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**Tuesday  
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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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<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
<b>Lord Ashton of Hyde</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Whip
<b>Lord Bates</b>	Minister of State, Department for International Development
<b>Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government, Wales Office
<b>Lord Bridges of Headley</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Exiting the European Union
<b>Baroness Buscombe</b>	Whip
<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 Gardiner of Kimble</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<b>Baroness Goldie</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Henley</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
<b>Lord Keen of Elie</b>	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
<b>Baroness Mobarik</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Nash</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
<b>Baroness Neville-Rolfe</b>	Commercial Secretary to the Treasury
<b>Lord O'Shaughnessy</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health
<b>Lord Price</b>	Minister of State, Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Prior of Brampton</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
<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 Vere of Norbiton</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Williams of Trafford</b>	Minister of State, Home Office
<b>Lord Young of Cookham</b>	Whip
<b>Viscount Younger of Leckie</b>	Whip

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# Written Statements

*Tuesday, 7 February 2017*

## Bills of Sale

[HLWS465]

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** My honourable friend The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Simon Kirby) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

In 2014, HM Treasury asked the Law Commission to review the Victorian-era Bills of Sale Acts. This legislation enables consumers and small businesses to borrow money using their goods as security, whilst allowing borrowers to retain possession of the goods. In recent years, bills of sale have been most commonly used in relation to logbook loans, which are loans that are secured on a consumer's vehicle.

The desire for a comprehensive review reflected the government's significant concerns about consumer detriment in the logbook loan market, in particular the lack of protections available to consumers who took out a logbook loan, as well as innocent third party purchasers who unknowingly buy a vehicle that is subject to a logbook loan.

In 2014, the government also fundamentally reformed the consumer credit market, by transferring regulation from the Office of Fair Trading to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). This more robust regulatory system is helping to deliver the government's vision for a well functioning and sustainable consumer credit market which is able to meet consumers' needs.

The government has ensured that the FCA has strong powers to protect consumers, including the power to levy unlimited fines and require firms to compensate consumers who have lost out, where it finds wrongdoing. The FCA assesses every firm's fitness to trade as part of the authorisation process, and it has put in place binding standards on firms. It proactively monitors the market, focusing on the areas most likely to cause consumer harm, and it has a broad enforcement toolkit to punish breaches of its rules. This has ensured that firms treat consumers fairly and consumers are better protected from sharp practice by firms.

However, the FCA cannot tackle the inadequacies of the Bills of Sale Acts, which mean that there are still significant gaps in the protection available for consumers who use logbook loans and third party purchasers.

The Law Commission's final report and recommendations to reform the Bills of Sale Acts were published in September 2016, and the government has now had the opportunity to consider the report fully.

The government is grateful to the Law Commission for a report which is exhaustive and careful in its treatment of this complex matter, and which makes detailed recommendations for reform.

The government agrees with the Law Commission's conclusion that consumers and unincorporated businesses should continue to be able to use their existing goods as security while retaining possession of them but that the Bills of Sale Acts no longer provide an appropriate legal framework and should be reformed. As well as accepting the overarching thrust of the recommendations, the government welcomes many of the detailed suggestions for reform. There are, however, some recommendations where the government's acceptance is qualified. We will want to reflect further on these points, and take discussions forward with the Law Commission, stakeholders and other government Departments.

This as an opportunity for the government to continue its work in creating a modern, fit for purpose consumer credit regime. The recommendations will improve outcomes for consumers by simplifying the information that is presented to them and providing increased protections if they get into financial difficulty. The recommendations will also remove unnecessary burdens for firms, and create new opportunities for small, unincorporated businesses to access finance.

Copies of the government's full response to the Report's recommendations will be placed in the libraries of the House once these have been fully considered and agreed with the Law Commission.

The government is keen that this work should move forward, and has agreed to support the Law Commission in drafting primary legislation to enact the necessary reforms. The government will seek to use the special Parliamentary procedure which is available for Bills that implement uncontroversial Law Commission recommendations, subject to agreement with the Usual Channels, and to bring forward the legislation when Parliamentary time allows.

The Law Commission's final report is available at: [http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/lc369\\_bills\\_of\\_sale.pdf](http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/lc369_bills_of_sale.pdf)

## Fire Reform

[HLWS466]

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

I want to update the House on progress made since the Prime Minister, as then Home Secretary, set out plans last May to reform the fire and rescue service in England to become more accountable, efficient and professional than ever before.

