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

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 2 April 2025

Combating Hatred against Muslims Fund

[HLWS572]

Lord Khan of Burnley: The government has announced a new fund to provide a comprehensive service to monitor anti-Muslim hatred and support victims with applications opening on Monday 7 April 2025.

Last year, police-recorded hate crime statistics found almost 2 in 5 of all religious hate crimes targeted Muslims, an increase of 13% in comparison to the year before.

With cases of anti-Muslim hatred on the rise, up-to-date and detailed information on incidents and drivers of this hatred will play a fundamental part in supporting the government to combat Islamophobia and ensure Muslim communities feel safe and supported.

As well as monitoring and reporting incidents, the grant recipient will work to increase awareness of what hate crime is; encourage victims to come forward to report incidents; and facilitate support for victims of hate. They will work alongside a network of local and national partners and stakeholders including the government, and faith and belief groups to deliver on this vital work.

The establishment of the fund will contribute to the government's commitment to creating safer streets as part of the Plan for Change, with addressing the rise of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate playing a crucial part in building safer, stronger and more cohesive communities for all.

The Government will work with communities to confront all kinds of racial and religious hatred to create a more tolerant and understanding society for everyone. The funding announced today is an important step in that mission.

The competition window will be open for six weeks from the 7 April 2025, closing on 18 May 2025 at 23:59.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 2 April 2025

Agriculture: Disease Control

Asked by **Baroness Redfern**

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the announcement on 25 February that they will invest £208 million in a new national biosecurity centre, whether those funds were previously committed to go directly to farmers as payments for 'public goods'. [HL5969]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: The National Biosecurity Centre is the new name for the facility delivered at APHA Weybridge, previously known as the Science Capability in Animal Health programme. This funding has not been previously committed to other purposes.

Animal Feed: Cereals

Asked by **Baroness Hodgson of Abinger**

To ask His Majesty's Government what percentage of grain grown domestically is used to produce animal feed. [HL6049]

Asked by **Baroness Hodgson of Abinger**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they permit non-assured imported grain to be used to produce animal feed. [HL6050]

Asked by **Baroness Hodgson of Abinger**

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they assess the quality of imported grain for animal feeds and, if so, what action they take if it is found to be substandard. [HL6051]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: The UK prides itself on world leading animal health and welfare standards. Farmers across the nation deliver on the standards set out in our world class legislation on matters such as living environment for animals, access to veterinary services and suitable diet for farmed animals.

Legislation is in place to ensure feed may be placed on the market and used only if it is safe and does not have a direct adverse effect on the environment or animal welfare.

Port health authorities are responsible for sampling and analysing imported feed products on a risk-based approach. Where analysis is carried out, the results would be reviewed by the relevant authorities and appropriate action taken. Local Authorities will inspect the feed businesses systems and the results of any checks performed by them, when they conduct Official Controls at the business. Feed businesses will routinely check the consignments of grain they have received.

Feed businesses are responsible for deciding whether or not they wish to purchase assured or non-assured grain for use in animal feed as this is a commercial decision.

Cereals and oilseeds make up a significant proportion of animal feed, most of which are internationally traded commodities. Subsequently, their supply chains are dynamic and responsive to global market developments in price and availability. Defra publishes statistics on domestic agricultural production on gov.uk however we make no assessment of end market. There are a number of external factors that will influence the split between human and industrial use of grain and that used for animal feed.

Cabinet Office: Bain and Company

Asked by **Lord Agnew of Oulton**

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the publication on 11 December 2024 of the procurement notice Review on the State of Digital Government (2024/S 000-039897), what assessment they made of Bain & Company's compliance with monitoring conditions; whether the Cabinet Office had final approval over the participation of Bain & Company in the framework mini competition; and what safeguards there are to ensure that firms subject to monitoring cannot use procurement intermediaries to bypass Government scrutiny of monitoring conditions. [HL5867]

Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent: The Cabinet Office's use of procurement intermediaries is governed by the Cabinet Office Commercial Directorate and any requirements commissioned via this route remain subject to the same level of assurance and governance as it would if it had been undertaken in-house.

As part of this specific procurement competition, the Cabinet Office Commercial Directorate confirmed with Government Commercial Function that Bain & Company were meeting all applicable conditions that permit them to be included in this mini competition.

Cambrian Line: Accidents

Asked by **Lord Wigley**

To ask His Majesty's Government what lessons Network Rail has learned from the railway accident near Llanbryn-mair on the Shrewsbury to Machynlleth line in October 2024; and how those lessons will be heeded throughout the railway network. [HL5979]

Lord Henty of Richmond Hill: The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB), the independent body responsible for investigating rail accidents in the UK, launched an investigation into the fatal accident at Talerddig, near Llanbryn-mair in Powys, on 22 October 2024, the day after the accident. Once the investigation is complete, RAIB will publish an investigation report, which will highlight any recommendations or learning points.

