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**Monday
6 February 2017**

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

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Written Statements

Monday, 6 February 2017

Government Assets Sale

[HLWS462]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (Jo Johnson MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Today, the Government is starting the process required to sell part of the English student loan book under the Sale of Student Loans Act (2008). The sale covers loans issued under the previous (“pre-2012”) system, specifically those which entered repayment between 2002 and 2006.

The Government’s intention to launch this sale at this time, subject to market conditions, was set out in last year’s Autumn Statement. The decision to launch this process is consistent with the Government’s fiscal policy and approach to asset sales. The position of all graduates, including those whose loans are part of a sale, would also not change as a result of the sale.

This Government is committed to cutting the deficit, reducing debt, and living within our means as a country. The Government’s policy is to sell assets where it is value for money to do so and where there is no policy reason to continue to own them. Selling assets gives headroom for the government to invest in other policies with greater economic or social returns and reduces fiscal pressures.

The Government’s policies towards student finance and higher education are not being altered by this sale. Under the current system of student support (the framework for which has been in place since 2012) we will continue to offer financial support so people who have the qualifications and want to pursue higher education are able to do so, with no limit on their numbers. This is part of making sure our economy works for everyone.

Students are protected by statute and completely unaffected. A sale would not alter the mechanisms and terms of repayment and sold loans would continue to be serviced by Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Student Loans Company (SLC) on the same basis as equivalent unsold loans. These protections mean that purchasers would have no right to change any of the current loan arrangements or to directly contact borrowers.

The Government has launched the first sale process on the basis there is a good prospect of achieving value for money, but will only proceed with the sale subject to market conditions and a final value for money assessment. The assessment of value for money is in accordance with the HMT Green Book framework and includes a comparison of the value of retaining the student loan book and receiving payments over time (the retention value) and receiving cash now (the proceeds of the sale).

This sale will comprise the future repayments on the outstanding balances on a selection of loans, with a total face value of around £4bn. The retention value to Government is lower and is calculated using standard Treasury Green Book methodology developed for asset sales, and also accounts for Government subsidy of the student loan system. The loans which are being sold have already been in repayment for over ten years, and therefore much of the original value of the loans has already been paid back to Government.

The sale process is expected to take several months. Selling the loan book involves securitising the remaining future repayments on the loans and selling securities representing the rights to these to a range of purchasers. The House will be informed if and when a sale is completed.

National Health Service

[HLWS464]

Lord O’Shaughnessy: This Government is committed to making sure that only those people who are living here and contributing to the country financially will get free National Health Service care. Following a two year programme of work to improve identification and cost recovery from chargeable patients in hospitals we consulted on extending the charging rules to areas of NHS care that are currently free to all. Proposals for this were set out in a public consultation entitled *Making a fair contribution – A consultation on the extension of charging overseas visitors and migrants using the NHS in England*, which ran from December 2015 to March 2016.

The proposals explored within the consultation aimed to support the principle of fairness by ensuring those not resident in the United Kingdom pay for NHS care. The proposals would not restrict access, but rather make sure that everyone makes a fair contribution towards the cost of the care they receive.

We are today publishing our response to that consultation, a copy of which is attached. It summarises respondents’ views and sets out how the Government intends to extend charging and increase cost recovery from patients not eligible for free care, including:

- Requiring NHS providers to obtain charges upfront and in full before a chargeable patient can access non-urgent treatment.
- Including out-of-hospital secondary care services and NHS-funded services provided by non-NHS organisations within the services that chargeable patients will have to pay for.
- Removing NHS assisted reproduction services from the range of services provided free of charge under immigration health surcharge arrangements.

The principle that the NHS is free at the point of delivery for people ordinarily resident in the UK will not be undermined by this work.

The most vulnerable people from overseas, including refugees, will remain exempt from charging. Furthermore,

the NHS will not deny urgent and immediately necessary healthcare to those in need, regardless of payment. Exemptions from charging will also remain in place for the diagnosis and treatment of specified infectious diseases in order to protect the British public from wider health risks.

The potential income generated through the extension of charging will contribute towards the Department of Health's aim of recovering up to £500 million per year from overseas migrants and visitors by the middle of this Parliament (2017/18). The recovery of up to £500 million per year will contribute to the £22 billion savings required to ensure the long-term sustainability of the NHS.

