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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**  
**(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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

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

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

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# Written Statements

Thursday, 15 September 2016

## Committee on Standards in Public Life: Report

[HLWS163]

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

Striking the Balance: Upholding the Seven Principles of Public Life in Regulation, the 16th report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, has been published by the Committee today. I have laid the report before both Houses.

## General Affairs Council (September 2016)

[HLWS158]

**Lord Bridges of Headley:** My right honourable friend the Minister of State, the Department for Exiting the European Union (David Jones) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

On 23 June 2016 the UK voted to leave the European Union. Until we leave however, the UK continues to play a constructive role in EU business. The General Affairs Council (GAC) on Tuesday 20 September is expected to focus on the following: follow up to the June European Council; preparation of the October European Council; the European Commission's 2017 Work Programme; and the Mid Term Review of the Multiannual Financial Framework.

### *Follow up to the June European Council*

The Presidency will present an update on the progress towards implementation of the June 2016 European Council Conclusions on migration, jobs, growth and investment and external relations. GAC Ministers will then hold an exchange of views; this will not be a detailed discussion.

### *Preparation of the October European Council*

Ministers will discuss the upcoming October European Council draft annotated agenda. The agenda currently covers migration, trade and external relations, and EU policy toward Russia. This is an opportunity for the UK to influence and shape the agenda of the October European Council.

### *European Commission's Work Programme 2017*

On 14 September the European Commission sent a 'Letter of Intent' outlining the broad content of the Commission Work Programme for 2017 (CWP 2017) to the Council and European Parliament. GAC Ministers will have an exchange of views on the contents of the Commission's letter of intent.

The CWP is adopted annually by the European Commission. It contains a list of the legislative and non-

legislative priorities that the Commission intends to bring forward in the course of the following calendar year.

### *Multiannual Financial Framework*

The GAC will discuss the Commission's proposal on the Mid Term Review of the Multiannual Financial Framework which was published on 14 September.

## Historic Royal Palaces (Borrowing Facility)

[HLWS157]

**Lord Ashton of Hyde:** My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage (Tracey Crouch) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The Departmental Minute laid today is in respect of an extension to the period whereby Government act as a guarantor on behalf of Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) for a borrowing facility of up to £4 million to meet short-term cash flow requirements.

The renewed guarantee will be available until 30 September 2021 and HRP will only enter into borrowing facilities at such times and within such monetary limits as the Department shall agree.

The guarantee provides a safeguard protecting HRP's business from a sudden and serious decline in economic conditions affecting HRP's admissions income until the savings from their planned rationalisation measures, if such an event should occur, could come through. It would only be used in extreme circumstances. The guarantee has been in place since 2002 and it has never yet been called upon.

Historic Royal Palaces is a charity established by Royal Charter. By virtue of a contract entered into on 1 April 1998, it carries out the functions of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under Section 21 of the Crown Lands Act 1851 of managing the unoccupied Royal Palaces.

I am arranging for the Minute to be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Historic Royal Palaces Departmental Minute [HRP Departmental Minute - 15.09.2016.docx]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-09-15/HLWS157/>

## Housing Benefit

[HLWS156]

**Lord Freud:** My Right Honourable Friend The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (The Rt Hon Damian Green MP) has made the following Written Statement.

Supported accommodation plays a vital role in the lives of many vulnerable people. A safe and stable and

supportive place to live can be the key to unlocking better outcomes for people and for many it is a stepping stone to independent living in the longer term. The Government values the role supported housing plays and is committed to encouraging further development to meet future demand.

Over the past number of months, we have spoken to providers, local authorities, charities, representative bodies and the Devolved Administrations about the future funding arrangements for the sector. We are also grateful for the extensive input from these groups into our evidence review of supported accommodation in Great Britain, jointly commissioned by my Department and the Department for Communities and Local Government at the end of 2014. The review has provided a helpful insight in to the scale, scope and cost of the sector and we will publish it shortly alongside a consultation document.

We have heard the concerns regarding the application of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates to social rents from 2018. So I can announce today that we will be deferring the application of this policy for supported housing until 2019/20. At this point we will bring in a new funding model which will ensure that the sector continues to be funded at current levels, taking into account the effect of Government policy on social sector rents. I can also confirm that the deferral until 2019/20 will extend to fully mutuals/co-operatives, almshouses and community land trusts while we consider whether any additional arrangements will be necessary for this group in the longer term.

It is our intention that from 2019/20 core rent and service charges will be funded through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit up to the level of the applicable LHA rate. This will apply to all those living in supported accommodation from this date. I can also confirm that the Shared Accommodation Rate will not apply to people living in the supported housing sector, in recognition of the particular challenges this would have placed upon them.