Maintaining high safety levels on the railway remains a priority for this Government and we expect the relevant parts of the rail industry, including Network Rail, to act on any recommendations resulting from RAIB's investigation.

Cardiovascular Diseases: Death

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of premature deaths from cardiovascular disease on economic growth. [HL5941]

Baroness Merron: Too many lives are lost prematurely to cardiovascular disease (CVD). In 2023, 29% of all CVD deaths in England occurred in people under 75 years old. The Government is committed to ensuring fewer lives are lost to the biggest killers, including CVD.

That is why the Health Mission set an ambition to reduce premature mortality from heart disease and stroke by 25% in the next 10 years. To deliver on this, the Department and NHS England are working together at pace to understand both the scale of the challenge and the opportunities for progress across the prevention, treatment, and management of CVD.

We know that CVD is one of the largest health condition contributors to economic inactivity in England. Of the 2.5 million working-age people who are economically inactive due to long-term sickness, 770,000 reported cardiovascular problems as a contributing factor. Estimates show that CVD costs the National Health Service £10 billion annually, and £24 billion annually to the wider economy.

Cardiovascular Diseases: Health Services

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the annual cost to the NHS of hospital admissions from preventable cardiovascular disease. [HL5942]

Baroness Merron: Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the second highest cause of premature death in England. It affects over 6.4 million people, causes one in four premature deaths, and 1.6 million disability adjusted life years.

According to the King's Fund analysis, there were approximately one million hospital admissions for CVD in England in 2019/20, leading to 5.5 million bed days. During the 2023/24 financial year, there were 220,000 admissions for coronary heart disease and 100,000 admissions for stroke. CVD costs the National Health Service an estimated £10 billion, and the economy an estimated £24 billion a year.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards the aim in the NHS 10 Year Plan to

reduce preventable premature deaths from cardiovascular disease. [HL5943]

Baroness Merron: The Government is committed to ensuring that fewer lives are lost to the biggest killers, including cardiovascular disease (CVD). A central mission of the Government is to build a health and care system fit for the future. To achieve this, it is crucial that we tackle preventable ill health, such as CVD, by ensuring that those at risk of developing or already living with the disease are identified and can be effectively treated.

The NHS Long Term Plan committed to improving the identification and treatment of CVD risk factors, such as high blood pressure, raised cholesterol, and atrial fibrillation. There has been significant progress since the plan was made in 2019, including that:

- 835,970 more people have been identified with hypertension since 2019, and 512,160 more treated to target, up to March 2024;
- 91.5% of those on the atrial fibrillation register were being treated with anticoagulants in March 2024, an increase from 87.3% in March 2020, and there has been a 10% increase in the number of people on the atrial fibrillation register over this period; and
- 62.3% of people at risk of CVD are now treated with lipid lowering therapy, as of June 2024, an increase of 676,000 people since March 2021.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the progress of the cardiovascular disease prevention programme. [HL6161]

Baroness Merron: We are committed to ensuring that fewer lives are lost to the biggest killers, including from cardiovascular disease (CVD). That is why, in our Health Mission to build a National Health Service fit for the future, we have committed to reducing premature deaths from heart disease and strokes by 25% in the next 10 years.

The NHS Health Check programme, England's CVD prevention programme, engages over 1.4 million people a year and, through behavioural and clinical interventions, prevents approximately 300 premature deaths, and 500 heart attacks or strokes a year. Data reported by local authorities shows that between April 2013 and December 2024, over 13.6 million NHS Health Checks have been delivered.

To improve access to the NHS Health Check, we are developing a new NHS Health Check Online service, which people can use at a time and place convenient to them, to understand and act on their risk of CVD.

For the 2025/26 contract year we have also brought in changes to shift care from sickness to prevention by incentivising general practitioners to focus on the most common killers, such as heart disease. Knowing that prevention is better than treatment, we have raised the

upper threshold of CVD indicators in order to stimulate performance gains and improve CVD care for patients.

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve personalised prevention of cardiovascular disease. [HL6162]

Baroness Merron: Our approach to personalised prevention is through the NHS Health Check, England's cardiovascular disease (CVD) prevention programme.

The Government continues to support this programme as it assesses the top seven risk factors for CVD in people aged 40 to 74 years old. Where an individual's NHS Health Check indicates that further action is necessary, they may be referred to either behavioural support services and/or a clinical assessment, where appropriate.