We are also publishing today on gov.uk the evaluation of the initial phase of the programme, the lessons from which we are factoring in to the future operation of the programme.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Consultation Response [Cost recovery response.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2017-02-06/HLWS464/>

Proceeds of Crime Act 2002

[HLWS463]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My hon Friend the Minister of State for Security (Ben Wallace) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am pleased to lay before Parliament the 2015-16 annual report of the appointed person under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. The appointed person is an independent person who scrutinises the use of the search and seizure powers that support the measures in the Act to seize and forfeit cash used for criminal purposes and to seize and sell property in settlement of confiscation orders.

The report gives the appointed person's opinion as to the circumstances and manner in which the search and seizure powers conferred by the Act are being exercised. I am pleased that the appointed person, Mr. Douglas Bain, has expressed satisfaction with the operation of the powers and has found that there is nothing to suggest that the procedures are not being followed in accordance with the Act. Mr. Bain has made no recommendations this year.

From 1 April 2015 to the end of March 2016 over £67 million in cash was seized by law enforcement agencies in England and Wales under powers in the Act. The seizures are subject to further investigation, and the cash is subject to further judicially approved detention, before forfeiture in the magistrates' court. These powers are a valuable tool in the fight against crime and the report shows that the way they are used has been, and will continue to be, monitored closely.

Written Answers

Monday, 6 February 2017

Accident and Emergency Departments

Asked by Lord Ouseley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of hospital fatalities resulting from people not being admitted to accident and emergency departments since the beginning of December 2016; and what assessment they have made of whether any increase or decrease from usual numbers is a result of seasonal factors or demonstrates a long-term trend. [[HL4948](#)]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: This information is not held centrally.

Army Reserve: Recruitment

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many soldiers were recruited to the Army Reserve in 2016. [[HL5023](#)]

Earl Howe: Intake figures to the Army Reserve during the calendar year 2016 are currently being validated ahead of publication as official statistics on 9 February 2017.

Army: Deployment

Asked by Earl Attlee

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Earl Howe on 18 January (HL4520), when was the last time the British Army deployed a largely fully formed and supported division into the field for divisional movement and manoeuvre training. [[HL5012](#)]

Earl Howe: The last time an Army Division deployed for training purposes was Exercise White Rhino, which took place in West Germany in September 1989. The largest exercise since then was Exercise Saif Sareea II in 2001 when over 22,500 personnel were deployed to Oman.

Assaults on Police

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision to fine a member of the public who was found guilty of assaulting PC Karl Cinavas at a polling station during the election count for a Police and Crime Commissioner; and whether, in the light of this event, they will review the charging and sentencing guidelines to discourage attacks on the police and elected representatives. [I] [[HL4883](#)]

Lord Keen of Elie: Sentencing is a matter for our independent judiciary, who take into account all the facts of the case.

Sentencing guidelines specify that where an assault is committed against public sector workers or those providing a service to the public, this is an aggravating factor. This means offenders already face increased penalties, within statutory maximum terms.

The charging standard is a joint document agreed by the police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to assist prosecutors and police officers in selecting the most appropriate charge. The charging decision in this case was made by the police.

Burma: Human Rights

Asked by Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have assessed the extent to which a UN Commission of Inquiry into the situation in Rakhine State, Burma, would help to establish the facts about what is taking place in the State, and make recommendations to help to improve the situation. [[HL4856](#)]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK Government supports the Rakhine Advisory Commission led by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, which has the support of Burma's democratically elected government and the international community. The Commission's interim recommendations are expected in the spring and its final recommendations in the summer.

A separate UN Commission of Inquiry could be authorised by the Security Council, the Human Rights Council or the UN Secretary General personally. We assess it is unlikely there would be sufficient international support for such a commission on the situation in Rakhine at this time. There are a number of countries that routinely oppose such commissions as a matter of principle, and have done so in the past. We consider the Annan Commission currently represents the most realistic way forward.