Services are already transforming and seizing opportunities for collaboration, for example, delivering a single suite of national operational guidance, creating a single, cross service research and development function and developing a cross service new commercial strategy. The service has also recently formed the National Fire Chiefs' Council which will transform the operational voice of fire and rescue services.

Our reform agenda is based around three distinct pillars: efficiency and collaboration, accountability and transparency, and workforce reform.

The Government has legislated through the Policing and Crime Act 2017 to transform local fire and rescue governance, enabling police and crime commissioners to become the fire and rescue authority where a strong local case is made. The Act also creates a statutory duty to collaborate. Better joint working can strengthen our emergency services, deliver significant savings to the taxpayer and – most importantly – enable them to better protect the public. This new duty requires emergency services to keep collaboration opportunities under review and to take on collaboration opportunities where it would be in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness to do so. It will come into force in April.

While fire and rescue authorities have achieved significant savings to date, I believe they can go further. Last year I undertook a basket of goods exercise to ascertain the prices each fire and rescue authority pays for a basket of twenty-five common items. The exercise illustrated that procurement practices need to be improved and so the Home Office has supported the sector develop a new commercial approach to aggregate and standardise procurement. This exercise will be repeated in the Autumn to ensure progress is being made and a separate exercise will be undertaken this spring on different, high spend items.

I will create an independent inspectorate and am considering options. I want this inspectorate to be rigorous in application and forensic in process, to deliver rounded and comprehensive inspections to assess the operational effectiveness and efficiency of each service. This independent scrutiny will ensure that fire authorities are held to the highest possible standards. I will update the House in due course as this body is formed.

Transparency of fire and rescue services increased last year by the publication of new procurement and

workforce diversity data and will be strengthened further by the creation of a new website that will hold a range of information, in one place, about services. This will include information such as chief officer pay, expenditure and workforce composition and further information is planned.

I will create a professional standards body to further professionalise the service. The Home Office is working with the sector to develop options for this body which I hope will form later this year. I propose this body to set standards on a range of issues such as leadership, workforce development, equality and diversity and codifying effective practice.

Finally, I published the independent review into firefighter terms and conditions by Adrian Thomas in November. The review's recommendations, if implemented, will secure the future of the service for years to come by creating a diverse working environment free from bullying and harassment, with strong leadership and more flexible working conditions. I am encouraged that the Local Government Association, in partnership with the sector, recognise the need to take swift action in response to this report and deliver vital reforms to the workforce. I expect the recommendations of the review to be followed, particularly in relation to reforming the National Joint Council and the Grey Book, and I will be closely monitoring progress.

I also expect services to step up and find solutions to the current lack of diversity so clearly highlighted in the workforce statistics we published last year, with just 4% of firefighters from an ethnic minority background and just 5% female.

Delivering this ambitious reform agenda does not simply rest with me, or with the Government. Ultimately, the sector itself must shape and deliver these changes. It is for their benefit and the benefit of the communities they serve, and I look forward to seeing the results.

# Written Answers

Tuesday, 7 February 2017

## A130

*Asked by Lord Marlesford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the purposes and plans for the coned off carriageway of the A130 trunk road between the A12 and the A13. [HL5049]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The A130 is a local road and its management is the responsibility of the local highways authority – in this instance Essex County Council. I understand that the section you are referring to has been coned off after issues were discovered during routine inspections. The additional lanes have been completed but remain coned off after a routine inspection highlighted issues with crash barriers along the route.

Further investigation work over recent months has revealed a need to reconstruct the ground alongside the carriageway as a preventative measure to protect against the risk of slippage in the long-term.

I understand work to resolve these issues is due to begin in March.

## Asylum: Children

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children under 12 years of age have been accepted into foster care in the UK in the past 12 months. [HL4996]

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children between 12 and 18 years of age have been accepted into foster care in the UK in the past 12 months. [HL4997]

**Lord Nash:** In the year ending 31 March 2016, there were 50 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children under 12 years of age who were looked after in a foster placement in England and 1,560 between the ages of 12 to 18 years.

The Department for Education only holds the information for England. The devolved administrations hold the information for the other constituent countries.

## Asylum: Children in Care

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children went missing from local authority care in England in (1) 2014, (2) 2015, and (3) 2016. [HL4992]

**Lord Nash:** National statistics on numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) who were looked after at 31 March are available in Table A3 of the attached document. Experimental official statistics on looked after children who went missing during the year are available in Table G1 of the same document.

During the whole year ending 31 March 2015, 190 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were identified as having had a missing incident.

