section of the Treaties and is, therefore,

subject to the UK's JHA opt-in. It is on that basis that the Government has decided not to opt in.

Foreign Affairs Council

[HLWS219]

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 17 October. 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 Luxembourg.

Foreign Affairs Council

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

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2016/10/17/>

European Union Global Strategy

The Council discussed the follow up the EU Global Strategy on foreign and security policy and adopted Council Conclusions. The Foreign Secretary made clear that the UK would continue to support European security after Brexit. He encouraged other European countries to spend more on defence and exploit the EU's soft power.

Tunisia

The Council discussed Tunisia and adopted Conclusions on the joint communication "Strengthening EU support for Tunisia", which was presented by Ms. Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn. Member States welcomed the EU stepping up its support but underlined that Tunisia needed to deliver reform for real progress to be made.

Syria

Foreign Ministers discussed the situation in Syria, in light of recent developments on the ground and the escalation of violence, including in Aleppo. The Foreign Secretary briefed Ministers on the 16 October London meeting that he had hosted. Ms. Mogherini concluded that the EU should work closely with the UN both on the humanitarian track and on preparing for the post conflict phase.

Migration

Foreign Ministers took stock of recent developments related to the external aspects of migration. Ms. Mogherini briefly updated the Council on migration partnership frameworks, underlining to Ministers her view that they had created a positive change in attitude within partner countries.

Ministers agreed without discussion a number of measures:

- Council Conclusions on the Democratic Republic of Congo
- The Council adopted decisions on partnerships priorities and compacts with Jordan for the period 2016 – 2018 and with Lebanon for the period 2016 – 2020.
- The Council renewed the EU restrictive measures in view of the situation in the Republic of Guinea until 27 October 2017.
- The Council approved the state of preparations of the first inter-summit meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and of the European Union, which will take place on 25 and 26 October 2016 in Santo Domingo.
- The Council adopted the provisional agenda of the second EU-Iraq Cooperation Council, which will take place on 18 October 2016 in Brussels.
- The Council adopted the Common Foreign and Security Policy report "Our priorities in 2016".
- The Council authorised the signature of an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement between the EU and the United States of America.
- The Council approved the High Representative's Report on the twenty-fourth Operation Althea six-monthly review.

Hinkley Point C: UK Guarantee

[HLWS217]

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

The UK Guarantees scheme was announced in July 2012 with spending cover provided through the Infrastructure (Financial Assistance) Act 2012, receiving Royal Assent on 31 October 2012. The scheme provides a sovereign-backed guarantee to help infrastructure projects raise debt finance. Guarantees for up to £40 billion in aggregate can be offered under the initiative.

As part of the Hinkley Point C negotiations, EDF sought a government guarantee to assist in bringing forward investment. The government is confirming that it has approved the provision of a guarantee for up to £2 billion to the project for the construction of its new EPR nuclear plant in Somerset, backed by commitments from the shareholders. The guarantee will be available from 2018 to 2020 if necessary conditions are met and is at government's discretion. Even if made available, and EDF have indicated to the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy that it is not their current intention to take up the guarantee, I judge the likelihood of any call under the guarantee to be very low.

The government will report to Parliament on the financial assistance given in line with the requirements set out in the Infrastructure (Financial Assistance) Act 2012.

Ministerial Correction

[HLWS214]

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

An error has been identified in a reply to a written question given to the hon. Member for North Thanet, Official Report, 9 Sep 2013: Column 612W.

The reply given was:

Sir Roger Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which French tropical overseas territories were included in his Department's average temperature calculations in respect of winter fuel payments to expatriate UK citizens living in the EU member states. [167864]

Steve Webb: From 2015-16 winter fuel payments will no longer be payable to individuals in countries where the average winter temperature is warmer than the warmest region of the UK (South-West England). The Government has worked with the Met Office to analyse comparable winter temperature data across all EEA countries. The Met Office used recognised administrative regions for each country. For France this was the 27 regions, including French Guyana, Guadeloupe, La Réunion, Martinique and Mayotte. It does not include the French overseas territories, which are not part of the EEA.

It should have said:

From 2015-16 winter fuel payments will no longer be payable to individuals in countries where the average winter temperature is warmer than the warmest region of the UK (South-West England). The Government has worked with the Met Office to analyse comparable winter temperature data across all EEA countries. The Met Office used recognised administrative regions for each country. For France this was the 27 regions, including French Guiana, Guadeloupe, La Réunion and Martinique. It does not include the French overseas territories, which are not part of the EEA.

Supporting Apprenticeships

[HLWS215]

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

Apprenticeships transform lives and are vital in making this a country that works for everyone. As well as giving young people the chance to build a better future by taking their first step on the employment ladder, they give those already in work the opportunity to progress further. And for those just about managing, they can unlock a brighter future. That is why we are committed to 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020, spending £2.5bn to transform this country's investment in skills, in our people.

For employers, apprenticeships bring great benefits too, by boosting the skills of the workforce and helping to

increase economic productivity. Yet for too long far too many employers have under-invested in the skills of their employees compared to in other countries. It is time to change that and ensure all employers play their part in improving productivity and social mobility. So we are working in partnership with employers to implement major reforms.

The new apprenticeship levy, which we are introducing in April 2017, will put the funding of apprenticeships on a sustainable long-term footing so we can support opportunities for all. The levy will be set at 0.5% of pay bill and only employers with a pay bill of more than £3 million will have to pay the levy. Employers that are not eligible to pay the levy will continue to receive government support towards the costs of apprenticeship training and assessment.

The levy applies to all UK employers but apprenticeship funding policy is devolved. It is for the Devolved Administrations to decide how they use their levy income. This statement sets out how we will fund apprenticeships in England to help build an economy that works for everyone.

To do that we are not only introducing the levy but also reforming the way we fund apprenticeships, introducing a dedicated register of approved apprenticeship training providers and launching the employer-led Institute for Apprenticeships. These changes will ensure apprenticeships are high quality, meet the needs of employers and provide opportunities for millions more people.

