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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN ANSWERS**

**Written Answers.....1**

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<b>Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on Trent</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for NI Office and Spokesperson for 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
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<b>Lord Lemos</b>	Whip
<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 Ponsonby of Shulbrede</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice, Whip
<b>Baroness Sherlock</b>	Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions
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<b>Lord Wilson of Sedgefield</b>	Whip

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# Written Answers

Thursday, 24 July 2025

## Abortion: Prosecutions

*Asked by Lord Dodds of Duncairn*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many criminal prosecutions related to abortion have been brought in each of the last five years, and what assessment they have made of connection between the number of such prosecutions and the availability of telemedicine for early medical abortion. [HL9470]

**Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede:** The Ministry of Justice publishes data on the number of prosecutions across England and Wales in the Outcomes by Offences data tool, that can be downloaded from the Criminal Justice Statistics landing page here: [Criminal justice statistics - GOV.UK](https://www.criminaljusticestatistics.gov.uk).

The offences that constitute unlawful abortion include procuring an illegal abortion under sections 58 and 59 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, as well as child destruction under section 1 of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. This data is held on a principal-offence basis and therefore reports information relating to the most serious offence that a defendant was dealt for. The Department of Health and Social Care is responsible for the policy relating to telemedicine for early medical abortion. The available data does not specify how many of these prosecutions are linked to the use of telemedicine for early medical abortion. The Government has not made an assessment on the connection between the number of such prosecutions and the availability of telemedicine for early medical abortion.

## Afghanistan: Resettlement

*Asked by Lord Jackson of Peterborough*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they consulted the government of United States before closing the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme. [HL9328]

**Lord Coaker:** The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) was a scheme developed by the UK Government to provide support to our Afghan Partners and allies. As such, the decision to close ARAP to new principal applications was taken by the UK Government.

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the lessons learned from the Afghanistan data loss incident. [HL9533]

**Lord Coaker:** The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has commissioned several audits at various times since the data protection incident relating to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy to inform remediation

plans. All recommendations from these audits have been accepted and are either complete or work-in-progress.

It is a key priority of this Government to reinforce data handling practices. Within the Defence Afghan Relocation and Resettlement (DARR) team we have introduced a new casework management system which prioritises data protection. We also recently completed a comprehensive review on legacy data held within this casework management system and historic email accounts to ensure information is held at the right security classification and within the right location, which also enhances the case-working capability. This includes the application of need-to-know principles, with shared sites locked down and proactively managed.

A new senior civil servant level Chief Information Officer was appointed within the DARR team in October 2024 with responsibility for a larger and more skilled data and information management team. They produced a data strategy in line with the Government Digital Services' data maturity assessment and this is shaped by priorities as identified from the myriad internal and external audits.

We regularly emphasise the need to complete the relevant mandatory training across DARR and all current staff have completed it. Bespoke induction training includes security briefings and data protection training, and there are regular communications on protecting information and expected behaviours, including discussions at senior leadership level.

We are continuously investing in our cybersecurity infrastructure to ensure we remain resilient against evolving threats. Through targeted interventions, campaigns, and role-specific training, we are embedding a culture where every individual understands their role in safeguarding Defence. By reinforcing positive cyber habits and reducing human cyber risk, we are building a workforce that is confident, capable, and cyber secure.

## Air Force: Weapons

*Asked by Baroness Goldie*

To ask His Majesty's Government, with regard to recommendation 48 of the Strategic Defence Review 2025, whether they have initiated the review of storage and other regulations of highly expensive weapons used by the Royal Air Force; and if not, when they will do so. [HL9399]

**Lord Coaker:** The Royal Air Force is in the process of establishing a review in line with Recommendation 48 of the Strategic Defence Review. This work will form part of the Chief of the Air Staff's wider Optimise Directive, which coheres initiatives aimed at delivering benefits across the Royal Air Force and ensuring the best use of resources. Examining investment options for the explosives' storage estate and availability of weapons through the Defence Investment Plan will form a key aspect of the review, which will be completed by June 2026.

## **Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023**

*Asked by **Baroness Hodgson of Abinger***

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Hayman of Ullock on 10 July (HL9168), whether they plan to meet the Low-Welfare Act Coalition as part of stakeholder engagement, and if so when. [HL9477]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** The Government has previously met with the Low-Welfare Act Coalition in October 2024 and has corresponded with the group since. Further engagement is planned shortly.

## **Army and Veterans: Civil Proceedings**

*Asked by **Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown***

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support and protect Army personnel and veterans from vexatious legal claims, and to provide veterans with protection against prosecutions. [HL9616]

**Lord Coaker:** The vast majority of Service personnel maintain the highest standards of behaviour, in the most challenging of circumstances. There are safeguards in place to reduce the risk of vexatious claims against them.

The Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Act was introduced in 2020 with the aim to provide greater certainty for service personnel and veterans in relation to claims and potential prosecution for historical events that occurred on overseas operations. This includes a statutory presumption against prosecution, meaning that it will be "exceptional" for Service personnel or veterans to be prosecuted in those circumstances.

The Act does not prevent victims of alleged offences by Service personnel from bringing forward their allegations, which will be investigated and, where appropriate, prosecuted.

All members of the Armed Forces, including the Reserve Forces and Ministry of Defence civilians, plus veterans, are provided with welfare and legal support at public expense where they face criminal or civil allegations that relate to actions taken during their employment or service, and where they were performing their duties. This applies regardless of where in the world the alleged offence took place, or when.

## **Autonomous Weapons and Uncrewed Systems: Procurement**

*Asked by **Baroness Goldie***

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made in procuring autonomous and unmanned platforms for the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. [HL9396]

**Lord Coaker:** For the Royal Air Force, Protector and Storm Shroud are entering operational service this year.

For the Royal Navy, the Concept of Hybrid Carrier Air Wings continues to develop to greatly enhance the striking power of our carriers. Molloy T150 uncrewed rotary wing logistics support air systems have deployed as part of OP HIGHMAST. The Peregrine rotary wing system has also entered operational service in the Gulf. Development continues on uncrewed surface vessels and uncrewed underwater vehicles.