To improve access to the NHS Health Check, we are developing a new NHS Health Check Online service, which people can use at a time and place convenient to them, to understand and act on their risk of CVD.

The Department is also piloting a new programme to deliver up to 130,000 lifesaving heart health checks in the workplace. These checks can be completed quickly and easily by people at work across 48 local authorities until 31 May 2025.

Cholesterol and Hypertension: Screening

Asked by Lord Weir of Ballyholme

To ask His Majesty's Government what action they are taking to improve early detection and diagnosis of (1) high blood pressure, and (2) raised cholesterol levels. [HL6160]

Baroness Merron: The Government is committed to tackling the biggest killers, such as cardiovascular disease (CVD). Improving early detection and diagnosis of the key risk factors for CVD, including high blood pressure and raised cholesterol levels, is vital to deliver on this commitment.

The Government continues to support the NHS Health Check, England's CVD prevention programme. For every 1.4 million NHS Health Checks delivered annually, there are 343,000 cases of high blood pressure identified, resulting in 40,000 diagnoses of hypertension, as well as 900,000 people identified with raised cholesterol levels.

To improve access to the NHS Health Check, we are developing a new NHS Health Check Online service, which people can use at a time and place convenient to them, to understand and act on their risk of CVD.

Subject to the outcomes of the NHS Health Check Online pilot, starting in spring 2025, the aim is to roll it out nationally from spring 2026, delivering approximately one million checks in the first four years.

The Department is also piloting a new programme to deliver up to 130,000 lifesaving heart health checks in the workplace. These checks can be completed quickly and

easily by people at work across 48 local authorities until 31 May 2025.

For the 2025/26 contract year we have also brought in changes to shift care from sickness to prevention by incentivising general practitioners to focus on the most common killers, such as heart disease. Knowing that prevention is better than treatment, we have raised the upper threshold of CVD indicators in order to stimulate performance gains and improve CVD care for patients.

Cultural Heritage: Skilled Workers

Asked by Lord Mackinlay of Richborough

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister of State for Culture, Media and Sport on 24 February (HC30997), what measures they have agreed with Historic England to ensure that the necessary workforce is in place in the UK heritage skills sector. [HL6187]

Baroness Twycross: Historic England is working across government and with sector partners to develop the infrastructure needed for heritage building skills.

For example, Historic England is engaging with the Department for Education via the Construction Skills Delivery Board, as well as on changes to vocational education, such as the introduction of Skills England. Historic England is also involved in regional pilot programmes aiming to tackle traditional building skills needs locally, and collaborating with Cadw and Historic Environment Scotland to improve the standard of retrofit training, to care for our historic buildings, while also making them more energy efficient.

Data, Statistics and Research on Sex and Gender Independent Review

Asked by Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will implement the recommendations set out in the report Review of data, statistics and research on sex and gender, published by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology on 19 March. [HL5960]

Lord Vallance of Balham: Sex and gender in data, statistics and research is an important area of discussion, and this review contributes to this ongoing dialogue. Given the wide breadth of recommendations, the government has ensured that the review has been shared with all the relevant departments and policy teams, who will consider the findings in light of their ongoing policy work.

Education: Artificial Intelligence

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that artificial intelligence technologies are used beneficially in education, and in particular to

ensure that students from lower-income backgrounds have equal access to such technologies. [HL5859]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: Effective use of technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) can power the future of learning by improving access to education and outcomes, reducing staff workload and running operations more efficiently.

Important developments in AI education policy in England include our updated policy paper on the use of generative AI in education, which sets out this government's core messages on AI use in education. The paper reinforces key messages on safety and provides updated information on intellectual property and data protection considerations as well as regulator approaches.

In January 2025, to ensure the safety of our children, the department announced that leading global tech firms had jointly committed to making AI tools for education safer by design. Google, Microsoft, Adobe and Amazon Web Services are amongst the firms who have helped develop a set of expectations AI tools should meet to be considered safe for classroom use.

To support a clear ask from teachers and leaders, the department is developing online resources and guidance to help teachers and leaders use AI safely in their setting. This will be published in spring.

The department will also be appointing a task and finish group to advise on digital, AI and technology in order to increase the future pipeline of talent with digital and AI specific skills and prepare children and young people to be ready for an AI and tech-enabled world, as well as making the most of opportunities to use AI and educational technology (EdTech) to drive better teaching and learning.

In addition to this work with schools and colleges, the government is committed to ensuring that everyone has the skills, access, support and confidence to engage in our modern digital society and economy, whatever their circumstances. That is why we are working closely with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), who recently published an action plan on digital inclusion. The full publication can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-inclusion-action-plan-first-steps/digital-inclusion-action-plan-first-steps>.