After extensive discussions with employers and training providers we are today publishing the final funding policy for May 2017 onwards and details of the new register of apprenticeship training providers. The adjustments we have made to the funding policy since our proposals in August will help ensure that the reforms benefit more employers, providers and apprentices.

Today we are confirming the final funding policy. Key features are:

- Higher funding for STEM apprenticeship frameworks and higher pricing of apprenticeship standards to support improved quality, and greater flexibility to train those with prior qualifications;
- Longer period of time for employers to spend funds in their digital account, now with 24 months before they expire, an increase from our original proposal of just 18 months;
- A commitment to introducing the ability for employers to transfer digital funds to other employers in their supply chains, sector or to Apprenticeship Training Agencies in 2018, with a new employer group including the Confederation of British Industry, Federation of Small Businesses, British Chambers of Commerce, Charity Finance Group and EEF – the Manufacturers' Organisation – to help government develop this system so that it works for employers.

- 90% contribution from government to the cost of training for employers that will not pay the levy;
- 100% contribution from government to the cost of training for small employers that will not pay the levy and who take on apprentices who are 16 to 18 years old, 19 to 24 year old care leavers or 19 to 24 year olds with an Education and Health Care Plan;
- £1,000 each from government to employers and training providers when they take on 16 to 18 year olds, 19 to 24 year olds who were in care or who have an Education and Health Care Plan;
- Help for training providers to adapt to the new, simpler funding model through an additional cash

payment equal to 20% of the funding band maximum where they train 16 to 18 year olds on frameworks; and

- A simplified version of the current system of support for people from disadvantaged areas to ensure the opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship is open to everyone, no matter where in England they live, their background or family circumstances.

We will continue to work in close partnership with employers and providers in the implementation of these reforms. We know they are major changes and we want to work together to ensure we transform our country's skills for the benefit of all.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 25 October 2016

Agriculture

Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their forecast timetable for negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU as regards food and farming. [HL2129]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The Prime Minister has made clear we will trigger Article 50 by the end of March 2017. It is in everyone's interests that we take time to establish a UK approach and clear objectives for negotiations. We have been clear that we will not provide a running commentary that might undermine our negotiating position.

We continue to receive views across the range of the Department's responsibilities following the outcome of the EU Referendum. Defra will be working on our future policies in this area, liaising closely with other key departments on future support for agriculture, animal welfare, and the food and drink industry. The Government will work with industry and the public to develop these new arrangements.

Asia Bibi

Asked by **Baroness Berridge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential need for Mrs Asia Bibi and her family to apply for asylum should she be released from detention in Pakistan. [HL2270]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We remain concerned about the situation of all religious minorities in Pakistan. We urge Pakistan to uphold the rule of law and ensure the rights of all citizens are respected regardless of gender, ethnicity or religious belief.

Our obligations under the Refugee Convention do not extend to considering claims from people overseas who may want to seek asylum here. There is no provision in the Immigration Rules for someone to be given permission to travel to the UK to seek asylum.

The UK and European Union approach is that an individual should apply for protection from the authorities in the first available safe country or through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Association of Port Health Authorities

Asked by **Baroness Blood**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the most recent meetings they have had with the Association of Port Health Authorities. [HL2197]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) can confirm since June 2016, FSA officials have met for discussions with Port Health Authority officials from the following ports:

- Belfast
- Felixstowe
- Southampton
- Gatwick
- Doncaster
- Heathrow

An official from the FSA will provide a presentation on imports and exports policy at the Association of Port Health Authorities (APHA) annual general meeting on Wednesday 30th November 2016. At the meeting, APHA members will be encouraged to provide their thoughts and views on the future work of Port Health Authorities in the United Kingdom.

A number of large UK ports are no longer members of APHA. These ports have formed another group which hold regular (quarterly) 'Major Ports Forum' meetings. The FSA, The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and The Animal and Plant Health Agency actively participate in all of these meetings.

The Government will continue to collaborate with Port Health Authorities going forward to ensure impacts on Port Health Authorities are fully considered in any policy making decisions.

Asked by **Baroness Blood**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current funding arrangements for the Association of Port Health Authorities. [HL2199]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Association of Port Health Authorities is currently self-funded by its Members. It is not anticipated that this will change following the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.

Bahrain: Administration of Justice

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to ensure fair trials in Bahrain for Mr Ali Isa Al-Tajer and others accused of similar offences. [HL2118]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We continue to monitor Ali Isa Al Tajer's case closely and encourage the Bahraini authorities to ensure due process is followed and international standards of justice are upheld. British Embassy officials regularly attend hearings of high profile cases and will continue to do so. As part of our programme of work, the Government continues to provide assistance to the Ombudsman and the Special Investigation Unit and encourage them to deal with any complaints seriously and in a professional and

independent manner conforming to international standards.

British Nationals Abroad: EU Countries

Asked by Lord Inglewood

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to preserve UK citizens' legal right to live in and travel freely across Europe following Brexit. [HL2119]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The Prime Minister has been clear that she wants to protect the status of UK nationals already living in mainland Europe, and that of EU nationals already living here. The only circumstances in which that would not be possible is if British citizens' rights in other EU member states were not protected in return. UK nationals that have lived lawfully and continuously for a period of 5 years in a given EU Member State will automatically have a permanent right to reside there.

The reciprocal rights and entitlements that will apply following the UK's exit are subject to the wider negotiation on our future relationship with the EU. We have not yet begun these negotiations, so it is not possible to set out any positions in advance. However, at every step of this negotiation we will seek to ensure the best possible outcome for the British people, at home and overseas.

Care Homes

Asked by Lord Ouseley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of continuing care home closures, what plans are in place to meet the care needs of the growing elderly population. [HL2309]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Department has not seen loss of capacity of social care provision. The Government recognises that the care sector is operating in a challenging financial environment and continues to engage with the care sector to understand their concerns about their financial viability and the sustainability of services.

The Care Quality Commission monitors the finances of the largest care businesses to identify likely insolvencies that would stop services. The Department continues to monitor the whole of the market of care providers, engage with the sector to better understand the challenges they face and support local authorities who purchase services.

The Department is working closely with the Local Government Association to consider targeted action to address the issues.