Further systems are under development or undergoing trials in a range of roles across both services. This will continue to be accelerated, with further workstreams through the Defence Investment Plan.

## **Batteries: Storage**

*Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering***

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to protect those who live close to a battery storage plant from fire risks. [HL9331]

**Lord Wilson of Sedgefield:** Grid-scale batteries are regulated by the Health and Safety Executive within a robust framework which requires responsible parties to manage risks at every stage of the system's deployment. Developers are responsible for minimising fire risks and work closely with fire services to develop site emergency response plans.

The Government will consult on including grid-scale batteries in the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR). EPR requires battery sites to demonstrate to the Environment Agency that risks are avoided or controlled and provides for ongoing regulatory inspections.

*Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering***

To ask His Majesty's Government how the energy stored in battery storage plants will be distributed for use, and whether local communities will be the priority for use of that energy. [HL9332]

**Lord Wilson of Sedgefield:** Energy from battery storage plants is distributed to consumers in order to maximise benefits to the electricity system overall and depending on where in the network the plant is connected. The Government is considering introducing a mandatory community benefits scheme for low carbon energy infrastructure under which developers would contribute to community funds, directly supporting local priorities and services. The government has sought views on the scope of such a scheme, and how a scheme should be administered and enforced.

## **Boeing E-7: Procurement**

*Asked by **Baroness Goldie***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they are planning to purchase further E-7 Wedgetail airborne early warning and control aircraft in accordance with

recommendation 47 of the Strategic Defence Review 2025. [[HL9398](#)]

**Lord Coaker:** The Ministry of Defence is continuing with its procurement of E-7 Wedgetail in order to meet the national and NATO requirements for an Airborne Early Warning & Control capability which is interoperable with its allies.

The recent Strategic Defence Review recommended that further E-7 aircraft should be procured when funding allows, taking account of infrastructure and operating costs.

### Civil Proceedings: Legal Costs

*Asked by Lord Meston*

To ask His Majesty's Government what consideration they are giving to implementing the recommendations of the final report of the Civil Justice Council for its review of litigation funding published on 2 June. [[HL9335](#)]

**Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede:** The Government welcomes the Civil Justice Council review of litigation funding, which will help inform the approach to potential reforms. We will outline next steps in due course.

### Crime

*Asked by Lord Davies of Gower*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the prevalence of the underreporting of (1) domestic abuse, (2) sexual violence, and (3) hate crimes. [[HL9325](#)]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The best measure of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), including domestic abuse and sexual violence, is prevalence as reported through the CSEW because this is anonymous, includes crimes not reported to the police and is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices.

The gap between police reports of domestic abuse and sexual violence and the number of victims and survivors estimated by the CSEW means there is a significant number of unidentified cases.

As part of our unprecedented mission to tackle the national emergency of VAWG we have worked with the ONS to develop a new combined metric to better capture the scale of these crimes for the first time.

For our forthcoming Strategy for tackling Violence Against Women and Girls we will use a broad suite of metrics to provide a more comprehensive understanding of VAWG across Government and society.

### Cryptoassets: Regulation

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to bring forward regulations regarding (1) investment

in, and (2) management of, cryptocurrency assets. [[HL9452](#)]

**Lord Livermore:** The Government intends to bring forward legislation delivering a comprehensive national regulatory framework for cryptoassets by the end of this year and has engaged with industry on draft legislation.

This will support growth in the UK by giving cryptoasset firms the regulatory certainty needed to invest here, and to help drive innovation in our financial services sector.

It will also ensure that UK customers are protected from the worst harms when they make use of cryptoasset services.

### Cryptocurrencies

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for issuing a central bank digital currency. [[HL9454](#)]

**Lord Livermore:** HM Treasury and the Bank of England are continuing to explore the case for a UK retail central bank digital currency (CBDC).

No decision has been taken on whether to introduce the digital pound. The work currently being undertaken as part of the ongoing design phase will provide a rigorous view of the costs and benefits of the digital pound and take account of international developments and wider trends in money and payments, providing the evidence base for a decision on whether to proceed to a build phase. Any decision to proceed with the digital pound would be accompanied by the introduction of primary legislation, ensuring full Parliamentary scrutiny by both Houses of Parliament.

### Defence: Finance

*Asked by Lord Craig of Radley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proposal for a European Rearmament Bank, and whether they plan to support its development. [[HL9390](#)]

**Lord Livermore:** The UK committed to increase defence spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2027. We also set an ambition to reach 3% in the next parliament.

The UK has always believed in working together with allies to keep our countries safe, secure and prosperous. A strong economy needs a strong national defence, and the UK is committed to collaborating with our allies on enhancing European defence capabilities and value for money from increased defence spending.

As we continue to strengthen our collective defence landscape, it is vital we look to the longer-term and build on the work of existing and ongoing initiatives to aggregate defence demand together and increase European & NATO interoperability and standardisation.



We continue to engage with stakeholders, such as the European Rearmament Bank authors, on new ideas.

*Asked by **Baroness Goldie***

To ask His Majesty's Government what proportion of the Single Intelligence Account they are redesignating as core defence spending. [[HL9395](#)]

**Lord Livermore:** Historically, the Single Intelligence Account (SIA) budget has included elements of NATO-qualifying defence expenditure. In line with our allies, and to recognise the important contribution the intelligence agencies play in national defence, by 2027 we will consider the whole of the SIA budget to be NATO-qualifying. It will count towards the 2.6% target for core defence spending.

The budget for the SIA from 2026 onwards is set out in the Spending Review 2025 document, published on 11 June 2025.

