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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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<b>Baroness Smith of Basildon</b>	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
<b>Lord Collins of Highbury</b>	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Whip
<b>Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on Trent</b>	Spokesperson for NI Office, Scotland Office and Wales Office, Whip
<b>Baroness Blake of Leeds</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Chapman of Darlington</b>	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>Lord Coaker</b>	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
<b>Baroness Gustafsson</b>	Minister of State, Department for Business and Trade and HM Treasury
<b>Lord Hanson of Flint</b>	Minister of State, Home Office
<b>Baroness Hayman of Ullock</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<b>Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill</b>	Minister of State, Department for Transport
<b>Lord Hermer</b>	Attorney-General
<b>Lord Hunt of Kings Heath</b>	Minister of State, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
<b>Baroness Jones of Whitchurch</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Business and Trade and Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and Whip
<b>Lord Kennedy of Southwark</b>	Chief Whip
<b>Lord Khan of Burnley</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
<b>Lord Leong</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Livermore</b>	Financial Secretary, HM Treasury
<b>Baroness Merron</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
<b>Lord Moraes</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice, Whip
<b>Baroness Sherlock</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
<b>Baroness Smith of Cluny</b>	Advocate-General for Scotland
<b>Baroness Smith of Malvern</b>	Minister of State, Department for Education
<b>Baroness Taylor of Stevenage</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Whip
<b>Lord Timpson</b>	Minister of State, Ministry of Justice
<b>Baroness Twycross</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture Media and Sport, Spokesperson, Cabinet Office, Whip
<b>Lord Vallance of Balham</b>	Minister of State, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
<b>Baroness Wheeler</b>	Deputy Chief Whip
<b>Lord Wilson of Sedgefield</b>	Whip

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# Written Statements

Wednesday, 19 March 2025

## Support for Victims and Survivors of Terrorism

[HLWS530]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** My hon Friend the Minister of State for Security (Dan Jarvis) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The impact of terrorism on individuals and their families is long lasting and evolving. In a single moment, their worlds are turned upside down and lives are changed forever. We hold in our thoughts everyone tragically lost, bereaved, and injured, physically and mentally, by terrorist attacks, both at home and abroad.

It is essential that each and every one of these individuals receive timely and compassionate support to help them recover from the impacts of an attack.

The Home Office has carried out a comprehensive review of the support needs of victims and survivors of terrorism, to identify ways to better address the needs of victims and survivors. The Government pays tribute and gives thanks to each and every victim and survivor who contributed to the review and to those who continue to raise awareness of the lived experiences of victims and survivors, and to campaign for better support.

Today we have published the review's findings, which fundamentally signal that more needs to be done to better support victims and survivors of terrorism.

The review identified that victims and survivors need consistent and co-ordinated support, with streamlined communications to enable clarity on what support they are eligible for, how to apply, and where to receive help in applying. The review also found that acknowledgement of victims' and survivors' lived experiences is crucial to their individual recoveries.

Today the Government has affirmed this commitment by announcing plans to implement a dedicated support hub to deliver timely and compassionate support to victims and survivors nationally. The Government has also launched a consultation on a 'National Day for Victims and Survivors of Terrorism' to better recognise those impacted by terrorist attacks.

### *Next Steps*

Today we have announced that we will deliver a dedicated support hub for victims and survivors of terrorism. The support hub will better support victims by streamlining communications through a single point of contact and will provide specialist support addressing their diverse needs in the immediate and long-term aftermath of an attack. We are aiming for the support hub to be available to victims and survivors from next year.

There is currently no single focal point to allow the nation to come together in reflection and remembrance of those sadly lost and impacted by terrorism. It is only right that we consider the ways the Government could appropriately acknowledge their experiences.

In recognition of this, today the Government has also launched a public consultation on a National Day for Victims and Survivors of Terrorism. The consultation seeks specific feedback on the proposal for a National Day, together with exploring other forms of recognition for victims and survivors. It also seeks respondents' input on key aspects of a National Day, including their views on a potential name, date, the ways it could be commemorated, and any consequences that may arise. We welcome responses from those impacted by terrorism including, victims, survivors, their loved ones and those that support them.

The consultation has launched today for a period of 12 weeks. It is available on GOV.UK and is open to members of the public.

We understand the outcomes of the review have been long-awaited. It is important to this Government that we are transparent about the unique challenges victims and survivors experience. Today we have also published a summary of the review and its key recommendations. The review summary is available on the GOV.UK website and accessible to all members of the public.

These reforms are an important first step towards better support and recognition for victims and survivors of terrorism. I personally pay tribute to their courage and resilience, and I pledge my commitment to ensuring they receive the support they deserve.

A copy of the consultation (and related Privacy Information Notice) and the review summary will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

# Written Answers

Wednesday, 19 March 2025

## Affordable Housing: First Time Buyers

Asked by **Lord Reid of Cardowan**

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to improve the affordability of homes on new housing developments for first-time buyers. [HL5473]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The affordability challenges facing prospective first-time buyers mean that too many people are now locked out of homeownership. This Government is determined to change that, ensuring that young families and hardworking renters can buy a home of their own.

The most sustainable long-term method to improve housing affordability and help people into homeownership is to increase the supply of housing. That is why the government committed to deliver 1.5m homes over the Parliament in the Plan for Change.