Cataracts: Surgery

Asked by Lord Harrison

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the statement by the Secretary of State for Health on 10 August that any patient who needs cataract surgery

should get it without delay, what is their assessment of the impact on cataract surgery waiting times and local capacity to deliver cataract treatment of a higher priority being afforded to such treatment. [HL2224]

Asked by Lord Harrison

To ask Her Majesty's Government, what is their assessment of the impact of innovative technology and improvements in efficiency on outcomes for cataract treatment. [HL2225]

Asked by Lord Harrison

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have lost their sight or had their vision impaired as a result of delays in the provision of cataract surgery. [HL2228]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Clinical commissioning groups are responsible for commissioning cataract surgery for their local populations. Patients have the right to start consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of referral for non-urgent conditions, or alternatively have the right to ask for an alternative provider who can see them sooner. All patients should be treated without unnecessary delay and according to their clinical priority.

Where National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance does not exist on a particular treatment, it is for local National Health Service commissioners to make funding decisions based on an assessment of the available evidence and on the basis of an individual patient's clinical circumstances. However, in light of concerns about lengthy waits for treatment and unacceptable variations in care, the Secretary of State has asked NICE to bring forward its guidance on cataracts from 2018 to 2017. This will provide NHS commissioners with evidence based guidance from NICE and ensure patients have access to the most effective treatment as early as possible.

The Government has not made an assessment of the effect of hospital-initiated postponement of cataract surgery on patients' sight or of the impact of innovative technologies; we anticipate that these aspects will be considered by NICE in their assessment.

Asked by Lord Harrison

To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the waiting times for cataract surgery for each of the past 10 years for each clinical commissioning group. [HL2227]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The information is not available in the format requested. Referral to treatment data are collected by 18 treatment functions and are not condition or procedure specific. Cataract surgery is included in the ophthalmology treatment function. The attached table sets out the median waiting time for completed admitted pathways for the ophthalmology treatment function, by primary care trust and clinical commissioning group, for the years that full data is available, 2007-08 to 2015-16.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Ophthalmology Waiting Times [HL2227 Annual Ophthalmology Median Waits for Completed Admitted Pathways By PCT and CCG.xls]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-10-12/HL2227>

Charities: Pay

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the current levels of, and recent increases in, the total remuneration paid to the executive heads of the major charities in England and Wales. [HL2417]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: Charity trustees, almost all of whom are unpaid, set levels of executive remuneration and must do so acting in the best interests of the charity. A 2014 study by The National Council for Voluntary Organisations found that senior executives in charities were generally paid substantially less than for similar roles in the public or private sectors. Charities are legally required to provide details of the number of staff in pay bands over £60,000 in their publicly available annual reports, and many charities go further in their accountability and publish full details as a matter of good practice.

Chess: Iran

Asked by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the World Chess Federation's decision to enforce a requirement on all competitors in the Women's World Chess Championship 2017 in Iran to wear the hijab, and what discussions they have had with, and what advice they have given to, UK Chess Associations about the safety of UK citizens competing in the event. [HL2349]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: We have had no discussions with the World Chess Federation on this matter. Visitors to any country should refer to FCO advice when travelling abroad, including abiding by local laws and customs.

Consumer Goods: Imports

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what impact they expect the recent fall in the value of sterling to have on imported consumer goods. [HL2278]

Lord Young of Cookham: Before the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, the UK government published short-term and long-term assessments of the likely impact on the UK economy from leaving the EU, including the effects of sterling revaluation. HM Government is monitoring economic developments

closely and the independent Office for Budget Responsibility will produce an updated economic forecast alongside Autumn Statement 2016.

Dairy Farming

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made working with retailers, supermarkets and farmers to ensure the future of the dairy industry in the UK. [HL2202]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government has continued to work closely with farmers, retailers and manufacturers to help with the prolonged period of low prices experienced by the dairy industry in the last 2 years. Wholesale prices have started to improve sharply and we have also seen some improvements in the UK farmgate milk price, albeit from a very low level.

The long-term outlook for our dairy industry remains positive with strong growth in global milk demand forecast to continue until 2025.

The Government cannot dictate prices but has sought to help dairy farmers manage risk. We have introduced a new system of extended tax averaging, allowing farmers to choose whether to spread their tax over a two or five-year period. We are exploring opportunities for a dairy futures market and better branding and labelling in supermarkets.

The Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) appointed in 2013 oversees relationships between supermarkets and their suppliers to ensure large supermarkets treat their suppliers lawfully and fairly. We have invited evidence on the case for extending the remit of the GCA to provide more support for farmers and will consider any representation we receive. The dairy industry's Voluntary Code of Practice has also made a positive contribution in developing a fair and balanced dairy supply chain, helping farmers to secure fairer contracts with their milk buyers.

The Government is committed to working with industry to develop new market opportunities. Government itself is now buying more British food as a result of our reforms – more than 90% of the butter and cheese bought is made from British milk generating £11m of business for our dairy industry. Further afield, we have been opening new export markets where we know there is a huge demand for quality British dairy products, and we are working to maximise this opportunity by pushing the British dairy brand with the launch of the Great British Food Campaign, and designating 2016 "The Year of Great British Food".

Digital Broadcasting: Radio

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what regulatory requirements are currently applicable to digital radio stations. [HL2215]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: There are extensive regulatory requirements covering digital radio.

Disadvantaged: Children and Young People

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will examine the results of the former Educational Priority Areas to explore whether similar measures could be combined with the continuing Troubled Families Programme, to improve results for disadvantaged children and young people. [HL2450]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: We want the UK to be a country that works for everyone – and that includes those we intend to keep on helping through this programme. We are looking widely at all the evidence available to see how things could be done differently, to learn from it and see if there is even more we can do to improve the lives of troubled families. We will first consider the evidence of the first programme's independent evaluation, but we are always open to learning from other programmes and reports.

Economic Situation: Forecasts

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they (1) have confidence in the economic forecasting capability of HM Treasury, (2) have evaluated the performance of HM Treasury forecasters, and (3) have considered the case for outsourcing some or all of HM Treasury's forecasting functions to another organisation. [HL2429]

Lord Young of Cookham: The independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) is responsible for producing forecasts for the UK economy and public finances. It publishes regular Forecast Evaluation Reports (FERs) in which it compares its forecasts to subsequent outturns and explains any forecast errors.