## Droughts and Floods: Artificial Intelligence

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

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how artificial intelligence could be used to protect against droughts and floods, particularly in relation to managing water storage systems. [[HL9570](#)]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** It is vital that water companies also embrace new technologies to manage their water systems, such as the use of artificial intelligence to help detect leaks.

The Environment Agency and its partners are assessing how new technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) can improve how they assess, manage and communicate flood risk, including:

- Trials to understand how machine learning (ML) approaches can link historic flood data to forecast flood impacts, whilst the development of generative artificial intelligence may improve targeted flood warnings.
- AI is being trialled in the administration of reports submitted by reservoir supervising engineers.
- Projects being delivered under the £200 million flood and coastal innovation programmes (FCIP) are piloting the use of AI and ML to provide improved local flood resilience.
- AI being explored in flood asset management, that will enable predictive maintenance to anticipate failures before they occur.

## Employers' Contributions: Unemployment

*Asked by **Lord Mott***

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the increase in employer National Insurance contributions on the unemployment rate; and whether they will deposit any

modelling carried out as part of that assessment in the Library of the House. [[HL9652](#)]

**Lord Livermore:** A detailed assessment of this policy has been published by HMRC in their Tax Information and Impact Note. The TIIN sets out the impact of the policy on the exchequer, the economic impacts of the policy, and the impacts on individuals, businesses, and civil society organisations, as well as an overview of the equality impacts.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) published their March 2025 Economic and Fiscal Outlook (EFO), which sets out a detailed forecast of the economy and public finances.

With all policies considered, the EFO forecasts the unemployment rate to remain low throughout the forecast period and fall to 4.1% in 2029.

## Farmers: Water Supply

*Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering***

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to engage with water companies to ensure that farmers have access to water for their crops and livestock. [[HL9561](#)]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** The Environment Agency (EA) is engaging with water companies to ensure that water is abstracted in the best way for all users and the environment and that water companies are following their drought plans.

Water companies' drought plans set out the actions they will take to monitor and manage the impact of drought on their customers (including farmers) and the environment. It is their responsibility to act in line with these plans.

Regional Water Resources Groups are made up of the EA, water companies, the National Farmers Union and Abstractor Groups. The regional groups are considering how they can work together to ensure there is sufficient water in the system to provide availability for all users. This may include, for example, water companies abstracting lower volumes at specific points, so water moves downstream and allows farmers to abstract water.

## Financial Services: Technology

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

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the financial benefits of fintech companies to the London Stock Exchange, and what steps they are taking to encourage fintech companies to be based in London. [[HL9527](#)]

**Lord Livermore:** In the Financial Services Growth and Competitiveness Strategy, Fintech is one of the five priority growth opportunities, noting that the UK Fintech sector attracted \$3.6 billion in investment in 2024. The Strategy set out the government's vision for the UK to be the world's most advanced global financial centre and

remain a leading jurisdiction for Fintech firms to start up, scale and list.

The Strategy announced that the government will also establish a Listings Taskforce to support businesses to list and grow in the UK. HM Treasury will work in partnership with the Office for Investment, and engage with industry, to ensure the UK attracts the best and brightest businesses from around the world, and right here in the UK, to list on UK markets.

## Food Supply

*Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering***

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to implement the recommendations contained in the Dimpleby Report on the National Food Strategy. [HL9427]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Towards a Good Food Cycle, the UK Government food strategy for England, published on 15 July, sets out the Government's plans to transform the food system. [A UK government food strategy for England - GOV.UK](#)

The food strategy will work to make good, healthy food more accessible and affordable, as part of the Government's Plan for Change. Our strategy builds on existing evidence and analysis, such as The National Food Strategy. We have an opportunity to convert the “junk food cycle”, identified by Henry Dimbleby, into a “good food cycle” that delivers growth, while improving health, climate and environment and food security outcomes from the food system.

## Health Insurance

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that the Financial Conduct Authority's Consumer Duty obligations are being enforced in ways that address risks to patient safety and informed consent in private medical insurance contracts, particularly in relation to the treatment of pre-existing conditions and service exclusions. [HL9373]

**Lord Livermore:** The government requires all insurers, including those providing private medical insurance, to treat customers fairly. This is enforced under the rules of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the independent body responsible for regulating and supervising the financial services industry, including insurance firms.

The FCA has a statutory objective to protect consumers. The government holds the FCA to account for how it advances its objectives, including through the FCA's Annual Report which is laid before Parliament.

The FCA's Consumer Duty sets high standards of consumer protection across regulated financial services firms, including a requirement for firms to put their customers' needs first. The FCA monitors firms to ensure they meet these standards and has robust powers to take action where necessary.

## Health Services: Private Sector

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to re-assess and update the Private Healthcare Market Investigation Order 2014, published by the Competition and Market Authority on 1 October 2014. [HL9372]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** Responsibility for reviewing the Private Healthcare Market Investigation Order 2014 lies with the CMA, which keeps markets remedies under review. While the CMA has not initiated a review of this Order at this time, it welcomes submissions from relevant parties where existing remedies may no longer be fit for purpose. If the CMA reviews the Order and deems there to be a change of circumstance such that the Order is no longer appropriate, it can vary or revoke the Order. However, it cannot introduce a new Order – this would require a new market investigation.

## Health: Companies

*Asked by **Lord Scriven***

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the merger of NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care, what steps they will take to ensure that health tech companies who have received first phase funding from the Small Business Research Initiative can receive second phase funding this financial year. [HL9355]

**Baroness Merron:** The Department and NHS England are committed to health and care research, as it is vital to fulfilling the objectives of the Growth and Health Missions. The Department and NHS England will continue to support research and development throughout the transition process and beyond. NHS England's Innovation, Research and Life Sciences Strategy team has confirmed funding in 2025/26 for innovations already supported through Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) Healthcare competitions in their current phases. NHS England has invested £13.6 million through the SBRI Healthcare programme to support the development of over 50 innovations this year. NHS England is unable to fund future phases within this financial year.