Farriers: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Elliott of Ballinamallard

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the provisions of the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 to Northern Ireland. [HL6100]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: The Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 promotes the proper shoeing of a horse, preventing suffering or cruelty to horses, and provides regulations for the establishment of a Farriers Registration Council to register persons engaged in

farriery. There are no plans to amend this legislation currently.

Food Poisoning

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to requiring each major food retailer to publish on their website a convenient way to report cases of food poisoning that are likely to have been caused by their products, and to take specified action upon such reports. [HL6132]

Baroness Merron: There are currently no plans to implement this. Food poisoning cases and other food safety or hygiene issues should be reported directly via the Food Standards Agency website, or directly to local authority food safety teams who are responsible for all types of food businesses in the area.

Fracking: Fylde

Asked by Lord Mackinlay of Richborough

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (HC37979), whether the decision to plug and abandon Preston New Road shale gas well was a matter for (1) the company, (2) the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, or (3) the North Sea Transition Authority. [HL5966]

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath: As stated in the previous answer, decisions on whether to abandon wells are ultimately a matter for the company.

Gambling: Young People

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of findings published on 18 March by the City of York Council, Next Generation York: the Health of Adolescents in our city, particularly that 16 per cent of young people had gambled, and of those 25 per cent took money to gamble without permission, and 14 per cent had conflicts with family or friends over gambling. [HL6266]

Baroness Twycross: We are committed to reviewing the best available evidence from a wide range of sources and working with all stakeholders in order to ensure there are robust protections in place to protect those at risk of gambling related harm, particularly children and young people.

The Government uses a wide range of sources to inform our understanding of children and young people's gambling behaviour and harm in Great Britain, such as the [2024 Young People in Gambling Report](#). The

department has noted the findings of the Next Generation York report from the City of York Council.

High Street Banks: Closures

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the closure of high street bank branches on consumers, particularly older people. [HL5971]

Lord Livermore: Banking has changed significantly in recent years with many customers benefiting from the ease and convenience of remote banking. While branch closures are commercial decisions for banks, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) guidance expects firms to carefully consider the impact of planned branch closures on their customers' everyday banking and cash access needs and put in place alternatives where reasonable. This seeks to ensure that branch closures are implemented in a way that treats customers fairly.

The FCA requires firms to provide a prompt, efficient, and fair service to all of their customers. This includes special considerations for vulnerable customers, such as the elderly and disabled. Additionally, under the Equality Act 2010, banks must make reasonable adjustments to ensure their services are accessible to all.

Where a branch closure is announced, LINK (the operator of the UK's largest ATM network) assesses a community's access to cash withdrawal and deposit facilities on behalf of the UK's largest high street banks. LINK takes into consideration a wide range of criteria, such as the size and vulnerability of the population, existing and remaining cash access facilities, the number of shops and how many older people live nearby. Following this independent assessment, LINK will decide whether to recommend any additional services, such as a banking hub.

The Government understands the importance of face-to-face banking to communities and high streets and is committed to championing sufficient access for all as a priority. This is why the Government is working closely with industry to roll out 350 banking hubs across the UK. The UK banking sector has committed to deliver these hubs by the end of this Parliament. Over 220 hubs have been announced so far, and over 135 are already open.

Alternative options to access everyday banking services can be via telephone banking, through digital means such as mobile or online banking and via the Post Office. The Post Office Banking Framework allows personal and business customers to withdraw and deposit cash, check their balance, pay bills and cash cheques at 11,500 Post Office branches across the UK.

Higher Education: Cyprus

Asked by Lord Wharton of Yarm

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to enhance academic partnerships between UK

universities and higher education institutions in Northern Cyprus. [HL5793]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: The UK supports all Cypriot students, including those in the North, to access UK higher education networks and institutes. In line with the rest of the international community with the sole exception of Turkey, the UK does not recognise the self-declared 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' as an independent state. Several UN Security Council Resolutions limit links between UK and the north of Cyprus.

Horses: Republic of Ireland

Asked by Lord Elliott of Ballinamallard

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to improve co-operation with the Northern Ireland Executive and government of Ireland in order to facilitate movement of equine animals between their respective areas, and improve processes for their registration. [HL6101]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: The Government recognises the importance of the equine sector to the UK economy. The majority of equine movements into and out of Great Britain take place with the island of Ireland, so we regularly engage with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in the Republic of Ireland.

Import Controls: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask His Majesty's Government what is the total cost to date of the construction of each of the border control posts being built in Northern Ireland, including all administrative fees. [HL6227]

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the total cost of building and completing each of the Border Control Posts in Northern Ireland; and what is the estimated date of completion of each one. [HL6228]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: In line with the commitments we have made under the Windsor Framework, SPS inspection facilities are under construction in Northern Ireland at the ports of Belfast, Larne, Foyle and Warrenpoint. Preparations are well underway, and they will be operationally ready by July 2025.