During the year ending 31 March 2016, 640 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were identified as having had a missing incident. Due to improvements in quality and completeness of the experimental statistics, figures for 2015 and 2016 are not comparable.

These experimental official statistics were collected for the first time in the year ending 31 March 2015 and so figures are not available for 2014.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Looked after children in England including adoption [HL4992 Attachment.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-25/HL4992>

## Asylum: Housing

*Asked by Lord Beecham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to monitor the performance of contractors providing accommodation for asylum seekers. [HL5122]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Asylum seeker accommodation is provided through a suite of private providers. The performance of these providers is monitored via the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) regime, details of which are set out in their contracts and cover the provision of the whole service. These are monitored formally, on a monthly basis, at Contract Management meetings between the providers and representatives of UK Visas and Immigration.

## Belfast Agreement

*Asked by Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the Supreme Court ruling in the case of *R (on the application of Miller and another) v Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union* and of the pending elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly, what discussions they have had with the government of Ireland regarding their roles as co-guarantors under the Good Friday Agreement. [HL4952]

**Lord Dunlop:** The Government remains fully and firmly committed to preserving and maintaining the Belfast Agreement, its successors and the institutions. The Government keeps in regular contact with the Irish Government on a range of issues in accordance with the

well-established three stranded approach. Most recently, the Prime Minister met the Taoiseach on 30 January in Dublin.

### **Brexit: Northern Ireland**

*Asked by Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the Supreme Court ruling in the case of *R (on the application of Miller and another) v Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union*, what steps they are taking to ensure that the views of all communities in Northern Ireland are taken into consideration when Article 50 is triggered. [HL4951]

**Lord Dunlop:** The Government will ensure that all views can be reflected in our analysis of the options for the UK's withdrawal from the European Union and we are going to listen and talk to as many organisations, companies and institutions as possible to do this.

We have set up a new Joint Ministerial Committee on EU Negotiations, which brings together constituent parts of the United Kingdom to discuss issues stemming from the negotiation process which may impact upon or have consequences for the UK Government, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government or the Northern Ireland Executive. The Committee met for the third time on 19 January.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has regular meetings with the political parties in Northern Ireland to discuss the implications of the decision to exit the European Union. In addition, he established a Business Advisory Group in September to ensure that the views of the business community are reflected in the process of exiting the European Union. The Secretary of State has also had positive engagement with representatives of the voluntary and community sector.

All these views are being taken into consideration in the process leading up to the triggering of Article 50 and the preparations for the UK's exit from the European Union.

### **Care Homes: Oxfordshire**

*Asked by Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the capacity available in care homes in Oxfordshire for patients who are ready to leave hospital. [HL4908]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** The Care Quality Commission (CQC) collects data on numbers of places in care and nursing homes in England as part of its regulatory work.

We are informed by the CQC that there are 5,138 residential and nursing home places in Oxfordshire at present. The CQC does not collect occupancy data, so information on the number of places that are vacant is not available.

### **Colorectal Cancer: Screening**

*Asked by Baroness Redfern*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reduce the age at which bowel cancer screening takes place from 60 to 50. [HL5007]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme offers bowel cancer screening every two years to men and women aged 60 to 74, using a self-sampling kit, the Faecal Occult Blood (FOB) test. Anyone over the age of 74 can self refer themselves into the screening programme every two years.

The programme initially offered screening to men and women aged 60 to 69 years old because the risk of bowel cancer increases with age, with over 80% of bowel cancers being diagnosed in people who are aged 60 or over. In the bowel cancer screening pilot, conducted in Coventry and Warwickshire and in Scotland in the late 1990s and early 2000s, over three times more cancers were detected in people aged over 60 than under 60, and people in their 60s were most likely to use a testing kit. In addition, there was not enough endoscopy resource to begin at a wider age range. Men and women aged over 70 have always been able to self-refer for screening every two years if they wish. The programme has now been extended to men and women aged up to 74.

In November 2015, the UK National Screening Committee which advises Ministers and the National Health Service in all four countries about all aspects of screening policy, recommended that the Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) should replace the currently used FOB test in the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme. Bowel cancer screening using the FIT self-sampling kit will be offered to men and women aged 60 to 74 every two years. Anyone over the age of 74 will still be able to self refer into the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme every two years. FIT is expected to increase screening uptake by around 10% and result in around 200,000 more people a year being tested, potentially saving hundreds of lives. FIT will be implemented from April 2018.