## Immigration: Fees and Charges

*Asked by **Lord Blunkett***

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Livermore on 8 July (HL8809), whether (1) a certificate of sponsorship fee, and (2) an immigration skills charge, constitute a taxable benefit for employers in circumstances where those costs cannot be passed on to employees. [HL9380]

**Lord Livermore:** If an employer pays for a certificate of sponsorship fee and the immigration skills charge, as a result of sponsoring a worker from overseas, these costs could be liable to Income Tax. Whether tax is payable

will depend on individual circumstances as tax exemptions may apply. For this reason, each circumstance will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Government has no plans to change the tax treatment of immigration fees. However, all taxes are kept under review as part of the tax policymaking process.

### Income Tax: Children

*Asked by Baroness Buscombe*

To ask His Majesty's Government what were the total income tax receipts for taxpayers aged 16–17 years old in each of the past three financial years. [HL9584]

**Lord Livermore:** Estimates for the total income tax liabilities for taxpayers aged 16–17 years old for the three latest available financial years 2020–21, 2021–22 and 2022–23 are set out below. Information after the financial year 2022–23 is not currently available.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Tax liabilities of 16–17 year olds (Millions) (£)</i>
2020–21	9
2021–22	12
2022–23	13

Source: Survey of Personal Incomes, tax years 2020–21, 2021–22 and 2022–23

Notes on the table

i) The tax year 2022 to 2023 is the latest year for which these figures are available.

ii) Figures are presented in millions.

iii) The data underlying the Survey of Personal Incomes is based on a large sample of over 900,000 individuals with incomes reported to HMRC. As is the case with the published Personal Incomes Statistics, these figures are statistical estimates and will be subject to sampling variation.

iv) This table only covers individuals with some liability to tax.

v) For more information about the Survey of Personal Incomes please refer to the supporting documentation. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-incomes-statistics-for-the-tax-year-2022-to-2023/personal-income-statistics-2022-to-2023-supporting-documentation>

vi) Note that tax year 2020–21 and, to a lesser extent, 2021–22 may be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdown restrictions may have prevented new taxpayers from joining the labour market.

### Infected Blood Compensation Scheme

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect all claims relating to infected blood to be settled in full. [HL9384]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** The IBCA Framework Document, published in March, sets out the timelines agreed between IBCA and Cabinet Office; namely for the bulk of infected people to be paid no later than the end of 2027 and the bulk of affected people to be paid no later than the end of 2029.

Due to the nature of the Infected Blood scandal there is uncertainty over the number of people who might be eligible for compensation. The final number of eligible people will ultimately depend on the number of victims who come forward and there is no limit or target on the amount announced for the scheme. Therefore these timescales have been agreed with IBCA to ensure that the door is kept open for those who have not yet identified themselves as being infected or affected.

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many claims relating to infected blood they expect to be settled within the next 12 months. [HL9385]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** IBCA has opened the service to those who are living with infection, registered with a support scheme, and are prioritising those who are nearing the end of their lives within this cohort. IBCA is contacting an average of 100 people every week to start their claim. Nearly two-thirds of those who are living with infection and registered with a support scheme have now been asked to start their claim, and IBCA expect to start claims for everyone in this group within the next few months.

### Investment

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask His Majesty's Government how they intend to ensure that investors in long term asset funds are protected against the losses, gating and trading suspensions which have arisen when open-ended funds cannot sell their investments to meet redemptions. [HL9572]

*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the suitability of (1) closed-ended and (2) open-ended investment companies for holding illiquid long-term real assets. [HL9573]

**Lord Livermore:** The Long-Term Asset Fund (LTAF) was devised to bridge the gap between closed-ended funds and fully open-ended daily-dealing funds and fulfil the need for investment products that can provide funding for long-term projects while offering investors potential for higher returns in exchange for limited liquidity.

The FCA have designed robust governance requirements for the LTAF, so investors who understand the risks of investing in long-term less liquid assets are able to invest with confidence. Where a firm markets an LTAF to a retail investor, the firm must provide



appropriate risk warnings and conduct an appropriateness assessment.

The international Financial Stability Board (FSB) recognises that open-ended funds that invest in less liquid or illiquid assets while allowing investors quick and frequent access to their money, risk being unable to sell investments quickly enough to meet large investor redemptions. In 2023 the FSB published recommendations to address these vulnerabilities in open-ended funds. The FSB's recommendations include assessing the appropriateness of redemption terms for open-ended funds holding less liquid and illiquid assets, which was a key consideration in the design of the LTAF.

The Government is supportive of the FSB's work on open-ended funds and the regulators are considering the implementation of the recommendations.

*Asked by **Baroness Altmann***

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to protect UK-listed closed-ended funds against cost-disclosure regulations which deter investment. [HL9574]

**Lord Livermore:** In 2024, the Government legislated to enable the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to reform the UK's retail disclosure regime to ensure consumers have access to the most useful information – including on risks, costs and performance – to support their investment decisions.

The FCA continue to engage with industry and will publish their final rules later this year.

### **Iran: Israel**

*Asked by **Lord Callanan***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether ministers have sought legal advice following the escalation of violence between Israel and Iran. [HL8701]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Ministers receive legal advice as appropriate. It is long-standing practice that Governments of all colours do not disclose the fact that legal advice has or has not been given, nor the content of any such advice. This practice provides the fullest guarantee that government business will be conducted at all times in the light of thorough and candid legal advice.