In addition to increasing the supply of homes of all tenures, we are committed to introducing a permanent, comprehensive mortgage guarantee scheme meaning first-time buyers will be able to take their crucial first step on to the property ladder.

## Armed Forces: Conditions of Employment

Asked by **Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton**

To ask His Majesty's Government what conditions (1) regular members of the British Army, (2) members of the Army Reserve, (3) members of the Regular Reserve, (4) members of the recall reserve, and (5) civilians employed by the Ministry of Defence are subject to under service law; and what conditions immediate family members of each of these groups are subject to under service law. [HL5556]

**Lord Coaker:** The Armed Forces Act 2006 (AFA 06) sets out the conditions under which different categories of individuals are subject to service law. Section 367 of the Act sets out the conditions for (1) Regular members, (2) members of the Army Reserve and (3) members of the Regular Reserve as follows:

(1) Every member of the regular forces is subject to service law at all times.

(2) Every member of the reserve forces is subject to service law while—

(a) in permanent service on call-out under any provision of the Reserve Forces Act 1980 (c. 9) or the Reserve Forces Act 1996 (c. 14) or under any other call-out obligation of an officer;

(b) in home defence service on call-out under section 22 of the Reserve Forces Act 1980;

(c) in full-time service under a commitment entered into under section 24 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996;

(d) undertaking any training or duty (whether or not in pursuance of an obligation); or

(e) serving on the permanent staff of a reserve force.

Individuals liable to recall (4) are not members of a reserve force under the Act and would only be subject to service law if they were recalled.

Civilians employed by the Ministry of Defence and immediate family members (if they are civilians) (5) would not be subject to service law under the AFA 06. In certain circumstances they could be subject to service discipline under Section 370 of AFA 06 and these circumstances are set out in Schedule 15 of the Act, such as when they are on an HM aircraft in flight or on a HM ship afloat or they are living or staying with someone who is subject to service law outside the UK.

## Armed Forces: Stonewall

Asked by **Lord Jackson of Peterborough**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Collins of Highbury on 25 February (HL5027), whether any of the Army, the Royal Navy, or the Royal Airforce are paid members or affiliates of Stonewall. [HL5551]

**Lord Coaker:** I can confirm that neither the Royal Navy, the Army, nor the Royal Air Force are paid members or affiliates of Stonewall.

## Artificial Intelligence

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they are taking steps to encourage firms to develop and incorporate AI technologies into their daily procedures. [HL5532]

**Lord Vallance of Balham:** The adoption of trustworthy AI across the UK public and private sectors will drive productivity and growth across the whole economy. To capture the full potential of AI in the private sector, we are targeting high-growth Industrial Strategy sectors and appointing AI Sector Champions in key industries to support diffusion across the whole economy. The cross-government Technology Adoption Review announced at the Autumn Budget will set out additional recommendations in Spring 2025 as to how government should work with industry to support businesses to adopt and innovate with AI.

## Azerbaijan: Hostage Taking

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Winchester**

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Azerbaijan regarding the ongoing detention and reported mistreatment of 23 Armenian hostages who were taken from Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023; and what steps they are taking, in coordination with international partners, to ensure Azerbaijan

upholds its commitments under international law. [[HL5222](#)]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** The UK urges the Azerbaijani authorities to ensure that those detained during September 2023's military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh, are afforded a fair trial and provided safe conditions, in accordance with Azerbaijan's international obligations and commitments. Our Embassy in Baku pays close attention to the cases and have sought regular updates to stay informed about progress. We have also been consistent in calling for the release of all remaining prisoners of war. The Minister of State Stephen Doughty raised these issues with Azerbaijan's Presidential Advisor, Elchin Amirbayov, during his visit to the UK in October. In a meeting with Azerbaijan's Principal Presidential Advisor, Hikmet Hajiyev, on 10 March, the Minister of State also urged Azerbaijan to seize the opportunity to sign an historic peace deal with Armenia. The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have also conveyed these messages.

### Care Workers: Recruitment

*Asked by Lord Kamall*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of increasing the certificate of sponsorship fee from £239 to £525 per individual on the ability of care providers to recruit care workers. [[HL5511](#)]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The need for an Impact Assessment will be kept under review. A provisional estimate of the impact of increasing sponsorship fees is a less than 0.2% increase in the cost of hiring an average skilled worker.

### Cereals: Imports

*Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the levels of non-assured grain being imported and undercutting the price of home-grown grain. [[HL5546](#)]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** UK Farm Assurance schemes are industry led and managed, therefore government has made no assessment on the level of assured grain in the UK supply chain.

British farmers are world-leaders and know their own land best - carefully planning their planting to suit the weather, their soil type, and their long-term agronomic strategy. In 2023, domestically produced wheat accounted for 83% of the wheat used in the milling grist.

Due to environmental and climate conditions the UK milling industry require a certain level of imports of high protein milling wheat year on year to meet consumer demand. Cereals are internationally traded commodities. Subsequently, their supply chains are dynamic and responsive to global market developments in price and availability. This is a good example of food security, built

as it is on supply from diverse sources, strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes. The import part of this supplements domestic production and ensures that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply. Due to environmental and climate conditions the UK milling industry require a certain level of imports of high protein milling wheat year on year to meet consumer demand.