Credit Cards: Fees and Charges

Asked by Lord Moonie

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much revenue each Government department has raised in the last year from surpluses obtained by charging fees to access online services by credit card which are in excess of interchange fees charged by credit card issuers; and to what extent this has been off-set by instances in which interchange fees are not passed on. [[HL4880](#)]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Data Protection

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to help people protect their personal data online. [HL5021]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: The Government takes the protection of individuals' personal data online as well as offline, seriously. The Information Commissioner is the UK's independent authority responsible for administering and enforcing information rights and provides guidance and advice to individuals and organisations on, among other things, the protection of personal data online. The Information Commissioner's Office has a number of tools at its disposal to take action against those that breach the legislation. These powers include the ability to conduct audits, serve enforcement notices and impose civil monetary penalties of up to £500,000.

The Government recently announced it would be implementing the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) by May 2018. Amongst other protections offered, the GDPR provides individuals with increased control over how their personal data is collected and used online.

Employment: Veterans

Asked by Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage employers to recruit service leavers and veterans. [HL4889]

Earl Howe: The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has a robust and effective resettlement system in place which includes the highly successful Career Transition Partnership (CTP). The CTP contract provides employers with unique access to the Service leaver talent pool. Employers can upload job opportunities to RightJob via the CTP website which receives over 50,000 unique hits per month, and promotes employment opportunities through regular e-bulletins sent to over 20,000 active clients. Through the resettlement contract, the CTP can link employers with the best Service leaver candidates for their vacancies. The CTP offers a high quality, no cost recruitment service for organisations looking to recruit highly motivated, skilled and experienced Service leavers.

The Government has set out plans for Prison Safety and Reform in a White Paper, committing to recruit an additional 2,500 prison officers across the estate. The MOD is working collaboratively with the National Offenders Management Service (NOMS) to recruit Service leavers as prison officers to support this recruitment drive, in recognition of the number of valuable transferable skills that Service leavers can bring to the Prison Service. The CTP works closely with NOMS to promote careers in the Prison Service. A NOMS official will be attending CTP employment fairs and a number of prison open days for Service leavers will run during the coming months. Additionally, NOMS are

developing a recruitment campaign targeted specifically at Armed Forces which will be supported by the MOD.

Food: Labelling

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the amount of food wasted because consumers equate or confuse best before dates with use by dates. [HL4849]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Research published in 2014 by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) shows that 48% (2.0 million tonnes) of avoidable household food waste arises because the food is not used in time. A date label was mentioned as the trigger for disposal for one third of such instances (around 660,000 tonnes; 16% of all avoidable food waste).

The Food Standards Agency, Defra and WRAP are working to support industry, implementing more changes to help people waste less of the food they buy, through clearer date labelling and more effective storage and freezing advice. Updated industry guidance is expected to be published this year.

General Practitioners

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their estimate of the number of new general practitioners required each year to cope with net migration. [HL4929]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: Health Education England (HEE) is responsible for ensuring that there is sufficient future supply of staff, including those needed in specialist fields such as general practice, to meet the workforce requirements of the English health system.

Each year, HEE produces a National Workforce Plan for England. This builds upon the needs of local employers, providers, commissioners and other stakeholders who, as members of its Local Education Training Boards, shape their local plans.

Demand forecasting is currently the responsibility of employers; it is an integral part of business planning and forms part of the Sustainable Transformation Planning process, led by NHS England.

HEE remains committed to increasing the number of general practitioner trainees. Last year, there were a record number of over 3,000 trainees appointed at ST1 level. Additionally, HEE is maintaining its focus on those areas where it has been traditionally hard to recruit. Last year, for example, the fill rate in the East Midlands increased from 63% to 95% and in the North East from 60% to 79%.

Guyana: Elections

Asked by Baroness Northover

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of

Guyana about the conduct of elections there, in particular regarding the case for an independent head of their Elections Commission. [HL5087]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK has been a strong and consistent advocate for free and fair elections in Guyana. We, and colleagues from other diplomatic missions and international organisations, closely monitored the run-up to, and conduct of, the general election in May 2015 and local elections in March 2016. Both were deemed free and fair. The process for selecting the new head of the Election Commission is clearly laid out in the Guyanese Constitution and the President is currently following that process. The British High Commissioner in Georgetown maintains a regular dialogue with the Government of Guyana at the highest level, including on issues such as the rule of law, good governance and tackling corruption, all of which are high priorities for the UK.