Energy: Conservation

Asked by Lord Teverson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps the Environment Agency is taking to ensure that decisions relating to the Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme receive director-level attention and remain adequately staffed. [HL2403]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: Implementation of the Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme remains an Environment Agency priority and there has been no change to the amount of resource assigned to this or to the level of oversight within the Agency.

EU Law

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what will be the status in the UK of EU legal instruments to which the

UK agrees between the bill to repeal the European Communities Act 1972 receiving royal assent and the UK leaving the EU. [HL2132]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The Government will bring forward legislation in the next session that, when enacted, will repeal the European Communities Act 1972 on the day we leave the EU. This 'Great Repeal Bill' will end the authority of EU law and return power to the UK.

The Government will set out the content of the Bill and its implications in due course.

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications for UK case law (1) during the period following the repeal of the European Communities Act 1972, and (2) between the repeal of the Act and the date of the UK leaving the EU. [HL2287]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The Government will bring forward legislation in the next session that, when enacted, will repeal the European Communities Act 1972 on the day we leave the EU. This 'Great Repeal Bill' will end the authority of EU law and return power to the UK.

The Government will set out the content of the Bill and its implications in due course.

European Court of Justice

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what will be the status in the UK of European Court of Justice case law on EU legal instruments which remain in force in the UK after it leaves the EU. [HL2131]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The Government will bring forward legislation in the next session that, when enacted, will repeal the European Communities Act 1972 on the day we leave the EU. This 'Great Repeal Bill' will end the authority of EU law and return power to the UK.

The Government will set out the content of the Bill and its implications in due course.

Eyesight

Asked by Lord Harrison

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to implement the UK Vision Strategy. [HL2226]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Government supports the aims of the UK Vision Strategy of improving eye health, preventing avoidable sight loss, improving services for those who do lose sight, and maximising social inclusion and opportunities for blind and partially sighted people.

Improving the commissioning of services is a key priority for the National Health Service and social care

services, and this is one way that we expect to see improvements for patients.

The Public Health Outcomes Framework is an online only data tool which examines indicators that help us to understand trends in public health. It includes an indicator on preventable sight loss which will track three of the most common causes of preventable sight loss: age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. The open availability of data provide a resource for commissioners and local health and wellbeing boards to identify what is needed in their areas and for comparisons to be made with other areas. The online data tool is available on the Public Health England website.

Our public health programmes tackling smoking and obesity will also help prevent sight loss by addressing some of the key risk factors in the development of eye disease.

Families: Disadvantaged

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the conclusion by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) that there was no consistent evidence that the Troubled Families Programme had any significant or systematic impact on those families which took part in the programme, what evidence they have for the statement by the Communities Minister, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, on 17 October that "this programme has transformed the lives of thousands of families"; and what is their response to the NIESR report National Evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme. [HL2384]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The NIESR Impact Study was just one of 6 reports comprising the independent evaluation of the first Troubled Families Programme. The evaluation found that the programme had many positive achievements. These include:

- Families feeling more confident and optimistic about being able to cope in the future
- Joining up local services for families by encouraging a single keyworker approach to work with the whole family on all of its problems
- Raising the quality and capacity of local data systems
- Better joint working with partners such as Jobcentre Plus

The data shows that nearly 120,000 of the families on this programme saw their lives improve – more children attending school, youth crime and anti-social behaviour significantly cut and, in more than 18,000 families, an adult holding down a job. The evaluation does not dispute this fact.

Unsurprisingly, the ambitious and innovative impact study which used national administrative datasets to track

changes in families circumstances over comparatively short time periods, was unable to specifically attribute positive outcomes achieved in employment, youth crime or school attendance to the Troubled Families Programme.

This was because at that time the level of change achieved was not significantly different from that seen in a group of families not on the programme with whom comparisons were made. This is not the same, however, as saying that the evaluation shows family outcomes did not improve, as some have wrongly inferred.

Of course, we will continue to review all evidence of how the programme is working, to learn from it and see if there's more we can do to help families facing such multiple problems. In fact, we have already adapted the new programme in a number of ways, including extending the length of time over which family outcomes will be tracked – from 12 months to 5 years.

Asked by Lord Ouseley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to continue with the Troubled Families Programme in the light of the National Institute of Economics and Social Research's recent analysis. [HL2455]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: At the Spending Review 2015, £720 million was allocated to fund the remaining four years of the new Troubled Families Programme (2015 – 2020). We are absolutely committed to continuing to help this group of people, to help these vulnerable families that have some of the most complex needs of people in the country. We are looking at the evidence from the evaluation of the first Troubled Families Programme (2012-2015) to see how things could be done differently, to learn from it and see if there is even more we can do to improve the lives of troubled families.

We have already learnt lessons from the first Troubled Families Programme and reflected them in the design of the new programme. We have published an overview of the first programme (attached) which highlights the improvements that have been made: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-first-troubled-families-programme-2012-to-2015-an-overview>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Troubled families programme - HL2455 [161024 The first Troubled Families Programme an overview - HL2455.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-10-19/HL2455>

Garden Bridge

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in respect of the proposed Garden Bridge, whether the Department for Transport met each of the criteria set by the Treasury

before funding was committed; if not, what action was taken to override the Treasury criteria; and what changes to procedures are in place to avoid any non-compliance with Treasury criteria. [HL2330]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Government funding for the Garden Bridge project was initially announced by the former Chancellor of the Exchequer in his 2013 Autumn Statement. In a subsequent letter to the then Secretary of State for Transport, the Chancellor said that this funding had been committed on the basis that:

- the Mayor of London would match it from Transport for London's resources;
- a satisfactory business case would be produced, demonstrating that the project provided value for money;
- Transport for London would fund the Bridge's ongoing maintenance; and
- the Mayor would cover cost overruns or shortfalls in funding.

The first criterion was met in full in advance of funding being transferred to Transport for London.