### China: Electric Vehicles

*Asked by Lord Robathan*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether there are any restrictions on the movement of Chinese-manufactured electric vehicles onto Ministry of Defence barracks or training areas. [[HL5566](#)]

**Lord Coaker:** The Ministry of Defence takes the security of defence assets very seriously, and is working with other Government Departments to understand and mitigate any potential threats to national security from vehicles. Our policies and procedures take account of the potential threats from all types of vehicle, not just those manufactured in China, and we have issued appropriate internal direction to all drivers and passengers.

There are no centrally mandated policy restrictions on the movement of Chinese manufactured vehicles. We are aware that individual defence organisations may have stricter requirements relating to electric vehicles on some sites, but we do not provide specific details for security reasons.

### Civil Service: Equality

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent on 25 February, why the publication of the Civil Service diversity spending dataset is delayed, following the commitment made to publish the dataset in the Written Statement by Baroness Neville-Rolfe on 14 May 2024 (HLWS462). [[HL5507](#)]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** The data from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Expenditure Review will be published in due course.

### Construction: Greater London

*Asked by Lord Inglewood*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the percentage annual increase in construction costs in central London in each of the last ten years. [[HL5504](#)]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** The Government does not collect data on annual increases in construction costs at local level. At national level, ONS data shows that the overall cost of construction, which takes into account materials, labour and overheads, has increased by 24%



between December 2019 and December 2024. In addition, data published by DBT show that the cost of construction materials has increased by 37.1% between January 2020 and January 2025. Construction wage rates correspond to activity in the sector. ONS statistics show that the annual growth for regular pay in the construction sector was 6.6% in the year to December 2024.

### Credit Unions

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Wirral*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effects of the regulatory policies of the Financial Conduct Authority and the Financial Ombudsman Service on the viability of the credit union sector. [HL5548]

**Lord Livermore:** The Government has made clear its strong support for the credit union sector, recognising the value that credit unions bring to their members in local communities across the country in providing products and affordable credit. We have also committed to doubling the mutuals and cooperatives sector.

The Chancellor announced new measures to support growth of the credit union and mutual sector in her first Mansion House speech on 14 November. This included asking the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) to produce a report on the mutuals landscape by the end of 2025. This report will aid understanding of the current landscape of the sector and how to best support the sector's specific needs.

The Treasury is responsible for setting the overall legal framework for financial services regulation. The FCA is responsible for regulating and supervising the financial services industry and the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) investigates individual complaints against firms. The FOS does not have a role in setting regulatory policy. The FCA and FOS are independent non-governmental bodies and the independence of both is vital to their roles.

### Dance and Drama: Scholarships

*Asked by Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury*

To ask His Majesty's Government when the Department of Education's tendering process will take place for the Dance and Drama Awards scheme for academic year 2026–27 onwards, and whether they anticipate any delays to their usual timeframe. [HL5490]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** The department hopes to soon announce the tendering arrangements for the Dance and Drama Awards scheme for 2026/27 academic year onwards. Funding for the 2026/27 academic year onwards is subject to the forthcoming spending review.

### Dangerous Dogs

*Asked by Lord McInnes of Kilwinning*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many XL Bully dogs without an exemption certificate have been seized since September 2024. [HL5611]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Defra does not hold information on the number of XL bullies that have been seized by police forces in England and Wales. This information will be held by individual police forces.

### Defence: Finance

*Asked by Lord Tyrie*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Prime Minister at the Downing Street news conference on 25 February, how they calculated that 0.2 per cent of GDP equates to £13.4 billion. [HL5336]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** In 2027/28 we will be spending £13.4 billion more on defence than we do today. Our cash spend in 24/25 is £66.3 billion and our cash spend in 27/28 will be £79.7 billion.

### Defence: Software

*Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the value of the Defence Gateway in enabling communication with and the work of the active and strategic reserve. [HL5512]

*Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend or replace the contract for the Defence Gateway. [HL5513]

**Lord Coaker:** The Defence Gateway remains a valued digital portal which enables effective communication, information sharing, and system access to users across the Defence community. Work to address its contracting is underway, due to commercial sensitivities I am unable to disclose further detail at this time.

### Energy Performance Certificates

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether secondary glazing and infrared heaters are included in energy performance certificate (EPC) assessments; and if not (1) why, and (2) what consideration they have given to including secondary glazing and infrared heaters in EPC assessments in future. [HL5697]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The Energy Performance of existing homes is assessed through the model known as the RdSAP, which enables EPC assessors to record instances of secondary glazing so this can contribute towards a higher EPC score for the dwelling. Infrared heaters are currently treated as a standard direct electric heater under this methodology. Although infrared heating is not modelled as its own category, the Government acknowledges its potential to offer efficiency benefits over other direct electric heating appliances. The 'Appendix Q' process enables the recognition of additional technologies such as infrared

heating and manufacturers or industry groups can pursue that route for recognition in RdSAP subject to the completion of appropriate testing.

