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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

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

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

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

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Written Statements

Thursday, 8 September 2016

Cremation Regulations

[HLWS142]

Lord Keen of Elie: My honourable friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Victims, Youth and Family Justice (Dr Phillip Lee) has made the following Written Statement:

"I am today announcing that new regulations regarding cremation in England and Wales have been laid before Parliament. The Cremation (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 will come into effect on 1 October 2016.

We are making these changes following our recent response to our consultation on cremation, published on 7 July 2016, in which we committed to make a number of changes to infant cremation regulations and practice. The regulations laid today introduce a statutory definition of ashes. They also remove the current requirement that cremation authorities must keep original paper records for two years, even though they have also made electronic copies of those records. These changes will provide clarity for bereaved parents at a difficult time in their lives, and modernise processes for crematoria.

In addition I would like to announce that, as also promised in the consultation response, we have now set up a National Cremation Working Group. The group is made up of representatives from the cremation and funeral industries, voluntary organisations who support bereaved parents, medical professionals and other government departments with an interest in cremation. In the coming months it will provide expert input into our work to further improve cremation legislation and practice. The group's first priority will be amending statutory application forms regarding options for disposal of ashes, and bringing the cremation of foetuses of less than 24 weeks' gestation into the remit of the cremation regulations."

ECOFIN: 9-10 September 2016

[HLWS141]

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

An informal meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council will be held in Bratislava on 9 – 10 September 2016. The Government is committed to leaving the European Union; in the interim, it continues to participate fully in ECOFIN meetings. EU Finance Ministers are due to discuss the following items:

Future economic policies in the EU

Ministers will discuss the EU's current economic policy framework and whether further systemic reforms are

needed. This discussion will be supported by presentations from former Italian Prime Minister and Finance Minister Mario Monti and former Swedish Finance Minister Anders Borg.

Deepening Economic Monetary Union (EMU) – fiscal pillar

An orientation discussion will be held on proposals for a euro area fiscal capacity, assisted by Guntram Wolff of Bruegel, Vítor Gaspar of the IMF, and Danial Gros of the Centre for European Policy Studies.

Taxation – current issues: improving tax certainty and fighting BEPS, tax crime and terrorism

Ministers will exchange views on measures to address tax avoidance, tax evasion and tax crime and counter-terrorist financing. The discussion will be framed by a presentations from OECD Secretary General Ángel Gurría and State Secretary of the Slovak Finance Ministry Dana Meager.

Investment plan for Europe

The Council will discuss the progress of the first two pillars of the Investment Plan for Europe; the European Fund for Strategic investment (EFSI) and European Investment and Advisory Hub. EIB President Werner Hoyer and EFSI Managing Director Wilhelm Molterer will report on the first year's functioning of EFSI and the Hub.

Intelligence Services Commissioner and the Interception of Communications Commissioner: Annual Reports

[HLWS138]

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 a copy of the latest annual reports from the Intelligence Services Commissioner and the Interception of Communications Commissioner. Both reports show the rigour and strength of our intelligence oversight system, a system that will be further strengthened with the introduction of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner provisions set out in the Investigatory Powers Bill. I welcome the unprecedented level of transparency about the authorisation and oversight regimes that both reports contain.

I am pleased that both reports recognise the diligence and rigour of those who use investigatory powers. These are important powers that are used, when necessary, to keep our country safe. Both reports contain details of the recommendations that the Commissioners have made to continue to improve the way that these powers are used. The public authorities who have received these recommendations will be giving careful consideration to them and how to further improve their processes.

I would like to thank both Commissioners, and the staff that work for them, for their continued diligence and the rigour with which they undertake their oversight roles. In

particular, I would like to thank Sir Mark Waller for all of the work that he has undertaken as Intelligence Services Commissioner since this is the last full year of inspections that he will undertake.

National Flood Resilience Review

[HLWS139]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Right Hon Friend the Secretary of State (Andrea Leadsom) has today made the following statement.

My Rt Hon Friend, the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ben Gummer) and I would like to update the house on our progress with the National Flood Resilience Review

Last year the UK was hit by a number of extreme flood events, including in Cumbria, Yorkshire and Lancashire. Record rainfall and river levels have led to widespread floods severely affecting cities, communities and businesses.