In respect of the second criterion, a business case for the project was produced by Transport for London and assessed by the Department before any funding was transferred. The Department's analysis suggested that the project had a wide range of possible benefit to cost ratios, and that whilst there were risk factors associated with such a unique project, it had a reasonable chance of delivering value for money. The funding was therefore made available with a number of conditions attached to it, including a cap of £8.25 million on the amount that could be spent before the start of construction. That particular condition was revised, with part of the funding now able to be used to underwrite the cancellation costs that would arise were the project to be cancelled. This followed a Ministerial direction by the previous Secretary of State for Transport in May 2016.

In respect of the third criterion, funding of the ongoing maintenance costs will be a matter for the Garden Bridge Trust, but should the Trust be unable to cover these costs, the previous Mayor issued a Mayoral direction in June 2015 which approved the provision of guarantees by the Greater London Authority in relation to the Garden Bridge, subject to suitable terms and arrangements being agreed.

In terms of the fourth criterion, the Government has made clear that there will be no more public funding for the project beyond what has already been committed.

I receive regular progress reports from the chairman of the Garden Bridge Trust, and Department for Transport officials are in regular contact with their opposite numbers in Transport for London and the Garden Bridge Trust to discuss these and other matters. I do not consider any changes are necessary to these procedures.

Gaza: Israel

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take following the interception of the Zaytouna-Oliva in international waters by Israel and its rerouting to the port of Ashdod. [HL2217]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We have no plans to take any action over this issue. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advise against all travel to Gaza including the waters off Gaza. We also advise British Nationals against participating in flotillas or overland convoys to Gaza because of the risks involved.

Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

Asked by Lord Bowness

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will seek to preserve the mutual recognition of the European Health Insurance Card throughout the UK and EU in their negotiations to leave the EU. [HL2357]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Nothing has yet been decided on whether the United Kingdom will seek to preserve the mutual recognition of the European Health Insurance Card after leaving the European Union. Officials in both the Department of Health and the Department for Exiting the European Union are considering the position and options available to us with the aim of achieving the best outcome for the UK health system and for the UK as a whole.

In Vitro Fertilisation

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, and to what extent, the expert panel convened by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority has concluded that a potentially viable pregnancy with normal karyotype can be achieved through pronuclear transfer based on the accompanying images of the relevant karyotypes in figures or other supporting data presented in Reproductive BioMedicine Online published in October. [HL2191]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority has advised that the independent expert panel are currently reviewing the latest evidence of safety and efficacy for pro-nuclear transfer and maternal spindle transfer. The panel has not yet reached its conclusions. It is anticipated that the panel's report will be published by the end of the year.

Influenza: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Kilclooney

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much is paid to GP practices for (1) advising a person to have a flu jab, and (2) giving a person the flu jab. [HL2302]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Under the General Medical Services contract, general practitioners (GPs) are paid £9.80 for each dose of influenza vaccination that they administer to patients who are eligible for the vaccination. GPs are not paid for advising patients to have the influenza vaccination.

Motor Vehicles: UK Trade with EU

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will disclose the proposals made by the Prime Minister to Renault Nissan concerning protecting new investment in Sunderland from the impact of potential EU tariffs; and whether similar protection will be offered to other motor vehicle manufacturers, component suppliers and firms that compete with Renault Nissan for capital, labour and land. [[HL2367](#)]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The Government is in close contact with Nissan, as it is with the sector more broadly. It will be a priority of Government negotiations to support all UK based car manufacturers and ensure that their ability to export to and from the EU is not adversely affected by the UK's future relationship with the EU. However, we do not provide a running commentary on our discussions with individual companies.

NHS: Sustainable Development

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much money has been (1) spent, and (2) committed to be spent, on consultancies in the preparation of NHS sustainability and transformation plans. [[HL2360](#)]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Sustainability and Transformation Plans are local plans and have been developed locally. Neither the Department nor NHS England collects data on whether these plans have been developed with outside advice.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what governance arrangements are in place to ensure that expenditure committed in the preparation of NHS sustainability and transformation plans provides value for money. [[HL2361](#)]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) themselves are drawn up collaboratively by existing organisations in the local areas, utilising existing resources. In addition, national bodies are working directly with STP teams to ensure local plans are as strong and deliverable as possible, and that financial plans achieve the best results for patients and communities within the resources available.

Nuclear Reactors

Asked by Lord Wigley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are planning to publish a route map for the development of small modular nuclear reactors in the UK. [[HL2438](#)]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: Policy development for small modular reactors, including plans in respect of publishing a Roadmap, remains on-going. We are drawing on the findings of the independent Techno-Economic Assessment, the Phase One expressions of interest documents, the meetings held by officials over the summer with 32 technology vendors, service providers and potential investors, and our continuing discussions with regulators.

Occupational Pensions

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to offer relief to unincorporated employers who are at risk of personal bankruptcy as a result of significant increases in defined benefit pension deficits in Non-Associated Multi-Employer Schemes following the rise in annuity costs associated with the falls in long-term interest rates in recent years; and if so, what relief will be made available. [[HL2185](#)]

Lord Freud: We have recently consulted on problems faced by non-associated multi-employer schemes (NAMES) and had representations from various interested parties. We will be responding in due course.

Occupational Pensions: Tax Allowances

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they have taken to ensure that (1) employers, and (2) employees earning under £11,000 a year, understand the consequences of using a net pay arrangement on entitlement to tax relief. [[HL2186](#)]

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that workers who are contributing to a workplace pension, and who earn less than £11,000 a year, are able to receive the government contribution to their pension for which they are eligible; and what action they are taking to ensure that such earners are not disadvantaged by losing out on the 25 per cent top-up to which they are entitled. [[HL2187](#)]

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to assess the number of people earning less than £11,000 a year who are auto-enrolled or paying into net pay arrangement workplace pension schemes. [[HL2188](#)]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Pensions Regulator provides guidance to employers on choosing a pension scheme for their staff in order to discharge their statutory obligations under automatic enrolment. This guidance covers the choice between net pay and relief at source schemes, and the implications of net pay schemes for employees who do not pay tax.