For costs above the level of the LHA rate, Government will devolve in England an amount of funding for disbursement locally. In Wales and Scotland, an equivalent amount will be provided and it will be for those administrations to decide how best to allocate the funding.

In England, we will devolve funding to local authorities to provide additional 'top up' funding to providers where necessary, reflecting the higher average costs of offering supported accommodation, compared to general needs. This will give local authorities an enhanced role in commissioning supported housing in their area. This will also allow local authorities to ensure a more coherent approach to commissioning for needs across housing, health and social care, using local knowledge to drive transparency, quality and value for money from providers in their area.

Different types of supported housing provision and services are commissioned by different bodies locally,

such as Clinical Commissioning Groups. It will be important to ensure that these bodies can access funding to deliver their commissioning objectives. We will work with relevant agencies and Departments across Government to design this fund to make sure that we maximise the opportunities for local agencies to collaborate.

In recognition of the need to manage the transition to a new funding regime carefully, we will ring-fence the top-up fund to ensure it continues to support vulnerable people. The amount of top-up funding will be set on the basis of current projections of future need. This will also help to provide certainty for providers that reductions in funding via the benefits system can be met elsewhere as well as to give greater assurance to developers of new supported housing supply. We will also consult on appropriate safeguards to ensure that this funding continues to support vulnerable people and promotes supply of supported housing. We will also consider what level of new burdens funding would be appropriate to enable local authorities to fulfill their new role.

As the Prime Minister made clear, we are working to ensure that vulnerable people in refuges are not adversely affected as a result of the LHA rates. While we are confident that this model will meet the needs of the majority of the sector, we recognise some particular challenges may remain for very short term accommodation, including hostels and refuges. We will work with the sector to develop further options to ensure that providers of shorter term accommodation continue to receive appropriate funding for their important work. Whilst the mechanism may be different, funding for this type of accommodation will benefit from the same protection as supported housing in general.

We recognise the vital importance of ensuring that providers are able to develop new, much needed, supported housing and we want the long-term funding model to support this. We will seek views through the consultation on how this objective might best be achieved through the design of the model.

In March 2016, we introduced a one year deferral for supported housing, fully mutuals/co-operatives, almshouses and Community Land Trusts from the reduction of social rents in England of 1% a year for 4 years from 2016. It is important that providers can continue to provide high-quality and cost-effective supported housing to meet the needs of their tenants. However, it is also important that supported housing should make efficiency savings in the same way as the rest of the social sector.

Therefore, I can confirm that, as planned, we will apply the rent reduction to supported housing, with rents in these properties decreasing by 1% a year for 3 years, up to and including 2019/20.

The existing exemption for specialised supported housing will remain in place and will be extended over the remaining 3 years of the policy for fully mutuals/co-operatives, alms houses and Community Land Trusts and refuges.

For those affected by the social sector rent reduction policy, the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 includes provision that allows a social landlord to be exempted from the requirement to reduce rents by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government or the social housing regulator (in the case of private registered providers) if complying would result in serious financial difficulty or jeopardise their financial viability. This provision provides a safety net for those providers who do not have the capacity to offset the decrease through efficiencies or from elsewhere in their business.

Supported housing is of vital importance to vulnerable people and we want to continue to work with providers to ensure that services are as good as they can be. We want to build on the work of excellent providers to drive all quality and value for money up to the level of the best. These reforms, giving local areas greater control and strategic oversight, represent the first step towards that goal, whilst giving the sector the necessary certainty over the total amount of funding available nationally. We also want quality and a focus on individual outcomes to play a greater role in how we fund the sector.

We will continue to work with the sector to develop the detail that underpins the new funding model and to ensure that any accompanying regulatory reform is effective and proportionate. It is important that we get the detail right and we want to continue the extensive conversation we have begun with the sector to do this. A formal consultation document will be published shortly.

### **Intelligence Services Commissioner: Report**

[HLWS161]

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

I have today laid before both Houses of Parliament, the Intelligence Services Commissioner's supplementary report on concerns raised by the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) about the Government's responsibilities in relation to partner counter-terrorism units overseas.

The statutory responsibilities of the Intelligence Services Commissioner, the Right Honourable Sir Mark Waller, include oversight of compliance with the Consolidated Guidance to Intelligence Officers and Service Personnel on the Detention and Interviewing of Detainees Overseas, and on the Passing and Receipt of Intelligence Relating to Detainees ('the Consolidated Guidance').

I am grateful to Sir Mark for his detailed examination of the allegations regarding the detention of Michael Adebolajo in Kenya in 2010, which were raised in the ISC's November 2014 report about the intelligence relating to the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby. I welcome the fact that he has firmly rejected any suggestion of a conspiracy by the security and intelligence agencies in Mr Adebolajo's detention and that he has found no evidence

to support the allegation that he was subject to mistreatment at the hands of the Kenyan authorities.