### **Iran: Syria**

*Asked by **Lord Callanan***

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to limit the influence of the government of Iran in Syria since the fall of the Assad regime. [HL9320]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The UK continues to support the Syrian Government to deliver its commitments to build a more stable, free and prosperous

future for all Syrians. We have long condemned Iran's reckless and destabilising activity, which puts regional stability at risk. Following Assad's fall, we continue to monitor Iranian activity in Syria.

### **Litter: Tobacco**

*Asked by **Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made an assessment of the cost to local authorities of cleaning up discarded cigarette filters since their estimate in 2021. [HL9369]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** This Government has not made a further assessment of the cost to local authorities of cleaning up discarded cigarette filters since the estimate from the 2021 report by WRAP. This estimated annual costs of £46 million to local authorities from cigarette butts (primarily discarded filters) and found that cigarette butts likely accounted for 7% of total litter costs to local authorities.

### **Local Government: Investment**

*Asked by **Baroness Prentis of Banbury***

To ask His Majesty's Government whether the Community Municipal Investment (CMI) green investment bonds, such as those offered by the London Boroughs of Greenwich, Southwark, Hounslow and Hammersmith and Fulham, are authorised by any regulator; and whether retail investors in such municipal bonds have any form of protection under the (1) Financial Services Ombudsman Scheme or (2) Financial Services Compensation Scheme. [HL9510]

**Lord Livermore:** The Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 establishes a framework whereby any person, whether an individual or firm, can only carry out a regulated activity by way of business if they are authorised by the appropriate regulator or are exempt from the authorisation requirement. Under this framework, the government determines which activities are regulated activities, by specifying them in the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Regulated Activities) Order 2001 (RAO).

Where local authorities are the issuers of bonds, or borrowers under loans, they themselves would not require authorisation from a financial services regulator to act in that capacity, and would not be subject to regulation by the financial services regulators.

Financial services firms facilitating access to such funding by local authorities may, depending on the circumstances, be subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority, and investors may be eligible to refer disputes with the regulated firm to the Financial Ombudsman Service. Depending on the precise circumstances of any products offered, compensation in the case of default may be available under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

## Ministry of Defence: Management and Public Bodies

*Asked by **The Earl of Minto***

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce duplication and simplify (1) management structures in the Ministry of Defence, and (2) the organisation of public bodies and agencies that work with the Ministry of Defence. [HL9498]

**Lord Coaker:** I refer the noble Lord to the statement I made on 1 April 2025 (HLWS571) about Defence Reform.

Under the Secretary of State for Defence and Ministers, the structure of the Ministry of Defence has been simplified under four Areas: a Department of State, a Military Strategic Headquarters, a National Armaments Director Group, and the Defence Nuclear Enterprise. Departmental processes, and the organisation of public bodies and agencies, are now being updated to reflect the new structure, which will include simplification and reducing duplication.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Defence Reform [HLWS571 - Defence Reform.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2025-07-15/HL9498>

## Ministry of Defence: Procurement

*Asked by **The Earl of Minto***

To ask His Majesty's Government what action they are taking to streamline procurement processes in the Ministry of Defence. [HL9429]

**Lord Coaker:** As set out in the Strategic Defence Review and in the ongoing work on Defence Reform, the Ministry of Defence through the National Armament's Director will improve the effectiveness of our procurement processes by removing silos between services, by speeding up our decision-making, and by reducing bureaucracy.

## Mohammed Alazawi

*Asked by **Lord Scriven***

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case of Mohammed Alazawi who has been sentenced to nine years' imprisonment for crimes related to the non-therapeutic circumcision of boys. [HL9634]

**Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede:** The Ministry of Justice has no responsibility for non-therapeutic male circumcision or its regulation.

The Government, however, sympathises with the children and families affected by the harm caused by unregulated and irresponsible individuals who claim to be medical practitioners. It is right that those who act outside

the law, as in the case of Mr Alazawi, are held accountable and brought to justice in these cases.

Non-therapeutic male circumcision refers to procedures not medically necessary. While the Government respects that some parents seek this for religious or cultural reasons, it would urge all families to ensure the procedure is carried out safely, with the child's wellbeing given the highest priority. We would also encourage parents, before such a procedure is undertaken on their child, to discuss the matter first with their GP or healthcare practitioner.

## Navy: Amphibious Warships

*Asked by **Baroness Goldie***

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the Strategic Defence Review 2025, what steps they are taking to improve the amphibious capabilities of the Royal Navy. [HL9394]

**Lord Coaker:** Following the Strategic Defence Review 2025, the Royal Navy is progressing plans to enhance its amphibious capabilities through investment in new amphibious shipping including the Multi Role Strike Ship, Littoral Response Groups and the ongoing modernisation of the Commando Force. Final decisions on capability will be informed by the Defence Investment Plan in autumn 2025.

## Offenders: Deportation

*Asked by **Lord Davies of Gower***

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Lord Hanson of Flint on 10 July (HL Deb col 1487), whether there have been any instances of the General Data Protection Regulation or other data protection legislation preventing the Home Office from removing foreign criminals from the UK. [HL9393]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The UK's data protection legislation allows for personal data to be processed to pursue legitimate aims.

In particular, the international transfers regimes, which this Government recently improved through the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, allows for personal data to be transferred to third countries where that is necessary for important reasons of public interest, including for immigration control and law enforcement.

## Pensions

*Asked by **Baroness Neville-Rolfe***

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of paragraph 2.75 of the OBR's Fiscal Risks and Sustainability Report, published on 8 July, which states that the shift from defined benefit to defined contribution pensions increases fiscal risk as gilt holdings fall; and the finding that this will lead to an increase in debt interest spending of £22 billion in today's terms. [HL9340]

**Lord Livermore:** We have seen gradual changes to the structure of the pension market as a result of the shift from Defined Benefit to Defined Contribution schemes. Overall demand for gilts has, however, remained resilient throughout these periods of changing investor patterns and, as the OBR notes, these changes are widely known.