In addition to FOB testing the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme is currently rolling out Bowel Scope Screening (BSS), a one off examination which will play a significant role in preventing bowel cancer. Both men and women will be invited for BSS around the time of their 55th birthday. If people are not screened at 55, they can request BSS up to the age of 59. BSS finds and removes any small bowel growths (polyps) that could eventually turn into cancer.

We believe the biggest impact we can have on saving lives from bowel cancer in England is implementing FIT in 2018 and roll-out of BSS to all men and women aged 55.



## Drugs: Misuse

*Asked by Lord Ramsbotham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why publication of the new drugs strategy, which was expected to be in March 2016, has been delayed. [HL5135]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We are currently developing the new Drug Strategy, working across government and with key partners. The new strategy will be published soon.

## Electronic Warfare

*Asked by Lord Moonie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many cyber attacks on (1) each of the Armed Forces', and (2) the Ministry of Defence, IT networks have been detected over the past year. [HL5149]

**Earl Howe:** I am withholding the information as its disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

## Family Proceedings

*Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will seek the UK's continued participation in Brussels II Revised and the Maintenance Regulation which give certainty of jurisdiction, ease of enforcement, co-operation between authorities, and protective measures pending resolution of family disputes, following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. [HL4912]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) has responsibility for overseeing negotiations to leave the EU and establishing the future relationship between the UK and the EU.

The Ministry of Justice, which has responsibility for both the Brussels II Revised and the Maintenance Regulations, has been working closely with DExEU to consider options for the future relationship between the UK and the EU.

The Government recognises the importance of the issues covered by these Regulations. We will work to ensure the best outcome for the UK.

## Matrimonial Proceedings

*Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will seek the UK's continued participation in the scheme set out in EC Council Regulation 2201/2003 concerning jurisdiction and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and the matter of parental responsibility (Brussels II Revised) following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. [HL4911]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) has responsibility for overseeing negotiations to leave the EU and establishing the future relationship between the UK and the EU.

The Ministry of Justice, which has responsibility for Regulation 2201/2003 has been working closely with DExEU to consider options for the future relationship between the UK and the EU.

The Government recognises the importance of the issues covered by this Regulation. We will work to ensure the best outcome for the UK.

## Mental Illness: Children

*Asked by Lord Ouseley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of figures recently released by NHS Digital, what action they are taking in response to the rising number of children being admitted to hospital suffering from anxiety. [HL4949]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** Children and young people's mental health is a priority area for this Government. We are committed to delivering the vision set out in the *Future in Mind* report, published in March 2015, which established a clear and powerful consensus about change across the whole system, including health, justice, social care and education.

This Government will drive forward the transformation of children and young people's mental health services to improve access and make services more widely available across the country so that where possible children can access support locally. In total the Government has made available an additional £1.4 billion over the course of this Parliament to support significant transformation in children and young people's mental health so that there is easy access to the right support from the right service when it is needed. This includes implementing clear evidence based pathways for community-based care to avoid unnecessary admissions to inpatient care.

## Offences against Children

*Asked by Lord Paddick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to bring section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 into force. [HL5034]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The Government is committed to commencing section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and will do so as soon as possible.

## Probation

*Asked by Lord German*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the response by Baroness Buscombe on 24 January (HL Deb, col 429) concerning the review of the probation system, what the membership and terms of reference of that review will be. [HL4971]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The Ministry of Justice is conducting an internal review of the probation system. The review is considering all aspects of the probation system and we are engaging with both Community Rehabilitation Companies and the National Probation Service. As with our plans for prisons, we want a simpler, clearer system with specific outcome measures such as getting offenders into apprenticeships and work. We will set out our plans for the probation system once the review is concluded in April.

*Asked by Lord German*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the response by Baroness Buscombe on 24 January (HL Deb, col 429) concerning the review of the probation system, whether the review will include services provided before prisoner release by community rehabilitation companies. [HL4972]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** We are currently conducting a comprehensive review of the probation system. This is examining all aspects of the probation system, including resettlement services delivered by probation services in prisons to support offenders on release from custody. We will set out our plans after our review is concluded in April.