Health Services: Veterans

Asked by Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken (1) to encourage all veterans to use NHS priority treatment services, and (2) to ensure that NHS Trusts promote awareness and understanding among healthcare professionals in relation to the treatment of veterans. [HL4886]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: In England, the pages on the NHS Choices website dealing with healthcare of the armed forces community were restructured and refreshed during 2015, and continue to be updated on a regular basis to raise awareness of the specific services available to the veterans. This is designed to ensure standardisation of the health messages received from the Ministry of Defence, the National Health Service and service charities, to minimise confusion and create a single point of access for service users and families.

Health Education England, with support from NHS England, have launched an e-learning programme for health and social care professionals to help increase understanding of the armed forces community and facilitate improved care and treatment. The programme is split across three areas of NHS care for current serving personnel, veterans and families.

NHS England's regional Armed Forces Network help to promote this learning and along with other communications pieces, a stand was hosted at the Royal College of General Practitioners' annual conference in October 2016 to showcase this and other information on caring for serving personnel, service families and veterans.

We encourage NHS trusts to appoint NHS Armed Forces Champions, and Health Education England are currently developing a package of training materials to facilitate the creation of Champions.

The Department continues to work closely with NHS England, the Ministry of Defence and service charities to align and reaffirm key messages.

Services in the rest of the United Kingdom are a matter for the devolved administrations.

Higher Education

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will place in the Library of the House, in addition to the published summary, a copy of the responses to the call for evidence on accelerated courses and switching university or degree. [HL4809]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Government does not believe it would be in the public interest to publish in full the responses to our recent Call for Evidence. To do so would risk damaging our relationships with universities by releasing information directly related to them and their operations, potentially limiting our capability to gather evidence from these institutions in the future.

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education guidance on Academic credit arrangements in higher education in England, published in August 2008, how many universities have a published framework for credit transfer between institutions in England. [HL4813]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Unfortunately, the Government is not able to provide this information as we do not gather this data. The QAA *Higher Education Credit Arrangements for England* offers universities guidance that is not compulsory, so data is not collected.

Horn of Africa: EU Immigration

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the release of correspondence between the British embassy in Khartoum and the Sudan Unit in the FCO concerning the EU-Horn of African migration route initiative otherwise known as the Khartoum process (FOI 0733-16), whether they are concerned that the Sudanese regime will not allow access to UNAMID to monitor the implementation of the Khartoum Process; and what steps they are taking to ensure that humanitarian access is a prerequisite for further co-operation on migration. [HL4900]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: Monitoring the implementation of the Khartoum Process does not fall under the mandate of the United Nations/African Union Hybrid Peacekeeping Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). The UK works closely with the current Chair (at present Ethiopia) and the Secretariat of the Khartoum Process Secretariat to maintain a map of current and proposed

projects, and ensure effective coordination and monitoring. We continue to urge the government of Sudan to allow humanitarian access throughout Darfur and to enable UNAMID to carry out its core mandate to protect civilians.

We are clear that engagement with the government of Sudan on migration issues does not mean that we will compromise on our stance towards Sudan's internal conflicts, human rights or the humanitarian situation. Rather, engaging with them provides another channel to raise concerns directly and address their cause. Most recently, during a visit to Khartoum in January the Permanent Under-Secretary to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Sir Simon McDonald, and the Permanent Secretary of the Department for International Development, Mark Lowcock, stressed the importance of tackling irregular migration in a way that was compliant with human rights.

International Whaling Commission

Asked by Lord Stoddart of Swindon

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Statement by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 17 January (HLWS417), who, and under what authority, instructed EU member states to abstain from voting on a proposal by Japan, Cambodia and Ghana to create a fund to strengthen the capacity of governments of limited means to participate in the International Whaling Commission. [HL4978]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: In the International Whaling Commission the EU Member States coordinate positions and are represented in negotiations by the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU, in this case the Netherlands. Following exit from the EU, the UK will no longer be required to operate in this way, and will negotiate on the basis of UK positions.

London Stock Exchange: Deutsche Borse

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risks to the UK's financial capability and stability if clearing activity is transferred outside the UK following the takeover of the London Stock Exchange by the Deutsche Borse, as recommended by Dirk Schiereck, chairman of corporate finance at Technische Universität Darmstadt, in a report commissioned by Deutsche Borse. [HL4859]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: I have nothing to add to the reply of my predecessor Lord O'Neil of Gately on 1 April 2016[1].