The government deliberately maintains a varied gilt issuance strategy to promote a well-diversified investor base, so that it is not overly reliant on demand from just one type of investor. Continuing to do so means that we expect that overall demand will remain robust in the future, even if there are changes in the demand patterns of particular investor groups.

### Pre-school education: Literacy

*Asked by Baroness Grey-Thompson*

To ask His Majesty's Government what action they are taking to tackle the impact of low levels of literacy on the economy through interventions in early years education. [[HL8716](#)]

**Baroness Smith of Malvern:** The department recognises a strong foundation in early language, reading and writing is crucial for children to achieve and thrive.

We are:

- Funding the Nuffield Early Language Intervention programme (NELI), an evidence-based programme targeting reception-aged children needing support with their speech and language development.
- Funding the Early Years Evidence Store which includes a theme on Communication and Language.
- Working with NHS England to deliver the Early Language Support for Every Child pathfinders.
- Working with partners to deliver the Early Language Local Innovation and Excellence programme which includes implementation of Speech and Language Communication pathway guidance and an early language identification measure.
- Funding the English Hubs Programme to improve the teaching of reading.
- Enabling schools to access the department's list of high-quality phonics programmes.
- Investing £10.7 million in 2025/26 to deliver home learning environment services through Family Hubs helping parents create settings that support early communication and literacy. The Little Moments Together campaign provides free resources that encourage parents to chat, play and read with their children.

### Private Education: VAT

*Asked by Lord Hacking*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made for the period of 1 January to 30 June of (1) the number of pupils who have transferred from independent to state schools due to the levying of VAT

on independent school fees, (2) the cost of these extra pupils to state schools, and (3) the net revenue, setting VAT inputs against outputs, collected by the tax from independent school fees. [[HL9593](#)]

**Lord Livermore:** VAT on private schools is forecast to raise £460m in 2024/25, rising to £1.7bn in 2029/30. Evidence so far, including the Department for Education's annual school census, shows pupils numbers remain firmly within historical patterns seen for over twenty years and broader demographic trends.

### Public Holidays: Veterans

*Asked by Lord Evans of Rainow*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the merits of designating the bank holiday at the end of August as 'Peace Day' in honour of veterans. [[HL9476](#)]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** The Government recognises the sacrifices made by so many veterans and the profound debt of gratitude owed to those who have served our country.

Occasionally, the Government may change a bank holiday for a one-off event, such as a changing the date of the early May bank holiday in 2020 to commemorate VE Day.

The current naming conventions of bank holidays are well established, and the Government has no plans to change the name of any future bank holidays at this time.

### Rare Diseases

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made an assessment of the impact of the abolition of NHS England on people with rare conditions. [[HL8321](#)]

**Baroness Merron:** Working under the *UK Rare Diseases Framework*, the Government is committed to improving the lives of those living with rare diseases.

Ministers and senior Departmental officials are working with the new executive team at the top of NHS England, led by Sir Jim Mackey, to lead the formation of a new joint centre. Whilst this transformation takes place, we will ensure that we continue to evaluate impacts and work collaboratively to ensure continuity of care and that there are no risks to patient safety.

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made an assessment of the impact of the reintegration of NHS England on the delivery of the National Congenital Anomaly and Rare Disease Registration Service. [[HL8322](#)]

**Baroness Merron:** Working under the *UK Rare Diseases Framework*, the Government is committed to improving the lives of those living with rare diseases. Digital data and technology are an underpinning theme of

the framework. We acknowledge the important role of the National Congenital Anomaly and Rare Disease Registration Service, part of the National Disease Registration Service, play in underpinning the delivery of England's rare diseases action plans. Ministers and senior Departmental officials are working with the new executive team at the top of NHS England, led by Sir Jim Mackey, to lead the formation of a new joint centre. The important role of the National Disease Registration Service will be considered as part of future plans. Whilst this transformation takes place, we will ensure that we continue to evaluate impacts and work collaboratively to ensure continuity of care and that there are no risks to patient safety.

### Sanitation: UK Relations with EU

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the UK–EU reset agreement, when they expect an agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary matters to be agreed. [HL9474]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** As announced at the UK-EU Leaders' Summit on May 19, 2025, the UK and EU have agreed to work towards a common Sanitary and Phytosanitary Area.

Our aim is to start the detailed negotiations as soon as possible, as we want to see businesses benefit from removing barriers to trade.

### Sewage and Water Supply

*Asked by Lord Empey*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the growth in demand for water and sewerage services as a result of the population increase of the United Kingdom in the past five financial years. [HL9588]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** The Government recognises the importance of having a robust drainage and wastewater system both now and for future demand. It is the responsibility of water and sewerage undertakers to plan to meet the needs of customers, including accounting for population growth. As part of the Environment Act 2021, a new duty has been created for water companies in England to produce Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMPs). DWMPs set out how a water company intends to improve their drainage and wastewater systems over the next 25 years, accounting for factors including growing population and changing environmental circumstances. These plans will help sewerage companies to fully assess the capacity of the drainage and wastewater network and develop collaborative solutions to current problems and future issues. The plans will bring together various stakeholders including local authorities and industry regulators. Taking a strategic approach to drainage and wastewater management, will help to identify and mitigate issues

related to insufficient network capacity or damaged infrastructure.

### Shoplifting

*Asked by Lord Davies of Gower*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many incidents of shoplifting were recorded in each of the past five years; and how many resulted in a charge or summons. [HL9322]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** The Home Office collects and publishes information on the number of notifiable offences and their outcomes.

The table below show the volume of the shop theft offences outcomes recorded by the police in the years from 2020 to 2024 and how many of those resulted in a charge or summons.