The Government will look carefully at Sir Mark's detailed analysis of the handling of this case and will take steps to address the issues where he has identified shortcomings in the response at the time, drawing upon the report's recommendations. In particular, Sir Mark has noted that the Consolidated Guidance, though still fit for purpose and carefully followed by intelligence officers and service personnel, could benefit from further clarification in certain aspects. The Government will consider further what changes could be made to the Consolidated Guidance to address the points Sir Mark raises.

### **Joint Childcare Service: Trial**

[HLWS159]

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

Ahead of the introduction of Tax-Free Childcare in early 2017 and the 30 hours extended entitlement for three and four year olds in September 2017, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will trial a new, digital, joint childcare service later this year. The trial will involve around 1500 parents, including some who are eligible for both schemes. It will enable HMRC to extensively test the system and ensure it provides a smooth experience and quality service for parents.

Tax-Free Childcare and the extended free entitlement are a key part of the Government's overall childcare offer which will provide over £6 billion per annum to working families and those on low incomes by the end of this Parliament.

The Government announced in November 2015 that parents will be able to apply online for both Tax-Free Childcare and the extended free entitlement through a new joint childcare service being developed by HMRC, with their delivery partner National Savings & Investments (NS&I).

The joint childcare service will provide a simple and straightforward way for working parents to access both schemes, avoiding the need to provide the same information twice, and saving them valuable time.

In March 2016, the Government announced that Tax-Free Childcare will be introduced and gradually rolled out during 2017. The service will be made available to all eligible families by the end of that year.

### **Local Government Finance**

[HLWS165]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Sajid Javid) has made the following Witten Ministerial Statement.

Today, I am publishing a technical consultation paper on the approach to the 2017/18 local government finance settlement. This will confirm the approach for 2017/18 already set out alongside the 2016/17 settlement, offering local authorities in England that are committed to reform, a 4-year settlement offer, which will give funding certainty for the remainder of the Parliament.

The consultation reconfirms the Government's commitment to the 4-year settlement offer and seeks views on expanding this offer. It also outlines:

the proposed approach to distributing funding through the improved Better Care Fund to support adult social care, in line with the approach taken in the 2016/17 settlement

the approach to council tax referendum principles for 2017/18, including once again a core principle of 2% (with additional flexibilities for shire district councils and lower-quartile police and crime commissioners), and a continuation of the Adult Social Care precept of an additional 2%

a proposal for a referendum principle of 2% for the larger, higher-spending town and parish councils, with consideration being given to extending the principle to all local precepting authorities

the proposed approach for adjusting business rates retention tariffs and top ups to cancel out, as far as is practicable, the impact of the 2017 business rates revaluation on local authorities' income.

In line with the Government's work to devolve power and budgets to local authorities, the consultation also proposes measures to enable certain local authorities to pilot 100% business rates retention, designed to ensure that other authorities are not adversely affected by these pilots, together with measures covering the allocation of funding streams within devolution deal areas, if all affected councils agree.

The consultation paper can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-finance-settlement-2017-to-2018-technical-consultation>

## Machinery of Government Change: Offender Learning

[HLWS162]

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

Policy responsibility for education and training provision for those subject to adult detention in England will transfer from the Department for Education to the Ministry of Justice from 1 October 2016.

## NHS Blood and Transplant Triennial Review

[HLWS160]

**Lord Prior of Brampton:** The Department of Health has completed its Triennial Review of NHS Blood and

Transplant, and is today publishing the associated review report. A copy of the review report is attached.

The review, which commenced on 25 June 2015, consulted with a wide range of stakeholders. The review concludes that NHS Blood and Transplant is an efficient and high performing organisation, and in the future will seek to increase its contribution to the life sciences industry. The report contains a total of 18 recommendations; five are about the function and form of NHS Blood and Transplant, with the remaining 13 intended to support NHS Blood and Transplant's future performance, efficiency, and governance.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

NHSBT Review Report [NHSBT\_TR\_Report\_Final.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-09-15/HLWS160/>

## Notification of Contingent Liability

[HLWS166]

**Lord O'Neill of Gatley:** My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Philip Hammond) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of England decided at its meeting ending on 3 August to raise the limit on purchases that may be undertaken by the Asset Purchase Facility (APF). This will encompass further purchases of gilts, along with a new scheme to purchase private sector assets and a new funding scheme that will lend central bank reserves to banks and building societies for an extended period at a rate close to Bank Rate (the Term Funding Scheme).

As set out in the MPC's remit, active monetary policy has a critical role to play in supporting the economy. It is the MPC's view that in the absence of monetary policy stimulus there would be undesirable volatility in output and employment, and it would be less likely to achieve a sustainable return of inflation to the target in the medium term.