### Financial Services: Equality

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Economic Secretary to the Treasury on 20 February (HC23473), whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer will use her powers under section IJA of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 to recommend to the Financial Conduct Authority that it drop the proposal to impose a new regulatory requirement on diversity and inclusion on the financial sector. [HL5552]

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by the Economic Secretary to the Treasury on 20 February (HC23473) and Lord Livermore on 6 November 2024 (HL1948), whether they will ask the Chief Executive of the Financial Conduct Authority to provide an update to the House on status of the FCA's December 2023 consultation on equality, diversity and inclusion requirements on financial services companies. [HL5553]

**Lord Livermore:** The Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority announced on 12 March that they have no plans to take forward their proposed rules on diversity and inclusion in regulated firms.

### Gambling: Taxation

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress has been made on their plan to consult on proposals to bring remote gambling into a single tax, as outlined in the 2024 Autumn Budget. [HL5687]

**Lord Livermore:** The Government is committed to modernising and simplifying the tax system and will publish the consultation on proposals to bring remote gambling into a single tax in due course.

### Gender: Children

*Asked by Baroness Fox of Buckley*

To ask His Majesty's Government, with reference to the longitudinal outcomes of gender identity in children study, what were the final results of the secondary data base analysis, and what are the preliminary findings from the prospective cohort study, which were due to be reported in 2020 and 2023 respectively. [HL5722]

**Baroness Merron:** The Outcomes and Predictors of Outcome for Children and Young People Referred to UK Gender Identity Development Services: A longitudinal Investigation (LOGIC) is a longitudinal study that looks into the development of gender identity in children and young people in the United Kingdom. The published study protocol states that "The study findings will be published in peer-reviewed journals and presented at both conferences and stakeholder events". Following granting of an extension, partly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the study is funded until July 2025. As an independent study, it is for the research team to decide when to submit their findings for publication. The study team has published several papers and we would expect to see further publications this year, in line with National Institute for Health and Care Research policy on open access publication.

### Georgia: Sanctions

*Asked by Baroness Northover*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of EU sanctions against individuals in Georgia, and whether they plan to implement similar sanctions. [HL5519]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** I am not aware of any EU sanctions on individuals in Georgia. The Foreign Secretary set out on 9 December 2024 that the UK was limiting engagement with the authorities, restricting defence engagement and suspending UK support to Georgian government programmes. Later in December we imposed sanctions on the Georgian Minister and Deputy Minister of the Interior and three police chiefs responsible for police brutality. We do not comment on future designations as this could affect their impact.

### Gofer Mining: Company Accounts

*Asked by Lord Sikka*

To ask His Majesty's Government what action has been taken, if any, against Gofer Mining Plc and its directors for failure to file annual accounts at Companies House since 2019. [HL5527]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** His Majesty's Government takes the failure of companies to file statutory accounts seriously.

Companies House routinely takes prosecution action against company directors who fail to file their company's accounts. In addition, financial penalties are applied when accounts are delivered late. These actions are aimed at ensuring that companies meet their statutory obligations. Over 97% of companies meet their obligations to file statutory accounts.

Companies House are aware of concerns that have been raised about the highlighted company. Companies House will look into these matters further and, where necessary, take appropriate action.

## Government Departments: Zero Hours Contracts

*Asked by Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton*

To ask His Majesty's Government which government departments currently employ people on zero-hour contracts. [HL5463]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** The number of (a) civil servants and (b) contractors employed on zero hour contracts is not held centrally by the Cabinet Office.

Zero hours contracts are not the normal practice or a recommended approach within the Civil Service. Departments may use them in very limited circumstances to help meet exceptional or fluctuating demands on the business.

The flexibility offered by zero hours contracts, zero hour arrangements and low hour contracts can benefit both workers and employers, but without proper safeguards this flexibility can become one-sided, with workers bearing all the financial risk. The Government's Employment Rights Bill will end one-sided flexibility, ensuring that jobs provide a baseline of security and predictability so workers can better plan their lives and finances. We will consult extensively on the implementation of the legislation to ensure it works for workers and employers alike, and anticipate this meaning the majority of reforms will take effect no earlier than 2026. Government understands that adjusting to these new reforms will take time and is committed to ensuring that all stakeholders receive appropriate time to prepare for these changes ahead of their commencement.

## Greenland: USA

*Asked by Lord Monks*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the remarks by the President of the United States of America about a possible American takeover of Greenland; and whether they have discussed this matter with the Kingdom of Denmark. [HL5516]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** As the Foreign Secretary has made clear, Greenland is part of the Kingdom of Denmark and the future of their constitutional arrangements is a matter for the people and Government of Greenland, and the Kingdom of Denmark. The Prime Minister met with the Prime Minister of Denmark in February. The readout is available on GOV.UK.

## Halifax Bank of Scotland and Lloyds Banking Group: Fraud

*Asked by Lord Sikka*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 5

February 2024 (HL1819), when Dame Linda Dobbs's review began; what period it covers; when the review was originally scheduled to be completed; when the review is now expected to be completed; when an interim report was published; and how many victims of fraud at HBOS and Lloyds Banking Group have given evidence to it. [HL5567]

**Lord Livermore:** The Dame Linda Dobbs Review began in April 2017. The review was originally scheduled to be completed by the end of 2020. It is now expected to be completed in 2025.

