

**Session 2022-23  
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**Tuesday  
24 October 2023**

**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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<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
<b>Lord True</b>	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
<b>Earl Howe</b>	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
<b>Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon</b>	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>Baroness Barran</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
<b>Lord Bellamy</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
<b>Lord Benyon</b>	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<b>Lord Caine</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office, Whip
<b>Lord Callanan</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
<b>Viscount Camrose</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
<b>Earl of Courtown</b>	Deputy Chief Whip
<b>Lord Davies of Gower</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Evans of Rainow</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Goldie</b>	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
<b>Lord Harlech</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Johnson of Lainston</b>	Minister of State, Department for Business and Trade
<b>Lord Markham</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
<b>Earl of Minto</b>	Minister of State, Department for Business and Trade
<b>Lord Mott</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Murray of Blidworth</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Migration and Borders, Home Office
<b>Baroness Neville-Rolfe</b>	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
<b>Lord Offord of Garvel</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business and Trade and Scotland Office
<b>Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport
<b>Baroness Penn</b>	Parliamentary Secretary, HM Treasury
<b>Baroness Scott of Bybrook</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
<b>Lord Sharpe of Epsom</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office
<b>Lord Stewart of Dirleton</b>	Advocate-General for Scotland
<b>Baroness Swinburne</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Vere of Norbiton</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
<b>Baroness Williams of Trafford</b>	Chief Whip
<b>Viscount Younger of Leckie</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions

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# Written Statements

Tuesday, 24 October 2023

## Building Safety: Second Staircases

[HLWS1076]

**Baroness Swinburne:** My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (The Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

This Government is committed to ensuring that people can be confident that our buildings are safe. The Building Safety Act set up a new, robust regime, with a new Building Safety Regulator at its heart. In recent years, we have also changed statutory guidance on fire safety, with new measures including:

- a ban on combustible materials for residential buildings, hotels, hospitals and student accommodation above 18m, and additional guidance for residential buildings between 11m-18m;
- a lower threshold for the provision of sprinklers in new blocks of flats from 30m to 11m;
- a requirement for wayfinding signage for firefighters in residential buildings above 11m; and
- requirements for residential buildings over 18m to have an Evacuation Alert System, and for new residential buildings over 11m to include a Secure Information Box (SIB).

We must never be complacent in our approach to safety. In July, I confirmed that I intend to introduce new guidance requiring second staircases in new residential buildings in England above 18m. This not only reflects the views of experts including the National Fire Chiefs Council and Royal Institute of British Architects, but also brings us into line with countries – including Hong Kong and the UAE – in having a reasonable threshold for requiring second staircases.

I can now announce the intended transitional arrangements that will accompany this change to Approved Document B. From the date when we publish and conform those changes to Approved Document B formally, developers will have 30 months during which new building regulations applications can conform to either the guidance as it exists today, or to the updated guidance requiring second staircases. When those 30 months have elapsed, all applications will need to conform to the new guidance.

Any approved applications that do not follow the new guidance will have 18 months for construction to get underway in earnest. If it does not, they will have to submit a new building regulations application, following the new guidance. Sufficient progress, for this purpose, will match the definition set out in the Building (Higher-Risk Buildings Procedures) (England) Regulations 2023, and will therefore be when the pouring of concrete for

either the permanent placement of trench, pad or raft foundations or for the permanent placement of piling has started.

With these transitional arrangements, we ensure that projects that already have planning permission with a single staircase, the safety of which will have been considered as part of that application, can continue without further delay if they choose. This means that, for some years yet, we will continue to see 18m+ buildings with single staircases coming to the market. I want to be absolutely clear that existing and upcoming single-staircase buildings are not inherently unsafe. They will not later need to have a second staircase added, when built in accordance with relevant standards, well-maintained and properly managed. I expect lenders, managing agents, insurers, and others to behave accordingly, and not to impose onerous additional requirements, hurdles or criteria on single-staircase buildings in lending, pricing, management or any other respect.