The MPC has judged that it would be appropriate to impart further stimulus through additional asset purchases. The MPC expects that purchases of corporate bonds will improve the availability of credit to UK companies and that further purchases of gilts will reduce borrowing costs, raise asset prices, affect expectations and confidence, and thereby support demand in the economy. The Term Funding Scheme should ensure that the very low level of Bank Rate is passed through to lending rates to households and businesses.

In line with the requirements in the MPC remit, the amendments to the APF that could affect the allocation of credit and pose risks to the Exchequer have been discussed with Treasury officials. The risk control framework previously agreed with the Treasury will remain in place, updated to reflect the changes to the APF.



Oversight arrangements for the expanded APF will be strengthened. These will include enhanced information sharing between the Bank and Treasury to monitor the operation and performance of the facility, and regular risk oversight meetings of Treasury and Bank senior officials. There will also be an opportunity for the Treasury to provide views to the MPC on the design of the schemes within the APF, as they affect the government's broader economic objectives and may pose risks to the Exchequer.

I have therefore authorised an increase of £70 billion in the amount of assets that the APF is able to purchase financed through the issuance of central bank reserves, of which £10 billion can be eligible private sector assets, bringing the total amount for purchases to £445 billion. I have also authorised an extension of the definition of assets eligible to be held in the APF to include secured lending of central bank reserves. The MPC expects that the value of this lending would increase in line with the amount outstanding in the TFS, which will in turn be determined by usage of the scheme, and could reach around £100 billion. I have therefore authorised an increase in the total size of the APF of £170 billion. This will bring the maximum total size of the APF to £545 billion.

The Government will continue to indemnify the Bank and the APF from any losses arising out of, or in connection with, the Facility. If the liability is called, provision for any payment will be sought through the normal Supply procedure.

On 4 August I wrote to the Chairs of Public Accounts Committee and Treasury Select Committee and invited them to raise any objections to my decision. A full departmental Minute has been laid providing more detail on this contingent liability.

### **Pension Protection Fund/ Financial Assistance Scheme: Long Service Caps**

[HLWS164]

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

I am pleased to announce that today I will launch a consultation on the draft regulations needed to ensure the long service cap in the Pension Protection Fund – the PPF – will operate as intended in all circumstances. The consultation will last for eight weeks and, after I have considered the responses, it is my intention to put before Parliament amending regulations, with the expectation that the PPF long service cap will be in place from April 2017.

I am also pleased to announce that it is the Government's intention to introduce an equivalent cap for

the Financial Assistance Scheme – the FAS – from April 2018.

The PPF provides compensation based on 90 per cent of the person's accrued pension if they are below the scheme's normal pension age when the company becomes insolvent. This 90 per cent is subject to a maximum, which would, currently, mean a maximum amount of compensation of £33,678 pa at age 65.

The Pensions Act 2014 contains provisions to increase this cap in the PPF at three per cent for every year of pensionable service in the scheme above 20 years, subject to a new maximum of twice the standard cap. This legislation has not yet been brought into force, as some changes were needed to secondary legislation. It is these changes on which I am now consulting.

The FAS provides financial support for those who lost significant amounts of pension because their defined benefit occupational pension scheme collapsed underfunded. Generally the FAS helps those schemes which were affected before the introduction of the PPF and ensures a person gets at least 90 per cent of the pension due at the point the scheme collapsed. This calculation is subject to a maximum cap. It is our intention to amend this cap so that it will, like the PPF cap, increase by three per cent for each full year of pensionable service, over 20 years subject to a new maximum of twice the standard cap.

I will, in due course, be putting before Parliament regulations to implement this new cap. So that the FAS scheme manager has sufficient time to plan for these changes, it is our current intention that the FAS changes will apply from April 2018. Those already being paid assistance will get the uplift applied to their cap amount from the implementation date although, as in the PPF, this increase will not be backdated.

A copy of the consultation document will be placed in the Library.

### **Tax: Draft Legislation**

[HLWS167]

**Lord O'Neill of Gatley:** My honourable friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jane Ellison) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced that the date of the Autumn Statement will be 23 November 2016.

The Government remains committed to improving the tax policy making process through high levels of consultation and legislative scrutiny. Following the Autumn Statement, draft clauses to be included in Finance Bill 2017 will be published on Monday 5 December 2016. This consultation on draft legislation will be open until Monday 30 January 2017.

# Written Answers

Thursday, 15 September 2016

## Bosnia and Herzegovina: EU Enlargement

*Asked by Baroness Helic*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Anelay of St Johns on 24 November 2015 (HL3593), whether it is their policy to continue the UK-Germany Initiative on Bosnia and Herzegovina. [HL1496]

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** The Government remains firmly committed to the initiative, now adopted by the EU, designed to inject momentum into Bosnia and Herzegovina's stalling reform process. We continue to work closely with EU, and other international partners, in order to help build a more stable, secure and prosperous BiH.