The Government's latest analysis of the eligibility of workers for automatic enrolment was published on 13 October 2016 in 'Workplace Pensions: Update of analysis on Automatic Enrolment'. Information on age and earnings breakdowns for all workers can be found in table 3a on page 6, and is available in the report titled: Workplace pensions: Update of Analysis on Automatic Enrolment 2016, which is available on the gov.uk website.

The Government does not collect data on the number of workers earning less than the personal allowance who are also members of pension schemes that operate a net pay system. The Government does not hold employee level data on employees enrolled in net pay pension schemes, as such schemes are not obliged to report pension contributions to HM Revenue and Customs. The Government does not therefore hold information on the value of tax reliefs paid out to employees in net pay schemes.

Palestinians: Economic Situation

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Palestine's economic prospects over the next five years. [HL2218]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The Palestinian economy continues to face a number of challenges, including the restrictions imposed by the occupation. The International Money Fund estimates that in the medium term growth is likely to be in the region of 2-3 per cent. If restrictions of the occupation were lifted, it is estimated that growth could be in the region of 7-9 per cent. We continue to support economic growth in the Occupied Palestinian Territories through the Palestinian Market Development Programme which assists companies to develop new products and enter new markets.

Palestinians: Visas

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to carry out a review of the system of granting visas to Palestinians coming to the UK on exchange schemes; and if so, when. [HL2219]

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are planning to revise the visa system for Palestinians living in East Jerusalem and Ramallah which prevents them from applying for a visa at a Visa Application

Centre other than the one closest to where they live. [HL2220]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: There are no plans to change the visa system for Palestinians living in East Jerusalem or Ramallah.

As set out in the Immigration Rules, applications for a visit visa or EEA family permit can be made in any visa application centre, British diplomatic mission or consular post overseas where entry clearance applications are accepted. Applications for other types of entry clearance should be made in the applicant's country of residence. Where there is no post in the country of residence, applications should be made to the designated application post.

There are three Visa Application Centres in the Occupied Palestinian Territories designated by the Secretary of State to accept visas applications. These are the Visa Application Centre at the American Colony Hotel in Jerusalem, the British Information and Services Office in Gaza City, and the British Council office in Ramallah. Applicants choose the location for their appointment to submit their application at the end of the online application process.

Parliamentary Questions

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

To ask the Leader of the House what procedural advice or guidance is given to government departments when answering Parliamentary questions. [HL2279]

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the difference between their approach to answering Parliamentary Questions and freedom of information requests. [HL2280]

Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen: The Government's guidance on answering Parliamentary Questions, for both the House of Lords and the House of Commons is set out in the attached Cabinet Office guidance. Freedom of information requests are answered in line with the requirements set out in the Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Attachment for PEER - FOI and PQs [CO-DC00-PRN01_Emman Chowdhury_3342_001.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-10-12/HL2279>

Port Health Authorities

*Asked by **Baroness Blood***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact that the UK withdrawing from the EU will have on Port Health Authorities. [HL2198]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Government is considering the impacts of the decision to leave the European Union, including the impact on Port Health Authorities (PHAs). The Government recognises the significant contribution PHAs make to public and animal health protection and the United Kingdom is committed to ensuring any potential impacts to PHAs are well managed.

Preventive Medicine: Children

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to increase funding for preventative measures to support under 16 year olds to stay healthy and prevent avoidable chronic disease in later life. [HL2206]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Responsibility for commissioning public health services for children from 0-19 now lies with local authorities. This affords the opportunity to commission based on local need and recognises that local government is best placed to identify the needs of their populations and to influence many of the wider factors that affect health and wellbeing.

The Department launched *Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action* in August this year. The plan focuses on actions that are likely to have the biggest impact on reducing childhood obesity and maintaining a healthy weight. Physical activity is a key strand of the plan and, from September 2017, we will double the Primary Physical Education and Sport Premium funding to £320 million. A copy of the plan is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Childhood Obesity Plan [Childhood_obesity_2016__2__acc.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-10-11/HL2206>

RFA Diligence

Asked by Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the sale of RFA Diligence will amount to, or exceed, the amount of taxpayer-funded expenditure of £16 million that was spent on refitting the vessel to extend its life to 2020. [HL2370]

Earl Howe: We do not yet know the sale price of RFA Diligence. In August 2016 the Disposal Services Authority advertised a competition for the sale of the former RFA Diligence for future use. This competition has not reached the stage where formal commercial bids have been received.

Royal Parks: Cycleways

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the Royal Parks have not yet completed the construction of the

sections of the East-West London Super Cycle highway which are planned to pass through Hyde Park and St James Park; and when it is expected that the work will be complete and open to cyclists. [HL2343]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: The East West Cycle Superhighway is a Transport for London (TfL) project carried out by their contractors. The Royal Parks has issued licenses to TfL to permit the work to take place within the parks. Part of the cycle route in Hyde Park is already open. TfL estimates that the remainder of the Hyde Park route will be open in the New Year.

The work in St James's and Green Parks is being planned in stages and the complete route should be finished by next summer although parts may be open sooner.

Sixth Form Colleges: VAT

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to change the rules on VAT applicable to sixth form colleges. [HL2214]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Government has no plans to change the rules on VAT applicable to sixth form colleges.

Social Services

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to respond to the Care Quality Commission's finding that the adult social care sector is "approaching tipping point". [HL2329]

Lord Prior of Brampton: We welcome *The state of health and adult social care in England in 2015/16* report from the Care Quality Commission. The independent regulator was set up to give a single authoritative account to the Department on issues such as this.

The report shows that 70 per cent of adult social care services are rated good or better and that improvement is taking place all over the country.

Social care is critical in enabling older people to retain their independence and dignity. This is why, against the context of tough public sector finances, the Government has taken steps to protect social care services. The Government is giving local authorities access to up to £3.5 billion of new support for social care by 2019/20. This will increase social care spending in real terms by the end of the Parliament.

Through the Care Act, we have a reformed care system that means local authorities are in a better position to meet the care needs of people who need them most. Councils now have greater flexibility to arrange care, as well as give greater choice and control to individuals.

The Department will continue to work with providers and their trade bodies, who have come together as a taskforce to understand financial challenges in the sector.