The Government has committed to a maximum funding envelope of £192.3 million. Of this envelope, Defra has spent £70.7 million up to 28 February 2025, the latest data currently available.

Lifelong Education

Asked by *The Earl of Clancarty*

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards the third category of registration with the Office for Students for smaller, specialist providers in support of accessing the Lifelong Learning Entitlement, including those offering Trinity College London's Level 5 and 6 Professional Performing Arts Diploma. [HL5491]

Asked by *The Earl of Clancarty*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with stakeholders regarding a proportionate route to registration with the Office for Students designed for smaller, specialist providers in support of accessing the Lifelong Learning Entitlement, including those offering Trinity College London's Level 5 and 6 Professional Performing Arts Diplomas accredited by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre. [HL5492]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: The government is fully committed to delivering the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) as set out in the Autumn Budget 2024. From the LLE's launch in January 2027, the Office for Students (OfS) will regulate all providers offering LLE-funded provision.

The OfS has made clear that they expect to restart work on registrations, degree awarding powers and university title in August 2025, although the changes will remain under review until then. We understand that the OfS will keep providers updated throughout this period about their plans, including confirming application arrangements from August onwards. The government supports the reasons for the temporary pause in order for the OfS to refocus their efforts on provider financial sustainability. As the independent regulator, it is for the OfS to process registrations in the manner they deem most appropriate.

The government will continue to engage closely with the OfS and providers to support timely transition arrangements for the launch of the LLE. The government, together with the OfS, will provide further information on the regulation of providers under the LLE in spring 2025.

Lighting: Cultural Heritage

Asked by *Lord Swire*

To ask His Majesty's Government what action they have taken to preserve remaining historic gas lamps in London. [HL6077]

Baroness Twycross: In October 2024, 40 free-standing gas lamps in Westminster were listed at Grade II to recognise their special interest and to ensure their future protection. Amendments were also made in February 2025 to a further 14 List entries for gas lamps already on the List to recognise the importance of the lamps and to aid their management by Westminster City Council.

Medical Treatments

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to review the requirement for opportunity cost neutrality in NICE's severity modifier. [HL6192]

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to assess the impact of NICE's severity modifier on people with secondary breast cancer. [HL6193]

Baroness Merron: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is responsible for developing the methods and processes that it uses in its evaluations independently and in consultation with stakeholders. The severity modifier is based on evidence of societal preferences and was introduced in 2022, as part of a comprehensive review of the NICE's methods and processes, following extensive public and stakeholder engagement.

The NICE carried out a review of the severity modifier in 2024 and found that it is operating as intended. Since its introduction, the severity modifier has resulted in a higher approval rate for cancer medicines compared to the NICE's previous methods, and has also allowed greater weight to be applied to non-cancer medicines that address a broader range of severe diseases, enabling the NICE to recommend medicines for conditions such as cystic fibrosis and hepatitis D.

The NICE has commissioned research to better understand societal preferences that will inform future method reviews, but there is no prospect of any change until it concludes, and any future changes would need to be consistent with the principle of cost neutrality.

Mental Capacity: Children

Asked by *Baroness Barran*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of children who have received deprivation of liberty orders in the past five years. [HL5810]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: Depriving a child of their liberty must always be a last resort, but is sometimes necessary to keep that child, and others, safe. A small but growing number of children, often with complex behavioural needs, require a deprivation of liberty order for their own safety.

Data collected by Nuffield Family Justice Observatory shows that in the year leading up to July 2023, 1,389 applications were made to deprive a child of their liberty under a Deprivation of Liberty Order (DOLO) authorised under the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court. Data collected in this period suggests that the number of applications has more than doubled since 2020/21. This data is attached and can be accessed at:

<https://www.nuffieldfjo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/CHILDR1.1.pdf>.

His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service have been publishing data since December 2023, covering the period July to September 2023. Between Q3 2023 and Q2 2024, 1240 deprivation of liberty applications were made. There were 299 applications made between April and June 2024.

To understand the existing system and how we can achieve better outcomes for these children, the department has commissioned research consisting of a literature review, analysing children's case files and undertaking case studies of three existing provisions developed in partnership with Integrated Care Boards. This research will provide insights into the characteristics of children who are, or have been, deprived of liberty and what has worked well for them. We aim to publish this research in summer 2025. We consistently seek insights from research and reports undertaken by different organisations, such as the Office of the Children's Commissioner's report in December 2024 on Illegal Children's Homes, to ensure we are utilising the information in these resources in our policy development.