## Bosnia and Herzegovina: Politics and Government

*Asked by Baroness Helic*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the security and political stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the planned referendum in the entity of Republika Srpska on 25 September. [HL1497]

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** The Government remains concerned about the increasing tensions over the Republika Srpska referendum planned for 25 September. We, together with international partners, are calling on all parties to find a way forward that is line with Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitution and the Constitutional Court's rulings.

## Building Regulations

*Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to review the guidance issued under the Building Regulations 2010, in particular that guidance relating to fire safety. [HL1490]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The Government is considering a number of issues related to the Building Regulations 2010 and building control system matters in England. We will make an announcement about our plans in due course.

## Council Tax: Referendums

*Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of extending the council tax referendum provisions introduced by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to include levying

bodies such as Internal Drainage Boards on (1) the ability of local authorities to raise revenue through council tax or the delivery of their statutory functions, and (2) the ability of Internal Drainage Boards to deliver flood defence and land drainage activities. [I] [HL1645]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The referendum threshold is not a cap - councils can set any council tax increase they like provided they obtain the consent of their local electorate in a referendum. Including levying bodies in the council tax referendum legislation increases the transparency and accountability of public bodies for their tax-raising and spending decisions. Local authorities and their levying bodies had shown that they can work together to cut costs and improve services, and this measure placed all local authorities on a common footing when setting council tax.

## Derelict Land

*Asked by Baroness Ford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the target date for the 73 councils across England to complete their brownfield registers. [HL1667]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The local planning authorities piloting the preparation of local brownfield registers were asked to complete their registers by the end of June 2016.

## Drugs: Licensing

*Asked by Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the paper presented to members of the Ethical Medicines Industry Group on 5 September, stating that new drugs and treatments can be made available to UK patients more quickly once the UK has left the EU; and what preparations they are making to ensure that the UK can more rapidly approve medicines once the UK has left the EU. [HL1768]

**Lord Prior of Brampton:** Nothing will change overnight as a result of the European Union referendum decision.

The United Kingdom remains a member of the EU until Article 50 negotiations have concluded. EU law continues to apply and ongoing compliance with EU law is considered important in facilitating orderly transition, for negotiating purposes, and to offer certainty in the meantime. As long as the UK is subject to EU law, the present arrangements remain in place.

## Fracking

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to ensure that regulations governing the exploitation on a significant scale of shale gas by



fracking will be robust and will not permit an unacceptable level of self-regulation. [[HL1621](#)]

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** Shale companies need permission from independent expert regulators before any hydraulic fracturing operations can begin:

- A licence for onshore oil and gas exploration is required from the Oil and Gas Authority
- Planning permission is required from the local Mineral Planning Authority
- Permits to operate a site are required from the Environment Agency
- Safety on a drilling site and standards of well construction are regulated by the Health and Safety Executive
- A drilling consent is also required from the Oil and Gas Authority

We are confident that we have a robust regulatory regime in place. The Government will keep the regulatory regime for shale under review as the industry develops to ensure it is proportionate and fit for purpose.

## Genocide

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Anelay of St Johns on 19 July (HL1204), whether they will now list the competent courts that can recognise genocide. [[HL1507](#)]

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** We continue to believe that recognition of genocide should be a matter for competent courts, decided by judges after consideration of all the evidence available in the context of a credible judicial process. A recent example was in March 2016, when the Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) convicted Radovan Karadžić of one count of genocide (along with other crimes) and sentenced him to forty years imprisonment. The UK is fully committed to the principle that there must be no impunity for the most serious international crimes.

## Government Departments: Land

*Asked by Baroness Ford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much public land held by central government departments and their agencies has been disposed of for house building since 2012, broken down by department. [[HL1666](#)]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The Government is committed to addressing the supply of new land for housing. That is why we have set an ambitious commitment to dispose of surplus government-owned land in England with the capacity for at least 160,000 homes by 2020.

As of the end of June, central government departments and their agencies had identified enough land for

approximately 139,000 homes. Of this, land with the capacity for an estimated 11,691 homes has already been disposed of. We will be publishing an annual report setting out detailed progress towards the commitment later this year, and will also monitor the broad progress of development on sites released through the programme. The report will include data showing land released for housing since 2012, broken down by department.

This builds on our previous Public Sector Land programme in the last Parliament, where between 2011 and 2015, central government departments and their agencies disposed of land with capacity for 109,590 homes.

## Housing: Construction

*Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the emerging findings of the Local Government Association's Housing Commission report *Building our Homes: communities and the future*. [I] [[HL1644](#)]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** We welcome the work which the Local Government Association is doing to meet our shared aims of delivering the homes which communities need, and creating a housing market that works for everyone. Many of our existing measures will help to achieve those aims.