Those who live in new buildings over 18m can be reassured that those buildings are already subject to the additional scrutiny of the new, enhanced building safety regime. Their fire-safety arrangements are scrutinised in detail at the new building control gateways and planning gateway one.

I realise that developers and the wider market are waiting for the design details that will go into Approved Document B. The Building Safety Regulator is working to agree these rapidly, and I will make a further announcement soon. In the meantime, I am confident that this announcement of the intended transitional arrangements will give the market confidence to continue building the high-quality homes that this country needs.

## Director of Labour Market Enforcement: Publication of Interim Annual Strategy 2023-24

[HLWS1074]

**Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** My hon Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Safeguarding (Sarah Dines) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Alongside my Honourable friend the Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business, I am publishing today the Labour Market Enforcement Annual Strategy for 2023-24, submitted by the DLME Margaret Beels OBE. The Strategy will be available on GOV.UK

The Director of Labour Market Enforcement's role was created by the Immigration Act 2016 to bring better focus and strategic co-ordination to the enforcement of labour market legislation by the three enforcement bodies which are responsible for state enforcement of specific employment rights:

- The Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate (EAS);

- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs National Minimum and Living Wage enforcement team (HMRC NMW/NLW team); and
- The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA).

Under Section 2 of The Act, The Director of Labour Market Enforcement is required to prepare an annual labour market enforcement strategy, which assesses the scale and nature of non-compliance in the labour market and sets priorities for future enforcement by the three enforcement bodies and the allocation of resources needed to deliver those priorities. The annual strategy, once approved, is laid before Parliament.

The Director is a statutory office-holder independent from Government, but accountable to the Department for Business and Trade's Secretary of State and the Home Secretary.

In line with the obligations under the Act, Margaret Beels submitted this strategy for 2023-24 on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

This strategy continues on from the 2022-23 strategy by using the same four themes to provide an assessment of the scale and nature of non-compliance and notes sectors where the risk level has changed. The strategy sets out the DLME's desire to achieve improved cohesion and join-up between the DLME and the three state enforcement bodies through non-legislative measures, including suggestions of where the enforcement bodies and sponsor departments should be focusing their efforts.

The Government's view is that the enforcement bodies have been funded sufficiently to deliver the activities set out in the strategy.

The DLME carried out stakeholder engagement for the 2023-24 strategy with a call for evidence and also by engaging with the enforcement bodies prior to submission.

As with previous reports, these recommendations are not formal Government policy. We have worked with the Director, their office, and the enforcement bodies to understand the recommendations, and will carefully consider them moving forward.

## **Gaza: Humanitarian Situation and UK Humanitarian Efforts**

[HLWS1072]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Right Honourable Friend the Minister of State for Development and Africa (Andrew Mitchell MP) has made the following written statement:

Today I am updating the House on the UK's response to the situation in Gaza.

The UK is committed to easing the desperate - and deteriorating - humanitarian crisis in Gaza, while standing alongside the people of Israel against the terrorist group Hamas and supporting Israel's right to defend itself.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister announced an additional £20 million in humanitarian aid for civilians in Gaza in response to the severe humanitarian crisis.

This assistance is in addition to the **£10 million of aid announced by the Prime Minister** last week and brings the total UK contribution to the Occupied Palestinian Territories since Hamas' terrorist attack against Israel on 7 October to £30 million – doubling our existing aid commitment this year and making us one of the largest donors.

The funding will allow key UN agencies and trusted partners, including the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) and the United Nations International Childrens Emergency Fund (UNICEF), a number of whom have presence in Gaza and Egypt, to provide essential relief items and services. The aid will respond to critical food, water, healthcare, shelter and protection needs for those affected by this severe humanitarian crisis. We are committed to ensuring UK aid is allocated to address the greatest needs.