The review, and appointment of Dame Linda Dobbs, has been instigated by Lloyds Banking Group. No interim report is planned and the number of victims giving evidence has not been made public.

The review has stated it will cover the period from the acquisition of HBOS in 2009 to 2017, and examine relevant evidence from before 2009 to assess what ought to have been known at the time of the HBOS acquisition.

Once completed, the review's findings will be shared with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), which will then consider what action is appropriate to take.

## Hereditary Peers

*Asked by Lord Mawson*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number and percentage of hereditary Peers in the House of Lords with experience of running and growing a business, and how this compares with the rest of the House; what assessment they have made of the impact of the removal of hereditary Peers from the House of Lords on its scrutiny of legislation and its role in holding the Government to account; and what steps they are taking to ensure that relevant business experience is maintained in the House. [HL5515]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** The Government recognises and values the contributions hereditary peers have made to the House of Lords.

The House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill delivers the Government's manifesto commitment to remove the right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords, completing the work of the House of Lords Act 1999. In the 21st century there should not be places reserved in the legislature for people born into certain families.

The Government is supportive of the inclusion of individuals from all backgrounds in the House of Lords and believes the second chamber is enriched by members who bring diverse experience and expertise. This includes members with business experience.

## Horse Passports

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to progress the implementation of a national



digital equine identification system to ensure the traceability of all horses. [HL5618]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** This is a devolved matter, and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

The Government recognises the importance of the equine sector to the UK economy and of improving equine identification and traceability. We have no current plans to implement mandatory digital identification, but we remain in close touch with the industry to look at potential improvements.

## Housing: Construction

*Asked by Lord Fink*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support small and medium-sized housebuilders, particularly those that are building homes that are well insulated and airtight. [HL5658]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The government recognises the important role of SME housebuilders in delivering high-quality, energy-efficient homes and we welcome the innovation shown by those that drive energy efficiency improvements with high levels of insulation and airtightness. The government also wants to go further, and we are committed to introducing new legislation through the Future Homes Standard (FHS) this year which will see all new homes future proofed with low carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and cutting consumer energy bills.

We are actively engaging with SMEs and the wider sector to understand the impact and ensure the standards remain deliverable. Once the FHS is published, there will be a transitional period to give housebuilders time to prepare and adjust.

SMEs will play a crucial role in delivering 1.5m homes and we are committed to supporting the sector. In December 2024, the government announced a £700m extension to the Home Building Fund which provides loans and finance to SME and will support the delivery of 12,000 homes. In addition, SME housebuilders can access lower-cost lending through the ENABLE Build scheme which was allocated an additional £1 billion guarantees capacity at the Budget on 30 October 2024.

## Listed Buildings: Energy Performance Certificates

*Asked by Lord Truscott*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether there will be exemptions for listed buildings under the proposed new energy performance certificate regulations. [HL5696]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** Currently buildings protected as part of a designated environment or because of their special architectural or historical merit are exempt

from the requirements to have an energy performance certificate insofar as compliance with minimum energy performance requirements would unacceptably alter their character or appearance.

We have recently consulted on EPC Reform and we are proposing that all heritage buildings are required to have an Energy Performance Certificate. The act of obtaining an EPC does not have any effect on the building materially and even if obtaining an EPC were to bring a heritage building into scope of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards, there are relevant exemptions if consent by the relevant authorities cannot be obtained, or if any of the recommendations on the EPC that need to be made, devalue the property by more than 5%. We would plan for this to be further balanced by ensuring EPC recommendations are tailored appropriately to consider the nature of the buildings.

## Local Government: Standards

*Asked by Lord Jamieson*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the consultation Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England which opened on 18 December 2024, what is their estimated budget for a new standards appeal body. [HL5601]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The consultation to which the Noble Lord refers, which closed on 26 February, sought views from across the local government sector on the appropriateness of creating a national body to consider appeals, alongside a range of other proposed measures to strengthen the local government standards framework.

We are now in the process of analysing those responses to ensure we are taking full account of sector views on all of the measures proposed. The government Response will be issued in due course. After its release, we will continue to work actively with local government on developing detailed implementation plans and, as appropriate, determine the budget implications of the proposals Government commits to pursuing.

## Medical Records: Artificial Intelligence

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of artificial intelligence technologies to streamline NHS patient records to allow records to be accessible across different hospitals and practices. [HL5430]

**Baroness Merron:** Improved digital and data infrastructure, such as Electronic Patient Records, are essential foundations for digital transformation. Many National Health Service trusts currently have out-of-date computers and devices, and poor clinical system interoperability limiting access to clinical information at the point of care.

New tools that use artificial intelligence (AI) to analyse text records and make them accessible for hospitals are currently being trialled in several NHS trusts. These tools can analyse patient records, doctors' notes and letters to recognise their meaning and accurately assign the correct details to the patient record in a more structured and accessible fashion. Early trials have shown positive results, such as helping identify bottlenecks in patient journeys through the system and facilitating recruitment to clinical trials, as well as improved communication between different hospitals and practices.

NHS England is developing guidance for those adopting or considering adopting ambient voice technologies, where the latest generation uses advanced AI technologies to convert spoken words into text used for clinical documentation, such as patient records. This process needs minimal intervention from users, though they still need to review and approve the text produced. They are currently being trialled in several local organisations and early results show they can significantly reduce the time clinical staff need to spend on administration.