[1] <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-03-17/HL7153/>

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Previous answer given on 1 April 2016 [1april.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-23/HL4859>

NHS

Asked by Lord Stoddart of Swindon

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will now establish a Royal Commission on the NHS to examine its existing organisation and purpose and whether there are other models available to provide an improved national health system. [HL4980]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The National Health Service and wider health system has already examined what needs to be done to ensure the sustainability of the health and care system. This produced the NHS Five Year Forward View.

The Government is backing this plan and has committed to increasing funding for the NHS by £10 billion in real terms by 2020-21 compared to 2014-15, enabling the NHS to deliver high quality care seven days a week.

The Government believes that the answer to the challenges faced by the NHS lies in delivering more integrated services and keeping people well and independent for longer not in altering the fundamental principles than underpin the NHS.

NHS: Private Sector

Asked by Lord Owen

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in respect of the Department of Health's figure of £8,722,000 for the amount spent in purchasing services from Independent Sector Providers in 2015-16, what are the (1) contracts, (2) providers and (3) service categories concerned. [HL4881]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: Information pertaining to contracts and service categories is not held centrally.

National Health Service commissioners purchase services from a range of independent sector providers. NHS England records independent sector providers through coding identifiers; a sample of independent sector providers sourced from NHS England's coding identifiers is attached, due to the large amount of data. Some providers do not have separate coding identifiers, therefore there are providers commissioned by NHS England which do not appear in the attached list.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Example list of providers [Example list of Providers.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-23/HL4881>

Nissan

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the policy position on EU negotiations outlined by the Prime Minister in her Lancaster House speech will lead to financial obligations under the deal agreed with Nissan. [HL4860]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The policy position outlined on EU negotiations will not lead to financial obligations to Nissan.

North Korea: Diplomatic Service

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether British Embassy staff in Pyongyang adhere to the directions of the Protocol Handbook for the Diplomatic Corps based in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. [HL4925]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We are aware of the Protocol Handbook of the Diplomatic Corps issued by the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Staff at the British Embassy in Pyongyang adhere to local laws and regulations in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the annual Nuclear Decommissioning Authority budget, and what percentage is spent on plutonium management. [HL4921]

Lord Prior of Brampton: In Spending Review 2015, the Government committed £11bn net funding to Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) over five years (in addition to its forecast commercial income). The total planned expenditure for the financial year 2016 to 2017 is £3.2 billion. The costs of storing and protecting plutonium, both historically and in the future, have not been disclosed on the grounds of commercial sensitivities as well as national security. Government is satisfied with the provision made in the NDA's budget to continue to make meaningful progress on the plutonium disposition programme.

Occupational Pensions

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they will introduce to enable workers earning under £11,000 a year to reclaim the 25 per cent government bonus that they are currently unable to receive when contributing to a net pay scheme, which they would be entitled to were they contributing to a relief at source scheme. [HL4838]

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are planning to oblige employers who use a net pay pension scheme for their staff to reimburse their low paid workers for the money they lose as a result of not being in a relief at source scheme. [HL4839]

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they take to inform public sector workers who earn less than £11,000 a year that they will not receive tax relief on pension contributions into public sector pension schemes. [HL4902]

Asked by Baroness Altmann

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are planning to conduct an inquiry, or to collect or request data from pension providers, on the numbers of workers earning under £11,000 a year who are contributing to a net pay arrangement pension scheme and are not receiving the 25 per cent additional contribution that they should receive from the Government into their pension. [HL4903]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The Pensions Regulator (tPR) 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. All employers, including public sector employers, are expected to follow tPR's guidance about providing their employees with relevant information on the arrangements for tax relief.

The Government appreciates the concerns for low paid workers enrolled in net pay schemes. However, it has not been possible to identify any straightforward or proportionate means to align the effects of the net pay and relief at source mechanisms more closely for this population. In particular, it is not possible to know an individual's final earnings until after the end of the tax year. While employers will know an employee's salary from a single job, neither employers nor pension schemes are currently required to know whether an employee also has alternative sources of income. Requiring them to gather this information would create a disproportionate burden, and many employees may not wish to share this information with their employer.

The Government does not therefore plan to oblige employers to reimburse their low paid employees if they are enrolled in net pay schemes, as this would not be possible to implement effectively.