The Prime Minister welcomed the limited opening of the Rafah crossing - it is important progress, and testament to the power of diplomacy. Sustained, unimpeded and safe humanitarian access must be allowed so civilians can receive vital, lifesaving support, including food, water, shelter, and fuel as quickly and effectively as possible.

Civilians must be protected and we continue to stress to all the importance of humanitarian access. Hamas, who have no regard for Palestinian civilians, continues to indiscriminately terrorise the Israeli people and the region as a whole. We unequivocally support Israel's right to self-defence. The UK has been clear that international humanitarian law must be followed and every effort made to avoid civilian casualties.

The UK is at the forefront of the global effort to help Palestinian people access the vital lifesaving support they need. We will consider further support depending on the changing humanitarian needs on the ground.

This support goes beyond funding alone and includes intensive diplomatic efforts to prevent regional escalation, back Israel's security and support long-term solutions to the crisis in the Middle East. The Prime Minister raised humanitarian support in his meetings with the leaders of Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the Palestinian Authority last week. During the Foreign Secretary's recent visit, he spoke to counterparts in Egypt, Turkey and Qatar to work with them to push for agreement on ongoing humanitarian access to Gaza. Lord Ahmad has also spoken with the Foreign Ministers of Iraq, Tunisia, Bahrain, Morocco, Algeria and the Palestinian Authority. I am in regular contact with Development Ministers and our humanitarian partners to discuss response and co-ordination efforts.

## Investigatory Arrangements following Police Use of Force and Police Driving-related Incidents: Terms of Reference

[HLWS1077]

**Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** My right hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Suella Braverman) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Police officers across England and Wales do an incredibly difficult job, in some instances having to make life or death decisions in a split second to keep us safe. It is vital the public and officers have clarity and confidence in the accountability system relating to police use of force and police driving, including the efficacy of investigations.

Successive Governments have referred to the need to consider the balance between ensuring the police can do their job to keep the public safe, while ensuring operational guidelines are complied with and officers act within the law.

On 24 September I announced a Home Office-led review to assess the existing legal frameworks and guidance on practice that underpin police use of force and police driving, and the framework for investigation of any incidents that may occur. It will examine:

- Whether use of force or police driving frameworks provide clear, understandable and well understood guidance for officers;
- Whether a lack of clarity or the frameworks themselves in any way inhibit or prevent the police from carrying out their role to protect life;
- Whether they serve to maintain public confidence in the police, in particular for those impacted by police use of force;
- How the UK meets its obligation to independently investigate situations where a death or serious injury (DSI) results from an incident involving law enforcement;
- Whether necessary lessons have previously been understood and acted upon after historic incidents; and
- Whether individuals are held to account appropriately.

I am pleased to announce that today we will publish the Terms of Reference for the review on Gov.UK. A copy of the Terms of Reference will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

These make it clear that the review will not consider live or ongoing investigations or proceedings. The need to ensure it does not in any way prejudice or interfere with ongoing or concluded investigations or proceedings is paramount. To that end, the Home Office will keep under consideration any potential effect of the review on such investigations or proceedings.

The review will be co-ordinated by the Home Office, reporting to me and working with other government departments such as the Ministry of Justice and the

Attorney General's Office. It will aim to provide findings to me by the end of year.

## Proceeds of Crime Act 2002: Appointed Person Report

[HLWS1071]

**Lord Sharpe of Epsom:** My right hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Suella Braverman) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today I lay before Parliament the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) Appointed Person report covering England and Wales for the period 2022-23. The Appointed Person is independent of Government and scrutinises the circumstances and manner in which search and seizure powers conferred by the Act are exercised without prior judicial approval and where nothing is seized for more than 48 hours.

I am pleased that we are now able to publish the Appointed Person's latest report. The report details that search and seizure powers were used in these circumstances on seven occasions.