*Table 1: Shoplifting offences recorded by the police from 2020 to 2024, and those resulting in charge/summons, England and Wales [Note: 1]*

<i>Calendar year (offence recorded)</i>	<i>Shoplifting Charged/Summonsed offences</i>		<i>%</i>
2020	254,547	44,969	18%
2021	256,198	39,353	15%
2022	315,052	48,268	15%
2023	429,873	72,144	17%
2024	516,971	93,156	18%

1. Figures for the period January to March 2020 exclude Greater Manchester police (GMP)

as they were unable to provide full data to the Home Office Data Hub (HODH) in this period.

*Asked by Lord Davies of Gower*

To ask His Majesty's Government what proportion of reported shoplifting offences result in police attendance. [HL9323]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** Data published by the NPCC ([Policing Retail Crime Action Plan shows early impact](#)), from a dip sample of 1,500 shoplifting incidents in December 2023, show that police attended:

- 60% of incidents where violence was used, with 16% of forces reporting 100% attendance for this type of incident.
- 76% of incidents where a suspect had been detained, with 21% of forces reporting 100% attendance.

Our Safer Streets Summer Initiative will see increased police patrols and local action in over 500 town centres this summer. As part of our Safer Streets Mission, we are committed to restoring neighbourhood policing, and as a result of our £200 million investment, we will see an additional 3,000 neighbourhood officers and PCSOs on the beat in communities across the country this year.



In the Crime and Policing Bill, introduced to Parliament on 25 February, we brought a new offence of assaulting a retail worker to protect the hardworking and dedicated staff that work in stores. We are also repealing legislation which makes shop theft of and below £200 a summary-only offence, sending a clear message that any level of shop theft is illegal and will be taken seriously.

To help tackle retail crime, we will provide £5 million over the next three years to continue to fund a specialist analysis team within Opal, the national policing intelligence unit for serious organised acquisitive crime.

We will also invest £2 million over the next three years in the National Business Crime Centre which provides a resource for both police and businesses to learn, share and support each other to prevent and combat crime.

### Small Businesses

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current level of confidence in the economy among small businesses; and how they plan to support small businesses. [HL9569]

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch:** Small businesses are vital to our communities and are essential to our economic success. Whilst we recognise the business environment has been difficult in recent times for many small businesses, according to the Lloyds Bank Business Barometer business confidence rose in June 2025 and is at its highest since 2015.

The upcoming SME Strategy Paper will outline our vision for small businesses to boost scale-ups, revitalise high streets, improve access to finance and markets. We are engaging with small business owners on the development of the Business Growth Service (BGS), to ensure that we deliver on our mission to make it easier for businesses to get the support they need to grow and thrive.

### Sodium Valproate

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government on what date they will respond to the Hughes Report into the medical and health challenges presented by sodium valproate for individuals, published on 7 February 2024; and what plans they have to implement a national financial redress scheme. [HL9351]

**Baroness Merron:** The Government is carefully considering the work by the Patient Safety Commissioner and her report, which set out options for redress for those harmed by valproate and pelvic mesh. This is a complex issue involving input from different Government departments. The Government will provide a further update to the Patient Safety Commissioner's report.

### Solar Power

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they will ensure that surplus energy generated by solar panels on roofs of warehouses and other commercial buildings can be exported back to the grid. [HL9333]

**Lord Wilson of Sedgefield:** Generation from rooftop solar can be exported to the grid provided there is capacity to accommodate it. This may require investment in distribution and/or transmission networks. Ofgem has raised the threshold for generation connection projects requiring a transmission network impact assessment from 1 Megawatt to below 5 Megawatts in England and Wales. This will reduce connection timescales and costs for rooftop solar schemes previously above the threshold. Reform of the transmission connections process will facilitate connections for projects that remain above the threshold, provided they are progressing and align with the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan.

### Streaming: Classification Schemes

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of self-rating partnerships between British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) and streaming services, and whether they plan to take steps to encourage wider adoption of BBFC age ratings on streaming services. [HL9348]

**Baroness Twycross:** The Government has not made an assessment of self-rating partnerships between the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) and video-on-demand (VoD) services. Ofcom, as the independent regulator, now has a new duty introduced through the Media Act 2024 to assess audience protection measures used by VoD services, such as age ratings, to ensure they are adequate to protect audiences from harm. The Government will in due course be designating mainstream VoD services, bringing them under enhanced regulation by Ofcom. Ofcom will then consult on a new standards Code for these services, similar to the Broadcasting Code. This could include the use of age ratings, if Ofcom considers it appropriate.

### Syria: Politics and Government

*Asked by Lord Callanan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and the interim government of Syria; and what steps they are taking to work with allies to maintain stability in that country. [HL9319]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The Foreign Secretary visited Damascus on 5 July, to renew UK-Syria relations and reiterate UK support to the new Syrian Government as it seeks to rebuild the economy and deliver an inclusive



political transition. A stable Syria is in the UK's interest and we have committed an additional £94.5 million of funding to provide urgent humanitarian aid, and support for Syria's longer-term recovery through education and livelihoods. We also lifted sanctions on some sectors, to help facilitate essential investment. Alongside allies, we continue to advocate and offer support for an inclusive political transition which protects the rights of all Syrians.

### **Syria: Sanctions**

*Asked by Lord Callanan*

To ask His Majesty's Government what conditions, criteria and evidence they used to inform the decisions to lift certain sanctions on Syria. [HL9321]

**Lord Collins of Highbury:** The Sanctions Act and the Regulations made under it provides the legal basis for the UK to impose, vary, and revoke sanctions designations and sectoral sanctions. On 25 April the UK lifted sanctions on several sectors, including trade, energy production, transport (aircraft) and finance, in order to reflect the change in circumstances in Syria, facilitate investment and support the Syrian people to rebuild their country and economy. The UK's sanctions regime continues to hold Assad and his associates to account for atrocities committed against the Syrian people. We keep our sanctions regime under review.