Overseas Trade: Sudan

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether promoting trade with Sudan is an official government policy, and, if so, when the policy of providing

information to businesses only on request changed and what prompted this change. [[HL4901](#)]

Lord Price: As part of our phased increase in direct engagement with the government of Sudan, the UK will consider opportunities to promote trade with Sudan, as trade can help to open up closed off political and economic systems. In this light, we are working with the World Bank, through the Sudan Multi-Partner Fund, to remove some of the barriers to private sector development through greater financial inclusion.

We will continue to provide support to UK companies to understand the opportunities and challenges of operating in Sudan. However, we have been clear with the Government of Sudan that the current conflicts, human rights abuses, and business environment remain obstacles to a sizeable increase in interest from British companies, and continue to urge them to make progress on these issues.

Pakistan: Religious Freedom

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the forthcoming periodic review of human rights in Pakistan, whether they intend to ask the government of Pakistan to affirm its commitment to Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the freedom to change one's belief or not have any kind of religious belief. [[HL4982](#)]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: As my noble friend Baroness Goldie made clear in the House of Lords on 8 September 2016, "the Government remains firmly committed to promoting and protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief, as set out in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights". We regularly raise our concerns about freedom of religion or belief with the government of Pakistan at a senior level. During his visit to Pakistan in November 2016, the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson), discussed religious tolerance and the importance of safeguarding the rights of all Pakistan's citizens. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Reading West (Mr Sharma), raised our concerns about religious minorities with Kamran Michael, Pakistani Minister for Human Rights, and Barrister Zafarullah Khan, the Prime Minister's Special Assistant for Human Rights during his visit to Pakistan in January 2017. The Government continues to urge Pakistan to honour in practice all its human rights obligations, including its commitment to Article 18 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to uphold the rule of law.

Philippines: Telecommunications

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of

the Philippines about the apparent failure to implement in full (1) the Public Telecommunications Policy Act 1995, (2) the Anti-Child Pornography Act 2009, and (3) the National Telecommunications Commission Circular No 01-01-2014; and when they expect to receive responses to any such representations. [[HL4853](#)]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK Government is working actively with the Philippines authorities to combat child sexual exploitation, including through implementation of the relevant legislation. The National Crime Agency has provided training on the forensic analysis of digital media and is assisting the Philippine Government with its national plan under the WePROTECT Global Alliance. The UK Government has committed £10 million in funding to the Alliance, as a clear demonstration of our policy of addressing child sexual exploitation through multilateral cooperation.

Plutonium

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Neville-Rolfe on 12 December 2016 ([HL3602](#)), what progress has been made by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority to develop a plan for the disposition of plutonium; and whether they intend to review further options, including the building of a new reactor and fuel manufacture at Sellafield. [[HL4920](#)]

Lord Prior of Brampton: Work is under way to gain a better understanding of these issues as regards research and development, and policy development. The Government is also working with international partners to learn from their experience.

The Government will be in a position to proceed once it is fully confident that a preferred option could be implemented safely and securely, that it is affordable, deliverable, and offers value for money.

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the basis for the £2.4bn estimated cost of the future plutonium management and disposition solution in the National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline 2016; and how they will define (1) affordability, (2) value for money, and (3) deliverability in respect of that solution. [[HL4922](#)]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The overall aim of the UK's plutonium management and disposition programme is to plan, develop and implement a management solution for separated civil plutonium in the UK until the inventory has been reduced to zero and is put beyond reach.

The Government will be in a position to proceed once it is confident that its preferred option could be implemented safely and securely, that it is affordable, deliverable, and offers value for money.

Any final decision on a disposition solution will be based upon a business case which complies with the

Treasury's Green Book guidance to ensure best practice and value for money.

Priority School Building Programme

Asked by Lord Beith

To ask Her Majesty's Government in which education authority areas in England new secondary or high schools have been built under the Priority Schools Building Programme on (1) existing sites, and (2) new sites. [HL5146]

Lord Nash: The £4.4 billion Priority School Building Programme is rebuilding or refurbishing those school buildings in the very worst condition across the country. There are two phases of the programme covering a total of 537 schools.

Under the first phase of the programme, building work is being undertaken at 260 schools. Of these, 177 schools have already opened in their new and refurbished buildings. This includes 98 secondary schools in 57 local authorities and all are on existing sites.