The Appointed Person has confirmed in the report that he is satisfied that the criteria required for justifying the searches without prior judicial approval were met and that the powers of search were exercised appropriately. The Appointed Person has made no new recommendations for the period. This would indicate that the powers are being used reasonably and appropriately in accordance with the Act. We will continue to monitor the way that the powers have been used closely.

Copies of the report will be available in the Vote Office.

## Relationships, Sex and Health Education

[HLWS1075]

**Baroness Barran:** My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Education (Gillian Keegan MP), has made the following statement:

Earlier this year, I wrote to schools to set out that schools can and should share curriculum materials with parents, in light of the current concerns in relation to materials used to teach relationships, sex and health education (RSHE).

Parents are one of their children's most important teachers. It is vital that they know what their children are being taught in relationships, sex and health education, and that they are reassured that the materials used by schools are thoughtful and appropriate.

Today, I have written to schools again to provide further information in the light of some important cases. This letter confirms that, where contractual clauses exist that seek to prevent schools sharing resources with parents at all, they are void and unenforceable. This is because they contradict the clear public policy interest in



ensuring that parents are aware of what their children are being taught in relationships, sex and health education.

The letter is clear that, if faced with such clauses, schools should write to providers asking for those clauses to be withdrawn on the ground that they are unenforceable. In the event that providers refuse to withdraw the clauses, legislation allows schools to still share resources proportionately, for the purposes of explaining to parents what is being taught.

For example, it is best practice to do this via a “parent portal” or if this is not possible, by a presentation. This is providing access to the documents is accompanied by a sufficient acknowledgment of the provider’s authorship and includes a statement, which parents agree to as a condition of access, that the content should not be copied or shared further except as authorised by copyright law. Where relevant and possible, IT systems should also be in place to prevent downloading.

Where parents cannot attend a presentation or they are unable to view materials via a “parent portal”, schools may provide copies of materials to parents to take home on request, providing parents agree to a similar statement that they will not copy the content or share it further except as authorised by copyright law.

The points made in both of my letters will be reflected in the updated statutory RSHE guidance, on which we will publicly consult. This additional content will help to further strengthen schools’ position, as they have a statutory duty to have regard to the RSHE guidance and can communicate this duty to their external providers.

We are clear that in all circumstances, parents have a right to see the materials being used to teach RSHE, which is why we have written to schools and parents today clarifying the legal position and reiterating that right.

### Shared Services Connected Ltd: Sale of Cabinet Office Stake

[HLWS1073]

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** My Rt Hon Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office and HM Paymaster General, Jeremy Quin MP, has today made the following statement:

I am pleased to announce that the Cabinet Office has exercised its option to sell its 25% stake in Shared Services Connected Limited (SSCL) to its joint venture partner, Sopra Steria Group S.A., which owns the remaining 75% stake. The sale is expected to complete in early November.

Sale of the stake will generate cash proceeds of £82.3 million payable on completion. Of the £57 million proceeds retained by the Cabinet Office, up to £45 million of the proceeds will be reinvested into accelerating programmes that increase cross-government productivity. This will include a particular emphasis on digital capability across Government.

The change in ownership arrangements is neither expected to affect the management nor staff of SSCL. Sopra Steria has confirmed that SSCL will remain a key component of the Sopra Steria’s UK family of businesses and that there will be no impact on services to customers.

#### *Background and rationale*

The SSCL joint venture was established in 2013 as part of a strategy to consolidate and transform the provision of shared business support services to central Government and the wider public sector. Founding customers included the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Environment Agency.

Over the last 10 years, SSCL has successfully expanded its customer base to cover other public sector bodies including the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence, Metropolitan Police and the Construction Industry Training Board. Revenue has grown from £123 million in the year to 31 December 2014 to £292 million in the year to 31 December 2022.

It had always been envisaged that the Cabinet Office might one day sell its stake. When the joint venture was established, Sopra Steria granted the Cabinet Office a put option exercisable in 2022 and 2023.