The NHS AI Lab and Sciencewise held a public dialogue on how the public feels decisions should be made about access to their personal health data for AI purposes. The NHS AI Lab conducted a discovery exercise to design approaches based on insights from the public, which is now informing broader data stewardship initiatives, including where AI is used in relation to patient records. There are strict safeguards in place throughout the NHS to protect data. All providers of services which handle patient data must protect that data in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, and Data Protection Act 2018.

### Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Public Consultation and Reviews

Asked by *Baroness Scott of Bybrook*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many policy reviews and consultations the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has launched since the General Election on 4 July 2024; what the subject of each review is; and what the anticipated timescales are for their completion. [HL5689]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** I refer the noble Baroness to the answer given to Question UIN 16492 on 04 December 2024 and the answer to Question UIN 24046 on 11 February 2025.

A full list of all live and closed consultations is published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UIN 16492 [16492.pdf]

UIN 24046 [24046.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2025-03-11/HL5689>

### National Wealth Fund

Asked by *Baroness Penn*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether spending by the National Wealth Fund will be subject to their fiscal rules; and, if so, which of the fiscal rules will apply. [HL5736]

**Lord Livermore:** The UK's fiscal framework (as set out at the October 2024 Budget) applies to the whole public sector, including the National Wealth Fund (NWF). The NWF is operationally independent, but wholly owned by the Treasury, and therefore part of the public sector and subject to the fiscal framework.

Specifically, the fiscal framework contains two fiscal rules:

i) the stability rule – to move the current budget into balance so that day to-day costs are met by revenues, meaning that the government will only borrow for investment. The NWF's current expenditure, for example the salaries of NWF staff, and current income, for example the income it receives for loans, are included in this metric.

ii) the investment rule – to reduce debt, defined as public sector net financial liabilities or net financial debt, as a share of the economy. Net financial debt is a broad measure that includes the value of financial assets owned by the government and nets these assets off the liabilities of government captured in net financial debt. NWF's financial assets, for example its loans and equity investments, are included as financial assets under this metric.

### NATO: Nuclear Weapons

Asked by *Lord Empey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with NATO or European allies concerning the provision of a nuclear umbrella to Ukraine or any other European country by the United Kingdom. [HL5495]

**Lord Coaker:** The conflict in Ukraine is not a nuclear matter for the United Kingdom. However, we have assigned our nuclear deterrent to the defence of NATO since 1962.

### NHS: Software

Asked by *Lord Kamall*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following plans to distribute wearable tech to remotely monitor health to patients, whether health data from smart watches and other devices will be available on the NHS app; whether such data will be used exclusively for the direct

care of patients; and whether such data will be copied to the NHS Federated Data Platform. [HL5672]

**Baroness Merron:** Data generated by apps and devices may not be used exclusively for the direct care of patients; some data may be generated by a wearable which will be used for a secondary purpose, such as research, but this must happen in accordance with the law. An individual would have to give their consent for the use of their data by a third-party app.

The NHS Federated Data Platform does not access data from the NHS App or wearables.

## Opposition: Freedom of Information

Asked by **Lord Sikka**

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to extending the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to political parties in receipt of Short Money in respect of (1) their policy-making, and (2) their fundraising activities. [HL5568]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** Registered political parties are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in respect of any of their functions.

## Overseas Trade

Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering**

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the trade data for (1) exports, and (2) imports, with (a) the United States of America, (b) the EU, and (c) European countries including those outside of the EU, in each of the last three years. [HL5557]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority.

Please see the letter attached from the National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond | National Statistician  
The Baroness McIntosh of Pickering  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW  
11 March 2025

Dear Lady McIntosh of Pickering,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what are the trade data on (1) exports, and (2) imports, with (a) the United States of America, (b) the EU, and (c) European countries including those outside of the EU, in each of the last three years (HL5557).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publish UK trade data at country level in our UK total trade, all

countries release[1] which is published on a quarterly basis. These data are available up to Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2024. The latest full year of data available is 2023.

Data on UK trade with the United States, the European Union and Europe can be found in Tables 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Please note that all data are in current prices and, as such, include the effect of inflation.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

*Table 1: UK total trade, trade in goods and trade in services with the United States, exports and imports, 2021-2023[2].*

*£ billion, current prices*

Year	Total Trade		Trade in Goods		Trade in Services	
	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
2021	142.3	80.2	49.7	39.2	92.6	41.0
2022	176.5	113.5	60.0	61.9	116.5	51.7
2023	179.4	112.1	60.4	57.9	118.9	54.2

Source: Office for National Statistics

*Table 2: UK total trade, trade in goods and trade in services with the European Union, exports and imports, 2021-20232.*

*£ billion, current prices*

Year	Total Trade		Trade in Goods		Trade in Services	
	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
2021	276.9	313.1	158.4	237.4	118.5	75.6
2022	352.2	419.7	207.1	306.6	145.1	113.1
2023	348.0	446.6	186.8	318.2	161.2	128.4

Source: Office for National Statistics

*Table 3: UK total trade, trade in goods and trade in services with Europe, exports and imports, 2021-20232,[3].*

*£ billion, current prices*

Year	Total Trade		Trade in Goods		Trade in Services	
	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
2021	333.4	393.7	184.7	298.5	148.6	95.2
2022	422.2	520.1	241.8	382.1	180.5	138.0
2023	415.5	525.0	215.2	368.1	200.3	156.9

Source: Office for National Statistics

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanaceofpayments/datasets/ukttotaltradeallcountriesseasonallyadjusted>

[2] Data may not sum due to rounding.