The government has already doubled the housing budget to help deliver a million homes and double the number of first time buyers. We have allocated £8 billion to deliver 400,000 affordable homes, including shared ownership, starter homes and homes for affordable rent. This government and its predecessor have pursued a wide range of actions to improve the speed of the planning process, and we are taking steps to diversify the market.

We look forward to reading the full report, and engaging with the Local Government Association on existing and future policies.

## India: Dalits

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of India's National Crime Records Bureau that, in a three-year period there was an almost 40 per cent increase of crime against Dalits throughout India; that in 2015, in Gujarat, there was a 163.3 per cent increase in crime against Dalits; and that sexual assaults against women and rape are listed as the top crimes against scheduled castes. [[HL1541](#)]

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** India has a strong democratic framework, independent and accountable law enforcement and judicial institutions. Its constitution guarantees fundamental human rights. However, it also faces numerous challenges relating to its size and social and economic development.

We are aware of the particular concerns around violence against minority groups and women and girls in India. We are committed to working with the Government of India, international partners and civil society groups on these important issues.

The British High Commission works with civil society and government bodies on projects which provide advice to lawyers and grassroots organisations that directly support the protection of minorities and Dalits. For example, we support a project which helps survivors of sexual violence understand their legal rights in the Indian criminal justice system. UK Government-funded training has helped to empower over 1000 Dalit women and men to exercise their legal rights. In November 2015, I met a group of senior Indian women advocates to discuss the challenges faced by women in India and how the UK Government could support their efforts to strengthen enforcement of the law.

### **India: Minority Groups**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of violence against Dalits and minorities in India, and what discussions they have had with the government of India about that issue. [HL1540]

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** India has a strong democratic framework, robust and independent institutions and its constitution guarantees fundamental human rights. However, it also faces numerous challenges relating to its size and social and economic development. We welcome Prime Minister Modi's comments on 6 August when he spoke against "cow vigilantes" attacking minority groups and urged state governments in India to investigate such attacks.

The UK discusses a wide range of matters with India, including religious tolerance and minority rights, both bilaterally and through the EU. The former Prime Minister (The Right Hon. David Cameron) discussed human rights with Prime Minister Modi in November 2015. Mr Modi reaffirmed his commitment and respect for India's core values of tolerance and freedoms; points which he also stressed in his speech in Parliament on 12 November 2015.

The British High Commission in India discusses the treatment of minorities with the Indian National Commission for Minorities and with state governments across India. They are in regular contact with civil society organisations working on the protection of minority rights across India, including key issues for minorities such as freedom of religious belief.

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Joint Statement of UK anti-caste organisations submitted on 18 August to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the United National Human Rights Commissioner and the UN Secretary General, and whether they will press for those British

organisations that submitted the Joint Statement to be given the opportunity to express their concerns to the United Nations office in Geneva and to report on the condition of Dalits and minorities in India. [HL1542]

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** We have received the Joint Statement from the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA) and will respond. We are aware of the particular concerns raised around minority rights highlighted by the ACDA.

### **Israel: Palestinians**

*Asked by Lord Palmer of Childs Hill*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the remarks regarding litigation over the Balfour Declaration made by the Foreign Affairs Minister and the President of the Palestinian Authority, what representations they have made to the Palestinian Authority regarding a return to direct negotiations without preconditions between it and the government of Israel. [HL1505]

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** Officials from our Consulate-General in Jerusalem have discussed the remarks about litigation with Palestinian officials and politicians. We continue to urge a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, although we have not called for a return to direct bilateral negotiations without preconditions. The UK's vision for a future two-state solution is clear. It should be based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and with a just, fair and agreed settlement for refugees.

*Asked by Lord Palmer of Childs Hill*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the remarks made by the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Palestinian Authority calling for legal action against the UK over the Balfour Declaration, what representations they have made to the Palestinian Authority regarding the delegitimising of the State of Israel. [HL1506]

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** Officials from our Consulate-General in Jerusalem have discussed the remarks with Palestinian officials and politicians.

### **Kashmir**

*Asked by Lord Ahmed*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will make representations to the government of India about allowing a delegation of members of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Kashmir for a fact-finding visit to Jammu and Kashmir in the immediate future. [HL1457]

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** Our missions across the globe have received many successful and worthwhile APPG visits by Parliamentarians with a strong record of interest in the relevant country. As with the British public, we encourage all Parliamentarians to study FCO travel

advice when planning any travel. The FCO currently advises against all travel to certain parts of Kashmir.

### **Landlords: Licensing**

*Asked by Baroness Ford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which local authorities (1) have applied for Secretary of State consent for discretionary landlord licensing schemes since new rules were introduced in 2015, and (2) have applications pending. [HL1668]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** Since April 2015, my Department has received three large selective licensing applications from the following local authorities: London Borough of Redbridge, Burnley Borough Council and Peterborough City Council. There are currently no applications pending.