The sale follows a review triggered by the approaching expiry of the put option. The Cabinet Office concluded that SSCL had been a successful joint venture delivering significant savings and value to the Government and the taxpayer, that the business was now well-established and that it was time for it to move to the next stage in its evolution. The sale price was based on an independent valuation advisory report and exceeds the Cabinet Office’s retention value. As at 31 March 2023, the carrying value of the stake and related put option in the Cabinet Office accounts was some £48.2 million.

#### *Fiscal Impacts*

The impact on the fiscal aggregates, in line with fiscal forecasting convention, are not discounted to present value. The net impact of the sale on a selection of fiscal metrics are summarised as follows:

<i>Metric</i>	<i>Impact</i>
Sale proceeds	£82.3 million.
Hold valuation	The price achieved is above retention value.
Public Sector Net Borrowing	The sale will generate cross-Government productivity savings and reduce future debt interest costs for Government, offset by the loss of dividends Government might otherwise have received from its shareholding.
Public Sector Net Debt	Immediate reduction of £25.3 million (£82.3 - £57 million).
Public Sector Net Liabilities	Immediately improved by £34.1 million (£82.3 - £48.2 million) less the extent to which the £57 million retained by the Cabinet Office is spent.
Public Sector Net Financial Liabilities	Immediately improved by £34.1 million (£82.3 - £48.2 million) less the extent to which the £57 million retained by the Cabinet Office is spent.

# Written Answers

Tuesday, 24 October 2023

## Antibiotics: Prescriptions

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the safety of NHS England's plan to allow community pharmacists to prescribe certain antibiotics. [HL10493]

**Lord Markham:** Pharmacists with an additional prescribing qualification are already allowed to prescribe medicines within their competence, including antibiotics. These skills are already being used in general practice and hospitals where many pharmacists have a prescribing qualification. Changes have been made to the initial training and education of pharmacists so that from 2026 all pharmacists will qualify with a prescribing qualification.

As part of the Delivery plan for recovering access to primary care, an additional investment up to £645 million will support a new Pharmacy First service which will allow community pharmacists to assess patients and provide treatments, including the supply of certain antibiotics. These will be supplied against Patient Group Directions (PGDs) which have been designed following extensive input from expert clinicians across the National Health Service to mitigate against the risk of increased antimicrobial resistance. The PGDs will be informed by the latest National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance to embed best practice and the new service will be closely monitored to ensure treatments, including antibiotics, are being supplied appropriately. In addition, a separate evaluation of the service will be commissioned by the National Institute for Health and Care Research.

## Brain Cancer: Research

Asked by *Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Brain Tumours, Pathway to a Cure – breaking down the barriers, published on 28 February 2023, what is the expected timescale to develop a strategy for adequately resourcing discovery, translational and clinical research into brain tumours as recommended by the report; and whether they will commit to ring fencing the recommended £110 million for this resourcing. [HL10540]

**Lord Markham:** The Department of Health and Social Care welcomes the All-Party Parliamentary Group report, recommendations of which continue to be worked through with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, UK Research and Innovation and the

Medical Research Council (MRC), and with the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR).

The report recommended action by the research funding agencies on coordinating activities and making funding available. We are taking steps to ensure that funders work closely together to coordinate work along the translational pathway, from the discovery and early translational science typically supported by the MRC, feeding through to the applied health and care research funded by the NIHR.

It is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions. As with other Government funders of health research, the NIHR does not allocate funding for specific disease areas. The level of research spend in a particular area is driven by factors including scientific potential and the number and scale of successful funding applications.

## Charities: Voluntary Work

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Durham*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of COVID-19 on the number of volunteers in the charity sector, and what steps they are taking to support charities to recruit a sufficient number of volunteers. [HL10525]

**Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay:** His Majesty's Government recognises how vital volunteering is for society, reaping benefits for those who volunteer as well as the organisations they assist. The Government aims to remove barriers which prevent people from getting involved.