[3] These data include all countries in Europe as set out in Appendix 5 of the Balance of Payments (BoP) Vademecum:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/39118/18471074/vademecum-balance-payment-november-2023-january-2024.pdf>. This total includes European Union countries.

### Parliament: Security

Asked by *Lord Robathan*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what is the salary of the Director of Security for Parliament. [HL5682]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The Director of Security for Parliament is a bicameral role, but for administrative purposes is employed by the House of Commons. The salary of the Director of Security is published alongside other Commons Executive Board members in the annual accounts of the House of Commons. In 2023-24 the salary and benefits in kind of the Director of Security were £140-145,000.

### Peers: Conduct

Asked by *Baroness Hoey*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker how much has been spent on the consultants employed in developing the Behaviour Code and implementing its associated training programmes. [HL5547]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** It is not possible to separate the sums paid to consultants and other third parties for developing the Behaviour Code and delivering its associated training programmes from those associated with the development of the wider Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (ICGS).

The total of such costs across Parliament since the 2019/20 financial year is £1,144,307. This includes sums paid to consultants for developing the Behaviour Code, designing the associated training sessions and delivering them on a rolling basis to members, staff and members' staff across both Houses. Also included in this figure is the wider training provided to ICGS staff on investigating complaints and on supporting the phone lines for reporting bullying; meetings with the independent reviewers of the ICGS; and training for House of Commons staff supporting new MPs after the General Election.

As the ICGS is a shared service, these costs are split according to a 70/30 ratio between the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The cost to the House of Lords since 2019/20 is therefore £343,292.

### Police and Crime Commissioners

Asked by *Lord Naseby*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they last made an assessment of the success or otherwise of the role and cost to the Exchequer of the Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales. [HL5518]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** As the directly elected representative for policing in their area, Police and Crime

Commissioners (PCCs) have an important local role acting as the voice of the public and victims in policing, holding Chief Constables to account and leading local partnerships to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.

In her Written Ministerial Statement of 19 November 2024 (HCWS232), the Home Secretary announced her intention to present a White Paper to Parliament this year on reforms to deliver more effective and efficient policing, to rebuild public confidence and to deliver the Government's Safer Streets mission.

### Pre-school Education

Asked by *Baroness Coffey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the primary drivers of children not being school ready. [HL5494]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** As set out in the Plan for Change, antenatal classes, health visitors, parenting support, baby and toddler groups and access to affordable, high quality early education and childcare are all vital to guiding parents, improving the home learning environment and supporting child development.

A strong and stable family environment is the foundation for better health, education and earnings. It is parenting, alongside the home-learning environment, that has a significant influence on these outcomes. The department knows parents struggle to access services and the support they need. Childcare is also too often unaffordable or not available. This lack of support contributes to too many children not being ready to start school.

That is why the department has set a milestone of 75% of five year-olds reaching a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile assessment by 2028.

To deliver this, we are rolling out expanded government-funded childcare entitlements and creating thousands of school-based nurseries to increase quality childcare, working in partnership with early years providers to drive up standards by reforming training and support for staff and strengthening and joining up family services to improve support through pregnancy and early childhood.

The government remains committed to working with the early years sector, teachers, health professionals and families to ensure every child has the best start in life.

### Pre-school Education: Standards

Asked by *Baroness Coffey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what is their definition of school readiness, and how "school readiness" is measured. [HL5493]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** Children's earliest years are crucial to their health, development and life chances. That is why the department has set a milestone of a record



proportion of children starting school ready to learn in the classroom. We will measure our progress through 75% of children at the end of reception reaching a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile assessment by 2028.

The statutory EYFS framework sets the standards and requirements that all early years providers must follow to ensure all children have the best start in life and are prepared for school. It requires that children be assessed against the EYFS Profile in the summer term of the academic year in which they turn five.

The EYFS Profile seeks to measure children's level of development to support their successful transitions into year 1 and to support parents, carers and early years educators to recognise children's progress and understand their needs. It comprises an assessment of the child's outcomes in relation to 17 early learning goals (ELGs) across seven areas of learning.

Children are defined as having a good level of development at the end of the EYFS if they are at the expected level for the 12 ELGs within the five areas of learning. These relate to communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, physical development, literacy and mathematics. This is the definition that will be used to measure progress on school readiness, as set out in the Plan for Change.

### Research: Finance

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) proposals in the "Guidance published for the People, Culture and Environment Pilot" published by UK Research and Innovation on 14 January; and what assessment they have made of the effect on scientific excellence, innovation and economic growth of introducing a 25 per cent weighting to EDI initiatives when allocating research funding. [HL5508]

**Lord Vallance of Balham:** The People, Culture, and Environment (PCE) pilot aims to assess the feasibility of integrating PCE elements, to guide the development of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029. Government acknowledges the important role of a positive research culture in attracting and retaining diverse talent, which is essential for maintaining the UK's global competitiveness in research. Final decisions on REF 2029's structure, including any potential PCE weighting, will follow the pilot's conclusion and further sector consultation. While the proposed weighting for PCE is 25%, EDI initiatives only form a small proportion of this.