### **Local Government: Land**

*Asked by Baroness Ford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many requests have been received from local authorities in the last three years for permission to sell land at undervalue under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972; and whether those requests were granted or refused. [HL1665]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The Secretary of State has received 41 requests from local authorities since September 2013 for permission to sell land at undervalue under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972. Of the requests received, 25 were granted, 6 were withdrawn, and 7 considered to be either invalid or the Secretary of State declined to determine. The remaining 3 cases are currently under consideration.

### **North Korea: Guided Weapons**

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, following North Korea's launch of three ballistic missiles on 5 September, the UN Security Council will be convened to consider the implications of that launch and an international response. [HL1544]

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** The UN Security Council (UNSC) met on 6 September to discuss a response to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) ballistic missiles launches on 5 September. The UNSC subsequently issued a statement condemning these launches as a flagrant violation of UN Security Council Resolutions. The UK strongly supports this statement, as we have with previous UNSC statements condemning DPRK provocations in 2016. We will continue to discuss at the UNSC, and with close partners, further measures in response to the DPRK's destabilising and provocative actions.

### **Occupational Pensions: Tax Allowances**

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action the Department for Work and Pensions has taken to inform employers and pension scheme members of the implications for those on low pay of using a net-pay scheme rather than a relief-at-source scheme that adds the tax relief due. [HL1588]

**Lord Freud:** Pensions' taxation is a matter for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

The noble Baroness may, however, find it helpful to note that the Pensions Regulator's website provides comprehensive guidance for employers about their duties under workplace pensions' legislation. This guidance covers pension scheme choice and the implications for an employer's workforce of net-pay arrangements and relief-at-source schemes.

### **Pension Protection Fund**

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many non-associated multi-employer defined benefit pension schemes in the UK are covered by the Pension Protection Fund, and what estimate they have made of the total number of employers in those schemes. [HL1758]

**Lord Freud:** As at 31 March 2016, there were 26 non-associated multi-employer schemes, with a total of 5,060 participating employers between them which are covered by the Pension Protection Fund.

### **Prisoners: Radicalism**

*Asked by Lord Blencathra*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Offender Management Service plan to adopt a regime based on isolation and solitary confinement for all those Muslim prisoners who are assessed as posing a risk of encouraging Islamic radicalisation whilst in prison. [HL1578]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The government is committed to tackling all forms of extremism. Keeping the most dangerous extremists away from other prisoners is essential to the safe running of our prisons and fundamental to public protection. Planning is under way to create specialist units within the high security estate to allow greater separation and specialised management of extremists who pose the highest risk to other prisoners. The regime of the new units will not be based on isolation or solitary confinement but on removing a small subset of the most dangerous and subversive radicalisers from the mainstream prisoner population.

## Prisons: Ministers of Religion

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Rochester*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the publication of the review of Islamist extremism in prisons and the probation and youth justice services, in what ways they plan to change the vetting of prison chaplains and build on existing good practice, including vetting to counter-terrorism level. [HL1518]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** Prison chaplains of all faiths make a valuable contribution to offender management, both in the provision of pastoral care and theological education, and as a safeguard against the spread of extremist ideologies. There are established pre-appointment checks in place for all prison chaplaincy positions, including Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) security clearance and the scrutiny of professional credentials.

The Government response to the review into Islamist Extremism included a commitment to strengthen the due diligence process for the recruitment of prison chaplains. This policy is still being developed, and will supplement rather than replace existing arrangements. The checks can be applied to all prospective prison chaplains, of any faith, before a final offer of employment is made.

## Starter Home Initiative

*Asked by Lord Beecham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the total cost, by 2020, of the discounts available under the starter homes scheme created by the Housing and Planning Act 2016. [HL1470]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The 2015 Conservative manifesto had the clear objective to build affordable homes, including Starter Homes to support young people into home ownership. They will be sold at a minimum 20 per cent discount on open market value and for no more than the price cap of £250,000 (£450,000 in London). The amount of discount will vary according to local property prices.

*Asked by Lord Beecham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the total untaxed capital gains that will accrue to the beneficiaries of the starter homes scheme by 2020, taking into account the discount and any anticipated rise in house values. [HL1471]

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The 2015 Conservative manifesto had the clear objective to build affordable homes, including Starter Homes to support young people into home ownership. They will be sold at a minimum 20 per cent discount on open market value and for no more than the price cap of £250,000 (£450,000 in London). The amount of discount will vary according to local property prices. No separate assessment on capital gains has been made.