The Government's Community Life Survey shows that approximately 7 million people in England (16%) took part in volunteering with groups and organisations at least once a month in 2021/22. This is in line with rates recorded in 2020/21 (17%) and lower than before the pandemic.

HM Government funded the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) to carry out the 'Time Well Spent' survey on volunteer experiences, which was published in June 2023. We are also working closely with the Vision for Volunteering, and funding it this financial year. This is a strategic initiative from the voluntary sector to lead the ongoing support and development of volunteering in England with the aim of changing the volunteering landscape for the better by 2032.

My Department has also funded several other initiatives to support volunteering. The Volunteering Futures Fund supports organisations to develop more inclusive volunteering opportunities. The Know Your Neighbourhood fund aims to widen participation in volunteering and to tackle loneliness. We also provided funding for the Big Help Out the day after the Coronation of His Majesty The King, on 8 May 2023, which encouraged people to help out in their communities and to volunteer with charities in their local area.

## Drax Power Station

Asked by *Lord Birt*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Callanan on 3 July (HL Deb col 984) on the use of Biomass at the Drax Power Station, on the basis of what evidence officials advised that “the Panorama Programme provided an inaccurate representation of practices by the forestry and business sector on the ground”, as set out in a briefing note obtained through a Freedom of Information request and published on 12 October. [[HL10613](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** I refer the noble Lord to the answer I gave to him on 18 September to Question UIN [HL9759](#).

## Electric Vehicles: UK Trade with EU

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following any negotiations with the EU concerning the implementation of tariffs on electric vehicles, what support they are providing to the industry in relation to any possible changes to tariffs. [[HL10640](#)]

**Lord Offord of Garvel:** The rules agreed in the Trade and Co-operation Agreement were designed to reflect industry capabilities, whilst encouraging onshoring of battery supply chains. Due to unforeseen and shared external shocks, carmakers across Europe have said they cannot meet the TCA's rules from 2024 and could face tariffs. This is a shared problem and HMG is determined to work with the EU to fix the specific issue faced in 2024. Government continues to support the UK automotive industry through the Automotive Transformation Fund, facilitating the creation of an internationally competitive electric vehicle supply chain in the UK.

## Energy: Prices

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they will take to help households struggling to pay their energy bills this winter if they fail to make an application for financial support. [[HL10669](#)]

**Lord Callanan:** The Government recognises the cost-of-living challenges families are facing and in response last winter we launched a package of support for households and businesses, spending £40 billion and paying around half a typical household's energy bill.

In order to continue protecting the most vulnerable, in 2023-24 the Government is already providing additional cost of living payments of up to £900 to households on means-tested benefits, of £300 to pensioner households, and of £150 to those on eligible disability benefits. The vast majority of this support has been and will be made available automatically to households and without the need for an application process.

## Household Support Fund

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to extend the Household Support Fund beyond its scheduled end date of 31 March 2024. [[HL10581](#)]

**Baroness Penn:** I refer the noble Baroness to the answer given to PQ [196466](#)

Asked by *Lord Palmer of Childs Hill*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the letter from Viscount Younger of Leckie to all members of the House of Lords on 13 October, whether the money allocated in the Household Support Fund is new money or money that has already been spent. [[HL10693](#)]

**Baroness Penn:** The Government is providing £842m to Local Authorities in England to deliver the Household Support Fund in England over 2023/24. The Devolved Administrations have received additional funding via the Barnett formula.

This is additional funding to Local Authorities, not re-allocated from elsewhere.

## Individual Savings Accounts: Stocks and Shares

Asked by *Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to permit fractionated shares to be held in ISAs. [[HL10542](#)]

**Baroness Penn:** HMRC's long standing view on interpretation of the current law is that a fraction of a share is not a share for the purposes of the ISA legislation.

The government is committed to ensuring the ISA market works for both industry and consumers. We are aware of representations from the industry to allow fractional shares to be included in ISAs going forward, and are considering the issue.

## Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of Derby*

To ask His Majesty's Government, following the Children's Society's The Good Childhood Report 2023, published on 20 September, what steps the Department of Health and Social Care's Major Conditions Strategy will take to prevent poor mental health and promote wellbeing in children and young people. [[HL10519](#)]

**Lord Markham:** As part of the development of the Major Conditions Strategy, we are considering the most effective ways to prevent and treat poor mental health and promote wellbeing for people of all ages. We will continue to work closely with stakeholders, the public and the National Health Service to identify actions that will have the most impact.



## Mobocertinib

Asked by **Lord Rogan**

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, or are intending to have, with (1) Takeda Pharmaceuticals, and (2) EGFR Positive UK, following the withdrawal of the drug Mobocertinib from the UK market. [HL10582]

**Lord Markham:** The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is engaging with Takeda Pharmaceuticals. This is to ensure that where appropriate, patients can have continued access to Mobocertinib following its withdrawal from the United Kingdom market.

The MHRA has not had discussions with EGFR Positive UK, but if approached would answer any questions they may have regarding the withdrawal of Mobocertinib from the UK market.

## National Grid

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards establishing the Future System Operator; and when they expect it to be fully operational. [HL10668]

**Lord Callanan:** The Department for Energy Security & Net Zero and Ofgem continue to work closely with National Grid, the Electricity System Operator and National Gas Transmission to establish the Future System Operator. This has included taking forward legislation as part of the Energy Bill; undertaking further consultation on the roles of the Future System Operator; and developing the relevant licences and detailed implementation plans. Depending on a number of factors, including passage of the Energy Bill and discussing timelines with key parties, our aim continues to be for the FSO to be operational in 2024.

## NHS: Drugs

Asked by **Lord Warner**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the proposed update to the 2023 Statutory Scheme to control the cost of branded health services medicines, what policy options were included in the Department of Health and Social Care's long list as alternatives to the options that were included in the final consultation. [HL10591]

**Lord Markham:** The statutory scheme consultation sets out the options under consideration. We are in the process of analysing the responses provided, including consideration of any alternative options proposed, and will update on our preferred policy approach later this year. A copy of the impact assessment is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Statutory Scheme Impact Assessment [Statutory Scheme Impact Assessment.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2023-10-16/HL10591>

Asked by **Lord Warner**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the proposed update to the 2023 Statutory Scheme to control the cost of branded health services medicines, what analysis and evidence the Department of Health and Social Care considered when it proposed to keep growth in the cost of branded medicines in real-terms decline, at 2 per cent a year. [HL10593]

Asked by **Lord Warner**

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Proposed update to the 2023 Statutory Scheme to control the cost of branded medicines, whether the 2 per cent cap in growth in the cost of branded medicines was assessed against (1) inflation expectations, and (2) demographic pressures. [HL10594]

**Lord Markham:** 2% allowed growth per annum represents an 80% rise in allowed growth compared to the 1.1% per annum which applied in the statutory scheme from 2019 to 2023. The proposal is consistent with the approach that underpinned the current statutory scheme's 1.1% allowed growth, i.e., it equals the average allowed growth of the preceding voluntary scheme.

The proposed allowed growth rate considered multiple factors including the overall fiscal path. Furthermore, consideration of the pipeline of upcoming new treatments featured within our forecast growth in spend on new treatments and, ultimately, continued growth forecast in medicine sales.

Controlling growth at this level is considered to allow for a viable overall envelope for the statutory scheme more favourable for industry compared to the existing statutory scheme arrangements, whilst continuing to ensure that spend on branded medicines is affordable to the National Health Service.

Asked by **Lord Warner**

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to refer the Impact Assessment for the 2023 Statutory Scheme to control the cost of branded health services medicines to the Regulatory Policy Committee. [HL10595]

**Lord Markham:** There are no plans to refer the statutory scheme Impact Assessment to the Regulatory Policy Committee. The proposals only impact companies which choose to sell to the National Health Service and are therefore considered to be in connection with procurement. Given this, the statutory exclusion from the Better Regulation Framework "Procurement 22(4)(b)" applies as confirmed previously by the Economic and Domestic Affairs Secretariat at the Cabinet Office.