### Social Rented Housing: Construction

*Asked by Lord Reid of Cardowan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to increase the number of social homes built each year. [HL5476]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** I refer the noble Lord to the answer given to Question UIN 31737 on 27 February 2025.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

UIN 31737 [PQ 31737.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2025-03-04/HL5476>

### Social Security Benefits: Asthma

*Asked by Earl Howe*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the benefits claimed by individuals who are unable to work because of asthma in the most recent year for which figures are available. [HL5503]

**Baroness Sherlock:** The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

### Social Services: Gender

*Asked by Baroness Thornhill*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Merron on 3 February (HL3955), for what purposes they require local authorities, under the Collection of Client Level Adult Social Care Data (No 3) Directions 2023, to collect data on gender. [HL5631]

**Baroness Merron:** Under the 'Collection of Client Level Adult Social Care Data (No 3) Directions 2023', local authorities are required to report data on gender as part of the subset of administrative data that is included in their quarterly Client Level Data return. The Department requires this data so it can be analysed and reported on at a national level, providing new and more detailed information about the characteristics of people who use adult social care.

### Stonewall: Finance

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office on 22 October 2024 (HC8818), and further to the Written Statement by Baroness Neville-Rolfe on 14 May 2024 (HLWS462), whether the equality, diversity and inclusion spending controls announced in that Written Statement apply to decisions by arm's length bodies to use public funds to affiliate, or pay services, or renew subscriptions to Stonewall. [HL5554]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** The Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Expenditure Guidance applies to the Civil Service workforce. That includes arm's-length bodies that fall within the Civil Service. Affiliations, services or



subscriptions to external organisations fall within the scope of external EDI expenditure, as set out in paragraph 7 of the guidance.

### **Stonewall: Membership**

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Collins of Highbury on 25 February (HL5027), whether the (1) Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, (2) Government Legal Department, and (3) Government Recruitment Service, are paid members or affiliates of Stonewall. [HL5506]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** Neither the Government Legal Department nor the Government Recruitment Service are paid members or affiliates of Stonewall. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman is independent of Government and we do not therefore hold information on any of its memberships or affiliations.

### **Thales: Northern Ireland**

*Asked by Lord Rogan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what benefits the £1.6 billion contract with Thales Air Defence Limited in Belfast to supply 5,000 missiles to Ukraine will bring to the Northern Ireland economy. [HL5522]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** The deal to increase production at Thales is a vote of confidence in Northern Ireland's valuable defence sector and we want to ensure that Northern Ireland benefits fully from increases in defence expenditure in the UK. The deal will also provide a major boost to the UK economy, creating 200 new jobs and supporting 700 existing jobs at Thales in Belfast.

### **Thames Water: Water Charges**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Thames Water will increase its prices, and what steps they are taking to support customers. [HL5575]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** For too long, investment has not kept pace with the challenges of an ageing infrastructure system, a rapidly growing population and climate change. Unfortunately, bills will therefore now need to rise to invest in our crumbling infrastructure and deliver cleaner waterways.

Owat published their final determinations for Price Review 2024 on 19 December, which sets company expenditure and customer bills for 2025-2030. This will

deliver substantial, lasting, improvements for customers and the environment through a £104 billion upgrade for the water sector.

All water companies offer affordability support through WaterSure and social tariff schemes to help reduce bills for households who struggle to pay their bills in full. Water companies also offer a range of financial support measures to assist households to better manage their budgets and provide flexible payments including payment holidays, payment matching, benefit entitlement checks and money/debt advice referral arrangements.

Water companies should continue to actively engage with households and inform them of support measures they offer. The Consumer Council for Water works with water companies and Defra to monitor the uptake of affordability measures, and the Government continues to explore options to improve the affordability of water bills.

### **UK Emissions Trading Scheme: Islands**

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government, with reference to page 15 of the consultation document, UK Emissions Trading Scheme Scope Expansion: Maritime, on what date they intend the UK-wide Islands Forum to meet; and when the last meeting of the Islands Forum took place. [HL5585]

**Baroness Taylor of Stevenage:** The last meeting of the Islands Forum took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 on the Isle of Anglesey, North Wales.

At present, there are no dates set for future meetings of the Islands Forum. My department is continuing to work closely with other UK Government departments to determine the future of the forum, which we will communicate in due course.

### **VAT: Tax Evasion**

*Asked by Lord Lucas*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Livermore on 24 February (HL5145), since 2017 on how many occasions the online marketplace paid VAT due from a seller, voluntarily or after court action. [HL5610]

**Lord Livermore:** In all cases, when a Joint & Several Liability notice has been issued, the online marketplace has removed the relevant seller from their platform. Since 2017, 9 assessments have been raised by HMRC against online marketplaces following the issue of a Joint & Several Liability notice where the online marketplace had failed to remove the seller within the relevant time limits.

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