The Department is also working to support local authorities meet their Care Act duties to improve commissioning and encourage an effective care market.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

CQC State of Care Report [20161013b_stateofcare1516_web.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-10-13/HL2329>

State Retirement Pensions

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what surveys or analysis they have conducted to assess the number of people reaching 65 years of age between 2018 and 2020 who are unaware that they will not be eligible for their state pension as soon as they reach 65. [HL2189]

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what surveys or analysis they have conducted since 2012 to assess the public's knowledge or understanding of the state pension age, particularly among people over the age of 50. [HL2190]

Lord Freud: The Government has provided information in order for all individuals to be able to find out their State Pension age and conditions of their benefits.

Following the 2011 changes, which brought about faster equalisation of men's and women's State Pension ages and accelerated the timetable for the rise to 66, DWP wrote to all individuals directly affected to inform them of the change to their State Pension age, using the address details recorded by HMRC at the time. The 2012 Attitudes to Pensions survey included questions on awareness of State Pension age.

Information on State Pension age changes and who they affect is also available on [GOV.UK](http://gov.uk), and the online State Pension age calculator gives individuals a quick and simple way to check when they will reach State Pension age. Between February 2016 and April 2016 the State Pension age calculator was used 2.3 million times.

Taxation

Asked by Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, in the light of Brexit, they are considering using a more flexible and variable approach to setting VAT and Excise duties for different goods and services to improve the nation's health and wellbeing. [HL2200]

Lord Young of Cookham: Until the UK has left the EU, we will remain a member of the EU with all the rights and obligations that membership entails.

The Government will work hard to get the best deal for Britain, including for VAT and excise, and is determined to make the most of the opportunities that are presented.

Timber

Asked by Baroness Parminter

To ask Her Majesty's Government what figure should be included for carbon dioxide emissions from wood, per unit of fuel, in the background data for fuel consumption used for the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory 1990–2014, given that there is no figure for wood included in the table on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs website. [HL2459]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: Emissions of carbon dioxide from using biomass, including wood, in the energy sector are not reported within the national totals in the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory because they are offset by the carbon dioxide absorbed by fast-growing bio-energy sources. The carbon stock they represent is reported in the land use change and forestry sector, in line with international guidelines set out by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Tuberculosis

Asked by Baroness Suttie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Public Health England's Tuberculosis in England annual report published on 27 September. [HL2235]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The Department of Health welcomes Public Health England's (PHE) *Tuberculosis in England: annual report*, which evidences the importance of the ongoing implementation of their national strategy *Collaborative Tuberculosis Strategy for England 2015 to 2020*. A copy of which is attached. The report contributes to the specific commitments made in the national strategy document, to support the eventual elimination of the disease as a public health problem in England.

The Department recognises the public health importance of tuberculosis (TB) and continues to support PHE, who have made TB one of its main priorities, in giving national policy leadership, ensuring that there is a coordinated approach to TB across all sectors at all levels.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Collaborative TB Strategy for England 2015-2020 [HL 2235 attach Collaborative_TB_Strategy_for_England_2015_2020_.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-10-12/HL2235>

UK Membership of EU

Asked by Lord Watson of Richmond

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they will ensure that the views of those who voted for Remain in the EU Referendum are respected and taken fully into account. [HL2174]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The Government is committed to ensuring that the negotiations result in a deal that works for Britain and is in the interests of everyone in the UK.

We have taken the conscious decision to build a national consensus to our approach to the negotiations. We are consulting a wide range of stakeholders in order to create a national picture of what people want from a deal on exiting the EU. This will allow us to deliver on what the country asked us to do through the referendum, by identifying the opportunities as well as the challenges.

We have already said that we will consult and work with the devolved administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, because we want Brexit to work in the interests of the whole country.

Our guiding approach is to implement the mandate that the people have given us to deliver the UK's exit from the EU, and to do so in a smooth way, which delivers the best deal for the British people and sees us working constructively with our EU partners going forward.

UK Withdrawal from EU

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are planning to publish a consultation paper setting out and assessing the different routes to Brexit. [HL2101]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The Government is consulting widely through meetings all over the country with academics, think tanks, businesses, charities, universities and more to ensure that all views can be reflected in our analysis of the options for the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

Asked by Lord Hunt of Chesterton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to circulate information to householders about the steps taken in the negotiation of the UK's exit from the EU, and the likely final arrangements for British and non-British people and organisations, in order that people can make plans for their future; and if so, when. [HL2165]

Lord Bridges of Headley: The Government will ensure that the appropriate information is communicated to Parliament and the public throughout the process of exit.

Visas

Asked by Lord Green of Deddington

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 26 September (HL1844), how many Restricted Certificates of Sponsorship were available in each month from April 2011 to November 2014. [HL2106]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The data requested is routinely published on the Gov.uk website and can be found at the following address <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employer-sponsorship-restricted-certificate-allocations/allocations-of-restricted-certificates-of-sponsorship> Please also find the information included in the link set out in the table below

<i>Allocation Month</i>	<i>Restricted Certificate of Sponsorship Available</i>	<i>Restricted Certificate of Sponsorship Granted</i>
Apr-11	4200	1019
May-11	4666	781
Jun-11	5397	845
Jul-11	6064	859
Aug-11	6760	819
Sep-11	7719	673
Oct-11	8536	818
Nov-11	9559	766
Dec-11	10269	729
Jan-12	11023	706
Feb-12	11773	832
Mar-12	12429	1040
Apr-12	1725	1037
May-12	2415	913
Jun-12	3188	924
Jul-12	3950	1007
Aug-12	4648	776
Sep-12	5486	785
Oct-12	6418	715
Nov-12	7418	717
Dec-12	8408	753
Jan-13	9355	780
Feb-13	10269	955