The department continues to work extensively with stakeholders across local authorities, the healthcare sector, cross-government, third sector and in academia to draw on relevant expertise throughout our policy development, which allows us to gain valuable insights about the characteristics of these children and what works well to improve their experience and outcomes.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL5180_Attachment
[Children_Subject_To_Deprivation_Of_Liberty_Orders.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2025-03-14/HL5810>

Neuroendocrine Cancer: Radiotherapy

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase funding for minimally invasive cancer therapies, in particular selective internal radiation therapy for neuroendocrine tumours that have spread to the liver. [HL6052]

Baroness Merron: Radiotherapy treatment for cancer is highly individualised and decisions about cancer treatment are typically made by clinicians and multidisciplinary teams of healthcare professionals. They consider all aspects of a patient's health and circumstances when recommending treatment options. While certain treatments may not be advised for some patients, these decisions are based on medical assessments and what is best for the individual's overall health and well-being.

The National Cancer Plan, coming later this year, will set out how we will seek to improve the experience and

outcomes for people at every stage of the cancer pathway. It will look at how we can improve communication and coordination for patients, so that they feel informed, empowered, and in control of their care.

NHS England: Redundancy Pay

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government whether any senior executive of NHS England who (1) has left in the last two months, or (2) will be leaving in the next two months, will receive a severance payment; and if so how many payments have been made, and what is the total cost of those payments. [HL6270]

Baroness Merron: Any exit payment for any senior executive that has left NHS England in the last two months, or that will be leaving over the next two months, will be in line with the individual's contractual entitlements and subject to the necessary approvals.

The total cost at this stage would be unknown, as exit payments are based upon individual terms and conditions, in line with contracts of employment.

NHS: Mental Health

Asked by Baroness Redfern

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to extend funding for NHS Practitioner Health beyond March 2026. [HL6189]

Baroness Merron: NHS England has recently extended the NHS Practitioner Health service to the end of March 2026. Discussions around the mental health and wellbeing provision for future staff, including this service, are ongoing.

Nicotine: Flavourings and Packaging

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to tackle the rise in illegal high-strength nicotine pouches. [HL5785]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce restrictions on the flavours and packaging of nicotine pouches. [HL5786]

Baroness Merron: Data from August 2024 by ASH suggests that 1.2% of children aged between 11 and 18 years old currently use nicotine pouches. The Government is concerned that these products, just like vapes, are being branded and marketed to appeal to children through colourful packaging and flavours. There is currently no set nicotine limit for nicotine pouches, and nicotine strengths vary from two milligrams per pouch to as high as 150 milligrams per pouch.

That is why, through the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, we are banning the advertisement and sponsorship of these

products, introducing age of sale restrictions to people aged 18 years old for nicotine pouches, banning free samples, and providing powers to restrict packaging, flavours, and point of sale displays.

These powers will also allow the Government to limit the amount of nicotine in a pouch, as well as ban any other ingredient that might be harmful in a pouch. We will therefore be able to regulate, subject to consultation, to ensure that nicotine pouches are limited to an appropriate strength.

We will consult on these regulations as soon as possible once the bill has received Royal Assent.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask His Majesty's Government how and when they intend to respond to the passing of the Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 Applicability Motion in the Northern Ireland Assembly. [HL5990]

Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent: The Government continues to evaluate the implications of Regulation 2023/2411, in the light of the applicability motion vote in the Northern Ireland Assembly and the conditions set out in Schedule 6B of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Office for Health Improvement and Disparities: Staff

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Merron on 10 March (HL5185), how many of the 1,010 full-time equivalent employees working for the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities will be tasked with working on the prevention of gambling harms under the gambling statutory levy. [HL5926]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Merron on 10 March (HL5185), how many of the 1,010 full-time equivalent employees working for the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities are working on problem gambling and gambling harms. [HL5927]

Baroness Merron: There is currently a project team of four working directly on the establishment of the gambling prevention commissioning programme of work, within the wider Alcohol and Gambling policy team. The team also draws on analytical, financial, and legal specialists from across the Department to support policy development. As work progresses on the development of the future approach to prevention, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities will consider any additional resource requirements.

Pharmacy: Finance

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made any allocation to community pharmacies for the Pharmacy First service for the financial year 2025–26; and, if so, how much. [HL6199]

Baroness Merron: We have now concluded the consultation on funding for 2024/25 and 2025/26, and have agreed with Community Pharmacy England to increase the community pharmacy contractual framework to £3.073 billion. We have also agreed to continue funding for Pharmacy First in 2025/26 to reflect the growth of the service to date, with £215 million available to be earned by contractors in 2025/26.