### **Taxation: Domicile**

*Asked by Lord Mott*

To ask His Majesty's Government how many (1) high-net-worth individuals, and (2) ultra-high-net-worth individuals, have ceased to be resident in the UK for tax purposes since 4 July 2024. [HL9622]

**Lord Livermore:** Taxpayers are not always required to inform HM Revenue and Customs when they leave the UK. Some taxpayers outside of Self Assessment might file a P85 form after leaving the UK, but only where they are seeking to claim a repayment of income tax.

Taxpayers in Self Assessment can indicate that they have become non-resident after leaving the UK, but tax returns for the 2024 to 2025 and the 2025 to 2026 tax years are not due to be received by HMRC until 31 January of 2026 and 2027, respectively. Additionally, tax residency is based on the tax year, meaning in the future we will be able to identify individuals who became non-resident in the 2024 to 2025 tax year but not specifically from July 2024.

### **Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill**

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the cost of implementing the Terminally

Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill in each of its first three years of operation should it become law. [HL8696]

**Baroness Merron:** I refer the noble Lord to the impact assessment.

### **Tobacco: Biodegradability**

*Asked by Baroness Redfern*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to require cigarette manufacturers to switch to producing biodegradable butts. [HL9566]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Whilst the plastic component of filters is of concern, the chemicals, toxins and heavy metals contained within a littered cigarette butt also pose a danger to the environment. For this reason, Defra does not support a move to plastic-free or biodegradable filters which would likely contain the same pollutants and have not been shown to break down quicker if littered in the environment.

Tobacco litter remains a concern for Defra, with cigarette filters consistently scoring as the most littered item in surveys. Local authorities already have powers to punish those who litter them including through prosecution. They can also create smoke free areas through the use of Public Space Protection Orders.

Defra believes the best way to tackle littering of filters is through reductions in smoking rates. We therefore continue to support all initiatives designed to encourage people to quit smoking or prevent them from starting smoking. Indeed, through the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, the Government is committed to creating a smoke-free generation, gradually ending the sale of tobacco products across the country and breaking the cycle of addiction and disadvantage.

We will continue to monitor the available evidence on the prevalence of littered cigarette filters before considering further action.

### **Typhoon Aircraft: Factories**

*Asked by Baroness Goldie*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to prevent the closure of the Typhoon fighter jet factory in Warton. [HL9397]

**Lord Coaker:** We continue to support BAE Systems in their ongoing export campaigns for Typhoon. We recognise the central role played by Combat Air in our industrial strategy and its vital contribution to the UK economy.

Over the next 10 years, Defence has plans to invest up to £30 billion on Combat Air through the Typhoon, F-35 and the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP), a significant proportion of which will be devoted to UK companies, particularly in north-west England.

As well as delivering a world class Combat Air fleet for our Armed Forces, this is supporting over 40,000 long-term, high-quality UK manufacturing jobs.

Recent orders placed by Spain and Italy for 25 and 24 aircraft respectively, negotiations on a potential deal with Türkiye, together with another 20 Typhoon expected to be ordered by Germany later this year, means that high-quality manufacturing jobs in BAE Systems are secure well into the 2030s.

This is because the UK leads on the manufacturing of 37% of all new Typhoon aircraft in accordance with the Eurofighter industrial workshare agreed by the four core nations (UK, Germany, Italy and Spain).

The work to deliver and integrate a new British-made ECRS Mk2 radar and integration of a new helmet called Striker II onto our existing fleet of Typhoon will also be carried out by BAE Systems Warton.

### Undocumented Migrants: France

*Asked by Lord McCrea of Magherafelt and Cookstown*

To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of illegal immigrants that French authorities have prevented from travelling to the UK. [[HL9279](#)]

**Lord Hanson of Flint:** Our work with the French authorities is estimated to have prevented over 12,000 crossing attempts so far this year. Data on small boat activity in the English Channel, including preventions, is published weekly on .GOV.UK.

### Water Supply

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that water companies are proactively protecting water supplies. [[HL9386](#)]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** The Government is committed to a twin track approach to improving water resilience. This involves action to improve water efficiency and reduce water company leaks, alongside investing in new supply infrastructure, including new reservoirs and water transfers.

We have secured £104 billion in private sector investment over the next five years, to boost out water supply and manage demand. This will help drive forward the major water infrastructure projects to protect water supplies.

### Wealth: Taxation

*Asked by Lord Mott*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have plans to introduce a wealth tax. [[HL9623](#)]

**Lord Livermore:** The Government is committed to making sure the wealthiest in our society pay their fair share of tax. That is why the Chancellor announced a series of reforms at the Budget in October 2024 to help fix the public finances in as fair a way as possible. These and other decisions announced at the Budget in October 2024 will help repair the public finances and fund public services such as the NHS and education.

### Wild Boar: Dartmoor

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Hayman of Ullock on 12 April (HL6470), what progress they have made on the review of the Feral Wild Boar Action Plan, and when they expect that review to be completed and published. [[HL9370](#)]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Primary responsibility for wild boar management lies with local communities and individual landowners. Following a review of available guidance and in consultation with stakeholder organisations through the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB)-led feral wild boar working group Defra will not be updating the feral wild Boar in England action plan which was published in 2008 in response to the first expansion of feral wild boar in the Forest of Dean. However, as part of ongoing work on improvements to contingency plans relating to wildlife disease management, guidance on Defra's approach to feral wild boar in England and management of feral wild boar in relation to exotic disease risks are being reviewed and will be published on gov.uk in due course. This will be in addition to the advice and further information on licensing and legislation relating to wildlife management including wild boar which is already available on GOV.UK

Defra works closely with stakeholder organisations to ensure communities, local authorities and landowners have access to guidance and information where needed to control populations and mitigate the impact of feral wild boar in their areas working alongside government action to monitor the disease risks posed by feral wild boar.

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