## Republic of Ireland

*Asked by Lord Kilclooney*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Republic of Ireland has established a Human Rights Commission with a mandate and remit equivalent to that within Northern Ireland as provided for by paragraph 9 of the chapter on rights, safeguards and equality of opportunity in the Belfast Agreement 1998. [HL4986]

*Asked by Lord Kilclooney*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Republic of Ireland has ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention on National Minorities as provided for by paragraph 9 of the chapter on rights, safeguards and equality of opportunity in the Belfast Agreement 1998. [HL4987]

*Asked by Lord Kilclooney*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Republic of Ireland has implemented enhanced employment equality legislation as provided for by paragraph 9 of the chapter on rights, safeguards and equality of opportunity in the Belfast Agreement 1998. [HL4988]

*Asked by Lord Kilclooney*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Republic of Ireland has introduced equal status legislation since 10 April 1998 as provided for by paragraph 9 of the chapter on rights, safeguards and

equality of opportunity in the Belfast Agreement 1998. [HL4989]

*Asked by Lord Kilclooney*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further active steps have been taken by the Republic of Ireland to demonstrate its respect for the different traditions in the island of Ireland since 10 April 1998, as provided for by paragraph 9 of the chapter on rights, safeguards and equality of opportunity in the Belfast Agreement 1998. [HL4990]

**Lord Dunlop:** These questions are a matter for the Irish Government.

However, it is my understanding that: the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, like the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, is a UN 'A status' accredited National Human Rights Institution, structured and operated in accordance with the Paris Principles; that the Republic of Ireland ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention on National Minorities in 1999; that the Republic of Ireland gave further effect to provisions of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in domestic legislation through the European Convention of Human Rights Act 2003, and that since 1998 a number of pieces of legislation have been introduced in the Republic of Ireland including the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004.

The UK Government remains committed to reforming our domestic human rights framework. We will consider further the Bill of Rights once we know the arrangements for our EU exit and consult fully on our proposals in the full knowledge of the new constitutional landscape that will create. The UK has a proud tradition of respect for human rights which long pre-dates the Human Rights Act 1998.

## Schools

*Asked by Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to ensure that schools are places where children feel free and safe to learn and grow; and how they intend to ensure that schools are not subject to overt or indirect pressure to play an active role in the operation and policing of immigration policies. [HL4566]

**Lord Nash:** All schools are bound by requirements of the Equalities Act 2010. The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:

- in relation to admissions,
- in the way it provides education for pupils,
- in the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service, or
- by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.



Further information on schools' responsibilities under the Equalities Act is attached.

The school an individual child attends will hold information about that child which will be used by the school to help ensure the child receives the best possible education. Every term the school is required, by law, to send some of this data to the Department for Education (DfE) via the school census. This process has been in place for more than 10 years and the information is used to provide a clear picture of how the school system is working, at local and national level. It helps us to make sure we are allocating funds where they are needed and that no groups of children are missing out on the education they deserve.

This year we also asked schools for additional information on pupil nationality and country of birth as well as data on proficiency in English. The return of nationality and country of birth data is completely optional and parents are under no obligation to provide it if they don't want to. These new data items on nationality, country of birth, and English proficiency will not be passed to the Home Office, or anyone else. They are solely for the Department for Education to use for research.

Separately, where the police or Home Office have clear evidence that a child may be at risk or there is evidence of criminal activity, including illegal immigration, limited data including a pupil's address and school details may be requested from the Department for Education. It is right that we share this data if it helps to keep a child safe from harm or to prevent a crime. This does not include nationality and country of birth information recently introduced into school census. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the DfE and the Home Office, which is available in the house library, sets out how this process works and the data which is shared.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

[Advice\\_on\\_the\\_Equality\\_Act \[Advice\\_on\\_the\\_Equality\\_Act.pdf\]](#)

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-11/HL4566>

### **Southern: Strikes**

*Asked by **Baroness Randerson***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what funding they have provided to support local authorities asked by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 22 December 2016 to take action to support contingency plans to minimise disruption as a result of strikes on Southern Rail. [[HL5045](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** On 22 December, Department for Communities and Local Government Officials wrote to Local Authority Chief Executives in London, Surrey, Sussex, Kent and Hampshire and Local Resilience Forum Chairs in London, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, to request support

for contingency plans aimed at minimising disruption for passengers as a result of the industrial action affecting Southern rail train services, in particular the ASLEF strike planned for the week commencing 9<sup>th</sup> January.

The Government has not provided additional funding to local authorities specific to the request from the Department for Communities and Local Government for support to minimise disruption as a result of strikes on Southern Rail and were not asked for funding.