The magnitude of these events means that we need to fully understand the scale of risk that the country is currently facing from river and coastal flooding. We need to take immediate steps to improve our resilience to this flooding.

As a result, the Government set up the National Flood Resilience Review, chaired by my Rt Hon Friend the then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Oliver Letwin) and overseen by a cross-government National Flood Resilience Review Group. That review is being published today, setting out the actions to improve the nation's resilience.

By using new plausible extreme rainfall scenarios developed by the Met Office in the Environment Agency's flood modelling, we are now confident that the Extreme Flood Outlines can be used as a robust planning tool for assessing flood risk.

As part of the review we completed a preliminary assessment of the resilience of key local infrastructure, such as energy, water, health, transport and telecommunications to flooding from rivers and seas. These are services our communities and businesses depend on.

The results showed around 530 facilities vulnerable to river and coastal flooding which could impact significant local communities. Working with the relevant utilities, regulators and government departments, a number of areas have been identified to improve resilience planning for this infrastructure. By Christmas 2016, the water and telecoms sectors will develop and implement plans for where temporary improvements can be made to the flood resilience of their infrastructure. These plans will ensure that the utilities obtain stock-piles of temporary defences in advance and have site-specific plans ready to deploy where they can be used. This is in line with current practice in the electricity supply industry.

In addition to these temporary defences all sectors with infrastructure at risk have agreed to develop and implement plans (where not already in place) to make medium term permanent improvements to the flood resilience of their services to significant local communities.

Whilst better understanding the risk helps us better prepare and protect infrastructure, effective response when flooding occurs is essential to minimise impact and protect lives. The review sets out actions that the Government and others will be taking to improve the response to flooding incidents by delivering a long-term rolling programme of improvements to our modelling, improving working across services and with local communities to strengthen our response, and improving our communication of flood risks.

The Government has prioritised investment in maintaining and improving flood defences in England with a record £2.3bn six-year commitment to 1,500 schemes. This is set to better protect 300,000 homes and provide £30 billion in economic benefits by 2021.

On top of that, in this year's budget, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a £700 million increase in flood defence and resilience spending, including a further £150m for new flood defence schemes in Cumbria and Yorkshire. He also signalled that part of this funding would be used to respond to this review.

The findings published today commit an investment of £12.5 million to increase the Environment Agency's stock of temporary flood defences and other incident response equipment.

The work identified in the review is continuing, including with local resilience forums. Additional funding support will be considered as further findings emerge.

Copies of the review have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Review of the Forensic Archive Ltd.

[HLWS140]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My hon Friend the Minister of State for Fire and Policing (Brandon Lewis) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am pleased to announce that I am today publishing the Review of the Forensic Archive Limited (FAL). FAL was established in October 2012 to manage and maintain material previously held by the Forensic Science Service.

The Review makes ten recommendations, most crucially that the functions of FAL should continue to be carried out and that FAL is the best organisation to do so. It also recommends that the Home Office continue to fund FAL. I agree with these recommendations.

I will place a copy of the Review in the Library of the House.

Written Answers

Thursday, 8 September 2016

Social Networking: Crime

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce criminal sanctions against social media companies and their managers in the UK who refuse to take down tweets, pages or other content supporting terrorism, hate crime or radical Islam. [HL1606]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: HMG has developed strong collaborative relationships with Communications Service Providers (CSPs) which has led to the voluntary removal of over 200,000 pieces of terrorist-related content

via referrals from the police Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) since 2010. The government continue to work with CSPs to encourage them to take more responsibility voluntarily for tackling terrorist and extremist content on their own platforms and, in certain circumstances, reporting terrorist content (for example, where there may be an imminent threat to life) to UK law enforcement when they become aware of it.

As most CSPs are international organisations based outside the UK and most online material is hosted outside the UK, national legislation has little application hence our focus on voluntary removals through companies' terms and conditions. These arrangements mean that where companies take action this removes access to the content from the whole platform world-wide, not just for users accessing it from within a particular jurisdiction.

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