<i>Allocation Month</i>	<i>Restricted Certificate of Sponsorship Available</i>	<i>Restricted Certificate of Sponsorship Granted</i>	<i>Allocation Month</i>	<i>Restricted Certificate of Sponsorship Available</i>	<i>Restricted Certificate of Sponsorship Granted</i>
Mar-13	11031	1044	Mar-16	2661	1748
Apr-13	1710	1247	Apr-16	2175	1692
May-13	2172	772	May-16	2464	1849
Jun-13	3120	1373	Jun-16	2575	1853
Jul-13	3416	1417	Jul-16	2701	2238
Aug-13	3680	1110	Aug-16	2695	1952
Sep-13	4189	1044	Sep-16	2879	1509
Oct-13	4863	973	The Answer includes the following attached material:		
Nov-13	5595	1024	Table HL2106 [Table - HL2106-HL2107.doc]		
Dec-13	6283	1275	The material can be viewed online at:		
Jan-14	6714	926	http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-10-10/HL2106		
Feb-14	7427	1289	<i>Asked by Lord Green of Deddington</i>		
Mar-14	7825	1033	To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Restricted Certificates of Sponsorship were (1) issued, and (2) subsequently taken up, by employers in each month since the permanent cap was introduced in April 2011. [HL2107]		
Apr-14	1724	1699	Baroness Williams of Trafford: The data requested is routinely published on the Gov.uk website and can be found at the following address https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employer-sponsorship-restricted-certificate-allocations/allocations-of-restricted-certificates-of-sponsorship Please also find the information included in the link set out in the table below		
May-14	1728	1083	<i>Allocation Month</i>	<i>Restricted Certificate of Sponsorship Available</i>	<i>Restricted Certificate of Sponsorship Granted</i>
Jun-14	2350	1738	Apr-11	4200	1019
Jul-14	2308	1749	May-11	4666	781
Aug-14	2213	1763	Jun-11	5397	845
Sep-14	2050	1442	Jul-11	6064	859
Oct-14	2277	1473	Aug-11	6760	819
Nov-14	2511	1723	Sep-11	7719	673
Dec-14	2481	1819	Oct-11	8536	818
Jan-15	2416	1670	Nov-11	9559	766
Feb-15	2392	2409	Dec-11	10269	729
Mar-15	1690	1519	Jan-12	11023	706
Apr-15	2528	1888	Feb-12	11773	832
May-15	2285	2277	Mar-12	12429	1040
Jun-15	1609	1215			
Jul-15	2040	1943			
Aug-15	2347	2418			
Sep-15	1544	1520			
Oct-15	2111	1953			
Nov-15	2011	2100			
Dec-15	1898	1774			
Jan-16	1926	1441			
Feb-16	2439	1760			

<i>Allocation Month</i>	<i>Restricted Certificate of Sponsorship Available</i>	<i>Restricted Certificate of Sponsorship Granted</i>
Apr-12	1725	1037
May-12	2415	913
Jun-12	3188	924
Jul-12	3950	1007
Aug-12	4648	776
Sep-12	5486	785
Oct-12	6418	715
Nov-12	7418	717
Dec-12	8408	753
Jan-13	9355	780
Feb-13	10269	955
Mar-13	11031	1044
Apr-13	1710	1247
May-13	2172	772
Jun-13	3120	1373
Jul-13	3416	1417
Aug-13	3680	1110
Sep-13	4189	1044
Oct-13	4863	973
Nov-13	5595	1024
Dec-13	6283	1275
Jan-14	6714	926
Feb-14	7427	1289
Mar-14	7825	1033
Apr-14	1724	1699
May-14	1728	1083
Jun-14	2350	1738
Jul-14	2308	1749
Aug-14	2213	1763
Sep-14	2050	1442
Oct-14	2277	1473
Nov-14	2511	1723
Dec-14	2481	1819
Jan-15	2416	1670
Feb-15	2392	2409
Mar-15	1690	1519

<i>Allocation Month</i>	<i>Restricted Certificate of Sponsorship Available</i>	<i>Restricted Certificate of Sponsorship Granted</i>
Apr-15	2528	1888
May-15	2285	2277
Jun-15	1609	1215
Jul-15	2040	1943
Aug-15	2347	2418
Sep-15	1544	1520
Oct-15	2111	1953
Nov-15	2011	2100
Dec-15	1898	1774
Jan-16	1926	1441
Feb-16	2439	1760
Mar-16	2661	1748
Apr-16	2175	1692
May-16	2464	1849
Jun-16	2575	1853
Jul-16	2701	2238
Aug-16	2695	1952
Sep-16	2879	1509

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Table - HL2107 [Table - HL2106-HL2107.doc]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-10-10/HL2107>

West Bank: Israel

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding harassment and violence by Israeli settlers in the West Bank towards Palestinians living there; and whether they intend to put pressure on the government of Israel to take responsibility for the settlers' actions. [HL2216]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The Government condemns all acts of violence by extremist settlers. Settler violence is an abhorrent phenomenon which must be tackled firmly. We condemn such acts and urge the Israeli authorities to investigate thoroughly every instance of violence by settlers and to bring those responsible to justice. We have most recently raised our concerns over this issue on 10 October and stressed the importance of Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take in response to plans by the government of Israel to establish a new settlement deep in the West Bank. [HL2221]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We have raised our concerns over this issue with the Israeli authorities. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood), issued a statement on 5 October condemning the announcement by Israel of plans to construct a new settlement near Shilo. The increased pace of settlement advancement, including moves to approve retroactively unauthorised settlement units and outposts, fundamentally calls into question Israel's commitment to the two state solution.

World War I: Debts

*Asked by **Lord Laird***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in

October 2014 that they were planning to pay off some debts from World War One, how much has been paid off to date, and how much is still outstanding. [HL2303]

Lord Young of Cookham: The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on 3 December 2014 that the government would adopt a strategy to remove the remaining undated gilts in the government's debt portfolio, thus repaying all the nation's First World War debt.

Three of the eight undated gilts that remained in the government's portfolio in 2014 were issued to fund the First World War: the 4% Consolidated Loan, 3½% War Loan and 3½% Conversion Loan. These were redeemed in 2015, on 1 February, 9 March and 1 April respectively.

Almost 99% of the amount due has been repaid to date. Due to the age of the records relating to undated gilts, the registrar has not been able to contact all holders. However, the government has thus repaid the vast majority of the nation's First World War debt.

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