The vast majority of schools within the first phase of the programme will be delivered by the end of 2017, two years earlier than originally planned.

Schools: Construction

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they safeguard against new schools being built in areas of considerable surplus capacity. [HL5114]

Lord Nash: Of the 268 mainstream free schools opened up to and including September 2016, 76% have opened in areas where there was a need for additional school places.

Free schools are approved for a variety of reasons, including the need for new school places, the need for better quality places in the local area, to increase parental choice or to meet demand from local employers. More than a quarter of inspected free schools (reports published by 31st December 2016) are rated outstanding by Ofsted.

In all cases due consideration is given to the impact that opening a new school will have on local schools.

Sierra Leone: Politics and Government

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they support governance in Sierra Leone. [HL4918]

Lord Bates: The UK's governance support in Sierra Leone is focused on increasing stability, accountability, and transparency. Our assistance includes helping the government to raise more domestic revenue, to improve its management of the public finances, and to strengthen the audit service. We are supporting communities to access more information about their rights and

entitlements to public services, and have helped the government to establish a new system that allows citizens to report being asked for bribes. Over the coming year, we will be supporting Sierra Leone to hold peaceful, free and fair elections. We are also assisting the government to be able to manage preparations for any potential future Ebola outbreaks.

Tidal Power: Swansea Bay

Asked by Lord Stoddart of Swindon

To ask Her Majesty's Government what volume of electricity a Swansea tidal lagoon would produce per annum and at what cost per MWh; and what would be its contribution towards security of supply during the morning and evening peak demand periods. [HL4977]

Lord Prior of Brampton: If built, the tidal lagoon at Swansea Bay is anticipated to generate approximately 0.5 TWh/year. The levelised cost of the project (in MWh) would depend on a number of factors including the capital costs, operating costs, operating profile, load factor and financing rates. For reasons of commercial sensitivity I cannot comment on the specifics of the developer's latest proposal. Its contribution to security of supply would be subject to a number of factors including the state of the tides.

Tourism

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the preparedness of the hospitality industry to cope with an increased number of domestic and overseas visitors resulting from the declining value of the pound, and of the availability of nationals of other countries to work in that industry. [HL4909]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: We are pleased to see the number of inbound visitors growing, as this will support the growth of the hospitality sector.

The Government is aware that the sector currently has a proportion of non-UK employees working within it. Officials are working closely with companies and representative groups to factor the long-term requirements of the sector into cross-Government thinking and to create the best workforce possible for the sector. This is particularly the case as we plan our exit from the European Union.

Wellington Barracks

Asked by Lord Trefgarne

To ask Her Majesty's Government how long the central heating and hot water systems at Wellington Barracks have been out of order; and when they expect them to be restored to working order. [HL5105]

Earl Howe: The fault with the gas boosters to the boiler supplying central heating and hot water at Wellington Barracks was identified on Monday 23

January 2017 and restored to working order on Thursday 26 January 2017. Electric heaters and mobile hand washing stations were provided in the intervening period.

World Economic Forum

Asked by Lord Palmer

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the total cost of all UK Government attendance expenses for the Davos Summit. [[HL4950](#)]

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: The Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for International Trade represented the Government at the 2017 Davos summit. Total verified UK Government attendance costs are not yet available. As part of the Government's transparency agenda, total costs for Ministerial visits are published quarterly and the information requested is under preparation. It will form part of the next set of Departmental returns for the first quarter of 2017.

Yemen: Military Intervention

Asked by Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Secretary of State for Defence on 19 December 2016 (HC Deb, cols 1215–1216), when they first became aware of the use of UK-made cluster bombs by Saudi Arabia in Yemen; and following assurances they have received from the government of Saudi Arabia that the use of such bombs has now stopped, what monitoring will take place. [[HL4998](#)]

Earl Howe: Amnesty International wrote to the Prime Minister on 23 May 2016, and to the Ministry of Defence on 3 June 2016, on the alleged use of UK-produced BL-755 cluster munitions by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. That allegation was confirmed by the Coalition in their statement on 19 December 2016.

We welcome the Saudi commitment to cease use of UK-manufactured BL-755 cluster munitions and have offered to assist with the destruction of any remaining stocks of the weapon.

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