*Asked by Lord Warner*

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce an end of scheme reconciliation exercise for the Statutory Scheme to control the cost of branded health services medicines. [HL10596]

**Lord Markham:** No end of scheme reconciliation exercise was proposed in the recent consultation on updating the statutory scheme. We are in the process of considering consultation responses.

### **NHS: Staff**

*Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government, with reference to the article Practice under pressure: how can the exodus of GPs be reversed published on 31 August by Dr Imelda McDermott and Dr Sharon Spooner, how they intend to make sustainable work schedules an integral part of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan. [HL10246]

**Lord Markham:** The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan commits to implementing the actions from the NHS People Plan, including ensuring staff can work flexibly. However, as independent contractors, it is for general practitioner practices to decide staffing levels and distribution of work across their teams.

### **Peers: Leave of Absence**

*Asked by Lord Young of Cookham*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker whether letters applying for Leave of Absence from the House of Lords are in the public domain. [HL10601]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** No. Members applying for leave of absence are required under Standing Order 21 to specify in their written application both their reason for seeking leave of absence and either a date by which they expect to return to the House or, if they are unable to specify a date, the circumstances which will allow their return. Letters requesting leave of absence may therefore contain sensitive personal information, which it would be inappropriate to disclose.

### **Public Expenditure**

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the sustainability of UK debt levels. [HL10578]

**Baroness Penn:** The Government is committed to ensuring debt is on a sustainable footing. This is reflected in the Prime Minister's priority to reduce national debt in the medium term and the legally binding fiscal rule to

have debt as a share of GDP to be projected to fall in the fifth year of the forecast horizon.

The independent OBR assesses performance against the fiscal rules twice a year alongside each fiscal event. In March 2023, the OBR confirmed that the fiscal rules had been met with debt falling as a percentage of GDP in 2027-28. The OBR will publish an updated economic and fiscal forecast on 22 November alongside the Autumn Statement

In the Charter for Budget Responsibility, the Government requires the OBR to publish an annual Fiscal Risks and Sustainability report, which includes long-run projections of the Government finances. The government will respond to the latest FRS at a future fiscal event. To manage longer-term spending pressures and maintain high quality public services, the Chancellor has recently announced a major public sector productivity programme.

### **Public Expenditure: Wales**

*Asked by Lord Wigley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what additional funding they have made available to the Welsh Government over and above the basic budget provision for Wales in the financial year 2023-24; and for what purposes any specific use was stipulated. [HL10647]

**Baroness Penn:** Spending Review 2021 set the largest annual block grant, in real terms, of any spending review settlement since the devolution Acts. This provided the Welsh Government with £2.5 billion in 2023-24 through the Barnett formula, on top of their £15.9 billion baseline. They also received over £320 million of ringfenced non-Barnett funding for 2023-24 for farming and fisheries.

On top of this settlement, the Welsh Government have received an additional £745 million through the Barnett formula for 2023-24, largely as a result of decisions made at Autumn Statement 2022 and Spring Budget 2023. They have also received around £450 million in non-Barnett funding for 2023-24 since Spending Review 2021.

It is for the devolved administrations to allocate their Barnett-based funding in devolved areas as they see fit. They can therefore take their own decisions on managing and investing available resources, reflecting their own priorities and local circumstances, and they are accountable to the devolved legislatures for these decisions. Non-Barnett funding is generally ringfenced, meaning it can only be spent for the purpose it was given.

A breakdown of Barnett and non-Barnett funding, including the policy areas for which the non-Barnett funding is ringfenced, can also be found in the Block Grant Transparency publication. This publication is updated regularly, and the most recent report was published in July 2023.

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