## State Retirement Pensions

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of men now aged between 58 and 62 inclusive who are aware that they will not receive their state pension when they reach their 65th birthday. [HL1460]

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimates they have made of the number of women now aged between 58 and 62 inclusive who are aware of their correct state pension age. [HL1461]

**Lord Freud:** No estimate is held on the number of men that are currently aware of the increases to State Pension age. However, all men affected by the State Pension age increase in the Pensions Act 2011 were written to between January 2012 and November 2013 using the addresses held by HMRC at the time.

The Department does not hold a specific estimate on the number of women that are aware of their state pension age. We wrote to all women affected by the Pensions Act 2011 in the age range specified between January 2012 and November 2013 using the addresses held by HMRC at the time.

In 2004, a DWP survey found that 73 per cent of people aged 45 to 54 (so aged 57 to 66 in 2016) were aware of the future increase in Women's State Pension age. In 2006, 86 per cent of women aged 55-64 (so aged 65 to 74 in 2016) and 90 per cent aged 45-54 (so aged 55 to 64 in 2016) were aware that the State Pension age will increase in future. In 2012, a similar survey found that only 6% of respondents thought their State Pension Age was 60.

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many letters they have written to (1) women, and (2) men, to inform them of changes to their state pension age; of those letters sent out, how many were returned undelivered; and when letters were returned undelivered, what efforts they then made to contact those individuals. [HL1462]

**Lord Freud:** Between April 2009 and March 2011, the Department mailed all women born between 6th April 1950 and 5th April 1953, informing them of their State Pension age under the 1995 Pensions Act. This involved sending 1.16 million letters to the affected females.

Following the 2011 changes DWP wrote to all individuals directly affected to inform them of the change to their State Pension age. This applied to women born between 6th April 1953 and the 5th of April 1960 and men born between 6th December 1953 and 5th April 1960. These letters were sent between January 2012 and November 2013. This involved sending 5.77 million letters to the affected males and females.



We do not have the total number of letters returned undelivered over the course of all the exercises. However, I can confirm we have a robust process in place to review all incorrect address returns and properly scrutinise and update customer account details when an address is confirmed. For State Pension customers, this process includes re-establishing contact through Local Authority Social Services or a DWP Visiting Officer.

*Asked by **Baroness Altmann***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what efforts they have made to inform people what their individual state pension age will be (1) directly using individual letters, and (2) indirectly such as through a national high-profile advertising campaign. [[HL1584](#)]

**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. For example, following the Pensions Act 1995, State Pension estimates, issued to individuals on request, made the changes clear.

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.

Information on State Pension age changes and who they affect is also available on [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.

As part of a national advertising campaign about the changes to the State Pension from 6 April 2016, we encouraged people to find out about their State Pension age. Between August 2015 and April 2016, there were 1.6m visits to the campaign page [GOV.UK/yourstatepension](#). Between February 2016 and April 2016 the State Pension age calculator was used 2.3 million times. The campaign directs people to our new online Check your State Pension service where individual personal State Pension forecasts can be viewed. Over a million forecasts have been viewed since the service launched in February 2016.

We have committed to completing a review of the State Pension age by May 2017. As part of our on-going no-cost media activity on the issue, the launch of the review, for example, was the front page of a number of national newspapers.

## State Retirement Pensions: Females

*Asked by **Baroness Altmann***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimates they have made of the number of women who were unaware in (1) 2011, (2) 2012 and (3) 2013, that the Pensions Act 1995 had changed their state pension age from 60. [[HL1463](#)]

**Lord Freud:** The Department does not hold a specific estimate on the number of women that are unaware of their state pension age. We wrote to all women affected by the Pensions Act 1995 between April 2009 and March 2011 using the addresses held by HMRC at the time.

In 2004, a DWP survey found that 73 per cent of people aged 45 to 54 (so aged 57 to 66 in 2016) were aware of the future increase in Women's State Pension age. In 2006, 86 per cent of women aged 55-64 (so aged 65 to 74 in 2016) and 90 per cent aged 45-54 (so aged 55 to 64 in 2016) were aware that the State Pension age will increase in future. In 2012, a similar survey found that only 6% of respondents thought their State Pension Age was 60.

*Asked by **Baroness Altmann***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many letters the Department for Work and Pensions has received from Members of Parliament since May 2015 on behalf of women who have complained about the impact of an increase in their state pension age. [[HL1585](#)]

**Lord Freud:** The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate costs.

## Turkey: Press Freedom

*Asked by **Lord Patten***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the effect on relations between the UK and Turkey of the closure of media outlets in Turkey following the attempted coup of 15 July. [[HL1508](#)]

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** Following the failed coup on 15 July the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Sir Alan Duncan), travelled to Ankara on 20 and 21 July to express the Government's support for Turkey's democratically elected government. He also emphasised to senior politicians the need for Turkey to adhere to international human rights obligations in the aftermath of the coup and during the imposition of a state of emergency, including press freedom and the rule of law. The Government continues to follow events there closely.



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