Primary Biliary Cholangitis

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure greater primary care awareness and early identification of primary biliary cholangitis. [HL5922]

Baroness Merron: We remain committed to improving the lives of people living with rare diseases, such as primary biliary cholangitis. One of the four priorities of the UK Rare Diseases Framework is increasing awareness of rare diseases among healthcare professionals. Our fourth England action plan, published in February 2025, reports on progress.

GeNotes is an online resource for clinicians, providing educational information as needed. This year the specialty of gastro-hepatology was launched in GeNotes, and includes resources for clinicians on primary biliary cholangitis.

NHS England, through the Hepatobiliary and Pancreas Clinical Reference Group, is working with partners to raise awareness and understanding of primary biliary cholangitis and its treatments. Plans include production of a treatment algorithm for use by emergency departments, which may also be helpful for general practitioners.

Primary Biliary Cholangitis: Health Services

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of current care pathways for patients diagnosed with primary biliary cholangitis. [HL5923]

Baroness Merron: The NHS.UK website has a conditions page on primary biliary cholangitis, available in an online only format, which provides an overview of the care pathway. NHS England commissions a specialist paediatric liver service from three hospitals, the Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, the King's College Hospital NHS

Foundation Trust, and the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. This service provides assessment, diagnosis, and management of children with all forms of liver disease, including primary biliary cholangitis.

Primary Biliary Cholangitis: Women

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure primary care clinicians receive training to distinguish symptoms of primary biliary cholangitis from perimenopause, and to support early diagnosis and timely referral for women affected by the condition. [[HL5920](#)]

Baroness Merron: We remain committed to improving the lives of people living with rare diseases, such as primary biliary cholangitis. One of the four priorities of the UK Rare Diseases Framework is increasing awareness of rare diseases among healthcare professionals. Our fourth England action plan, published in February 2025, reports on progress.

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) has a holistic curriculum of training, with a specific section on women's health, including menopause. To support practicing general practitioners, the RCGP has developed a Women's Health Library with educational resources and guidelines on women's health, which includes a specific section on menopause.

Primary biliary cholangitis has a set of commonly found symptoms, and work is underway to raise awareness of them. NHS England, through the Hepatobiliary and Pancreas Clinical Reference Group, is working closely with partners to raise awareness and understanding of primary biliary cholangitis and its treatments. Plans include the production of a treatment algorithm for use by emergency departments, which may also be helpful for general practitioners.

Pupils: Ukraine

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

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will consider teaching Ukrainian to GCSE and A-level standards in some schools and commit to overcoming any obstacles preventing this from happening. [[HL5393](#)]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: Decisions about which languages to offer at GCSE in England are taken by the four independent awarding organisations, AQA, OCR, Pearson Edexcel and WJEC, rather than by central government. Awarding organisations are free to produce a GCSE in any modern language, including Ukrainian. This decision would be informed by several factors, including the level of demand from schools and the proportion of the population in the UK speaking the language.

The government stands steadfast behind the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian government. The department is proud to support children and families from Ukraine during their transition to a new life and to do our part to

support the Ukrainian people. The department launched the UK-Ukraine School Partnerships Programme in January, which supports UK-based Ukrainian students' cultural ties to Ukraine and builds cross-cultural understanding among our pupils.

River Severn and River Thames: Water

*Asked by **Lord Wigley***

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proposals for pumping water from the River Severn to the River Thames for use in South-East England. [[HL6167](#)]

Baroness Hayman of Ullock: The Severn to Thames Transfer is part of the RAPID programme and this means it will receive regulatory oversight as the owners (Severn Trent Water, Thames Water and United Utilities) continue to investigate and develop this potential strategic regional option (SRO). The Severn to Thames Transfer progressed through gate two in June 2023 after it was assessed by the RAPID partner regulators (Ofwat, EA and DWI). It was decided that this SRO should continue to be developed towards gate three.

The Severn to Thames Transfer is not currently a preferred option in water companies' water resource management plans (WRMPs). However, at PR24 Ofwat decided that the Severn to Thames Transfer should continue to be developed. This is because securing our future water supply is of critical importance, and therefore it is crucial that there is contingency within the system.

In the event that the Severn Thames Transfer is progressed, it is likely to involve a pipeline connection of the River Severn to the River Thames to enable the transfer of up to 500Ml/d raw water to the Southeast during times of drought.