### **Sudan: Humanitarian Aid**

*Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of progress towards full humanitarian access to the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states following the meeting between of the UK Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan and the Sudanese Foreign Minister on 24 January. [[HL5067](#)]

**Lord Bates:** Following the meeting between the UK Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan and the Sudanese Foreign Minister, Ibrahim Ghandour, the Minister has reconfirmed the government of Sudan's commitment to improving humanitarian access to the two areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan. We continue to encourage the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) to agree to proposals to guarantee direct medical support to the areas under their control as a way to unblock a broader agreement on longer term access.

### **Surrogate Motherhood**

*Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they intend to respond to the ruling of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights in the case *Paradiso and Campanelli v. Italy*; and what assessment they have made of the implications of the case for surrogacy and family law. [[HL4981](#)]

**Lord O'Shaughnessy:** The Government is not planning to make any response to the judgment, concerning Italian domestic law, by the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights. No assessment has been made of the implications of the case for United Kingdom surrogacy and family law.

### **Tax Evasion**

*Asked by **Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will seek continued participation in EU-wide co-operation on exchanging information and tackling tax evasion following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, particularly in relation to the Mutual Assistance Directive 2010/24/EU which enables cross-EU border enforcement of tax debts. [[HL4910](#)]

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** The Mutual Assistance Recovery Directive (MARD), which dates back to 1976, provides for Member States to assist each other in recovering tax debts. The Council of Europe-OECD Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters also provides for reciprocal assistance in tax collection between signatories of the agreement, as do some of the UK's bilateral tax treaties.

There may be specific European programmes, some of which may be partly but not wholly EU, in which we may still want to participate. The Government is still formulating its position and this will then be a matter for the EU exit negotiations.

### Timber: Imports

*Asked by Lord Clark of Windermere*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much timber with bark for firewood has been imported into the UK in each of the last five years. [HL4933]

*Asked by Lord Clark of Windermere*

To ask Her Majesty's Government from which countries timber with bark for firewood has been imported into the UK in the last five years. [HL4934]

*Asked by Lord Clark of Windermere*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the eco-system of importing timber with bark to the UK. [HL4935]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs collect and publish National Statistics for the United Kingdom on the level of imports of woodfuel under commodity code 44011000: 'fuel wood in logs, billets, twigs, faggots or similar forms'. No record is made to differentiate the presence or absence of bark on imports of woodfuel.

Figures for 2011-15, the latest figures for which complete data is available, are shown the Table attached.

We recognise that wood can be a pathway for the introduction and movement of harmful plant pests. That is why a new Statutory Notification Scheme for importing solid woodfuel (firewood) came into force on 1 January 2017. This requires importers bringing firewood into England and Scotland from outside the UK to provide the Forestry Commission with at least three days' prior notification of its arrival if it is coming by sea, road or rail, and four hours' notice if arriving by air. The Welsh Assembly Government is expected to introduce a similar regulation.

The scheme will enable the Forestry Commission to gather information about the firewood importing trade, and to carry out risk-based and random inspections of a selection of imports. This will help to ensure that the firewood or its associated wooden packaging meets British plant health landing requirements.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

TABLE OF IMPORTS 2011-2015 [HL4933 HL4934 HL4935 - firewood imports with bark - Table.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-24/HL4933>

### Unmanned Air Vehicles

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many reports of drone related incidents involving aircraft were made last year; and what was the location of each of those incidents. [HL5043]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The independent UK Airprox Board (UKAB) is responsible for assessing reported airprox in the interests of enhancing air safety. Reports of all airprox events are published on the UKAB website <https://www.airproxboard.org.uk/>.

In 2016 there were 70 reported airprox incidents involving drones, the locations of which are summarised below and further details are included in the attached table.

Location	Number of reported airprox incidents involving drones
London Heathrow	25
London Gatwick	4
Manchester Airport	3
London City	2
London Stansted	2
Morton-in-Marsh	2
Odiham	2
Other	30
Total	70

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL5043 - Table with further information [HL5043 - List of reported airprox incidents involving drones in 2016.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-26/HL5043>

*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with airport operators and airlines about measures to reduce the risks to aircraft from the use of drones. [HL5044]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government engages regularly with airport operators and airlines to discuss a range of safety and security issues, including the threat posed by drones. For instance, in November 2016 the Airport Operators Association chaired a meeting between its members and Government on the risks related to drones.

**Written Questions: Government Responses**

*Asked by Lord Bradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to answer Lord Bradley's Question for Written Answer HL3278 tabled on 16 November 2016. [[HL4960](#)]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** I regret the delay in answering the Noble Lord's Question for Written Answer HL3278. An answer was given on Monday 30 January 2017.

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