Teachers: Recruitment

*Asked by **Baroness Barran***

To ask His Majesty's Government what are the total annual running costs of the Department for Education's teaching recruitment service. [[HL5343](#)]

Baroness Smith of Malvern: The department aims to deliver high quality advice and support for every potential teacher, enabling them to successfully apply for initial teacher training (ITT) through our Get Into Teaching service and our modernised in-house digital recruitment services. The total running costs of these services for the 2024/25 financial year are £36.5 million. This includes a range of programmes such as the Get Into Teaching Information service, Apply for Teacher Training service and the Teaching Internships programme.

Trade: USA

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to strengthen trade relations with the United

States of America, particularly in the technology and digital sectors. [HL6157]

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: The UK-US relationship is already very strong, with trade worth £315 billion in 2024, and shared investment of over £1.2 trillion at the end of 2023.

As you will be aware, on Tuesday 18 March, the Secretary of State for Business and Trade met with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer and the Special Envoy to the UK Mark Burnett in Washington DC. The meeting followed last month's agreement between the Prime Minister and President Trump that teams would start working together on an Economic Prosperity Deal, building on our shared strengths and commitment to economic security.

Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to combat tuberculosis domestically and internationally. [HL6219]

Baroness Merron: The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and NHS England's joint *Tuberculosis (TB): action plan for England, 2021 to 2026* details actions to achieve a 90% reduction in people with TB by 2035. This is aligned with the World Health Organization's (WHO) elimination targets. Work to review and update the national action plan, including a call for evidence, is underway.

The *Tuberculosis (TB): action plan for England, 2021 to 2026* is available on the GOV.UK website, in an online only format. The UKHSA's research and analysis executive summary on TB, updated 16 January 2025, is also available on the GOV.UK website, in an online only format.

The United Kingdom is a leading donor in the fight against TB. Our £1 billion commitment to the Global Fund, from 2023 to 2025, will provide TB treatment and care for 1.1 million people, screen 20 million people for TB, and provide 41,800 people with treatment for multidrug-resistant TB. This is complemented by our investment in Unitaid, to improve access to key TB products, and our support of WHO and others, to strengthen health systems.

Vaccination: Publicity

Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth**

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote the uptake of vaccinations to combat the spread of diseases. [HL6220]

Baroness Merron: The Government is aware of the need to improve the uptake of our vaccine programmes.

The Department is working with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and NHS England to take

steps to promote uptake by providing diverse delivery methods, to make getting vaccinated easier, increasing outreach efforts to under-served groups, and raising awareness of the dangers of vaccine preventable diseases. Paid for marketing campaigns to support uptake of routine immunisations, seasonal flu, and COVID-19 vaccinations have been run over the past year, with evaluation showing positive results.

The UKHSA has continued to undertake annual surveys of parents and adolescents to develop an understanding of how knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes towards immunisation, vaccine safety, and disease severity influence vaccine uptake decision-making.

Along with this work, the Department is also looking at how it can go further, exploring new ways to boost uptake by supplementing the general practice offer already based in communities through teams including community pharmacists and health visitors.

It is vitally important that everyone has their recommended vaccinations, as they are the best way to help protect yourself and your family from these viruses, which can cause serious harm.

VE Day and VJ Day: Anniversaries

Asked by **Lord McInnes of Kilwinning**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the statement by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on 13 March (HC Deb col 1307), whether all the education materials will be produced for the whole of the UK; and whether they have received commitments from the devolved administrations to distribute these materials to all state schools. [HL6008]

Baroness Twycross: The Government has announced an ambitious programme for the entire UK to commemorate the 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ Day. Communities across the UK will come together to mark the commemorations - by participating in the official programme and by organising their own events and activities.

The Government has launched a brand-new collection of educational resources titled *VE Day: Our Shared Story*, encouraging every young person across the UK to engage with veteran testimony and experience through the year of the 80th anniversary. Schools, teachers and community youth groups are invited to download the free schools planning pack to start planning activities for young people. The material will be translated into Welsh and we are working closely with the Devolved Governments to disseminate the educational materials across all parts of the UK.

Windsor Framework

Asked by **Lord Dodds of Duncairn**

To ask His Majesty's Government what resources they are providing to the working of the Windsor Framework Independent Monitoring Panel. [HL5991]

Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask His Majesty's Government how many staff are employed by the Windsor Framework Independent Monitoring Panel; and how many times the body has met since it was created. [[HL5992](#)]

Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent: I refer the Noble Lord to the answer given by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 18 March 2025 ([UIN 38339](#)).

In accordance with paragraph 160 of the *Safeguarding the Union* command paper, a Secretariat is provided by the UK Government to the Panel, and the Panel receives relevant data to support its monitoring functions. The Panel does not directly employ staff.

It is a matter for the Panel to determine the structure and cadence of its meetings and panellists regularly engage with each other as well as having recently met the Secretary of State on 3 March.

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