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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS
OFFICIAL REPORT

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The first time a Member speaks to a new piece of parliamentary business, the following abbreviations are used to show their party affiliation:

Abbreviation	Party/Group
CB	Cross Bench
Con	Conservative
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
GP	Green Party
Ind Lab	Independent Labour
Ind LD	Independent Liberal Democrat
Ind SD	Independent Social Democrat
Ind UU	Independent Ulster Unionist
Lab	Labour
Lab Co-op	Labour and Co-operative Party
LD	Liberal Democrat
LD Ind	Liberal Democrat Independent
Non-afl	Non-affiliated
PC	Plaid Cymru
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

No party affiliation is given for Members serving the House in a formal capacity, the Lords spiritual, Members on leave of absence or Members who are otherwise disqualified from sitting in the House.

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House of Lords

Thursday 9 January 2020

11 am

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Rochester.

Oaths and Affirmations

11.05 am

Lord Fellowes of West Stafford took the oath, and signed an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct.

National Health Service Infrastructure Question

11.06 am

Asked by **Baroness Thornton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the consequences for patient safety of the backlog of maintenance and repairs to National Health Service infrastructure.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford) (Con): My Lords, the Government recognise that the quality of infrastructure, including backlog of maintenance, can pose challenges to the efficiency, safety and quality of NHS services. That is why we have launched the *Health Infrastructure Plan*, which includes the biggest hospital building programme in a generation. This substantial investment will support many of the hospitals facing the biggest challenges from their estates.

Baroness Thornton (Lab): I thank the Minister for her Answer. NHS Providers says that the cost of the backlog is now £6.5 billion, and last year 15,844 patient incidents and 4,810 clinical incidents were caused by estate and infrastructure failure, and there were 1,500 fires in which 34 people were injured. The backlog includes wet walls in wards preventing babies' incubators being plugged in. This is extremely serious. Will the Government provide the necessary funding to catch up—I am not sure that it is available yet? What is the timescale for catching up with the backlog—not building necessarily the 40, or six or however many, new hospitals that have been tendered?

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: The department acknowledges that parts of the NHS estate do not meet the demands of a modern health service and that there is unmet need for capital within the NHS. That is why we announced £2.1 billion of capital for health infrastructure in August and a further £2.8 billion injection in September. This is to ensure that staff are safe to deliver the world-leading health service that they should in a modern, efficient environment. We are also going further by reforming the capital regime to establish a clearer set of capital controls and the right incentives for organisations in respect of their infrastructure. The Chancellor has also confirmed that DHSC will receive a new multi-year capital settlement in the next capital review. Backlog of maintenance across the government estate will be a key theme of the spending review.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff (CB): My Lords, I declare my interests in relation to emergency medicine. Will the Government undertake to look specifically at the problem for emergency departments, given that many of them do not have enough cubicle space for the number of ambulances that arrive and the number of patients who are blue-lighted in? Staff do not have enough space to take a short break from the front line of some of the most harrowing cases that they have to deal with.

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: The noble Baroness is very expert in this area, and she is absolutely right that the NHS estate must prioritise areas of most need. This is why we have put in a serious amount of investment. NHS Improvement is also conducting a backlog review to understand where the areas of greatest need are and to assist NHS trusts in prioritising capital spending over the next few months and years.

Baroness Jolly (LD): My Lords, equipment such as CAT scanners also comes from this source of income. Many are now not operating properly or are out of action awaiting repair. How many days of treatment are lost each year as a result of this?

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: Data on the proportion of capital equipment that is out of action or on days lost is not currently collected and the responsibility for that is with local NHS organisations, but the Government have recently supported investment in new diagnostics. As outlined in our *Health Infrastructure Plan*, we have invested £200 million to deliver new state-of-the-art diagnostic machines, such as MRI machines, CT scanners and breast-scanning equipment, to 78 trusts. We recognise that we need to improve the number of scanners that are younger than the “golden rule” of 10 years old.

Baroness Manzoor (Con): My Lords, I welcome the Government scrapping car parking charges, which will support people who are caring. I also welcome the new money that will be put into the infrastructure project, which is vital, as the noble Baroness, Lady Thornton, has pointed out. Can my noble friend say, however, whether AI and new technology will be used, and whether funding will be put in place to help carers and people living in their home?

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: I thank my noble friend for her question. She is absolutely right that we want to prevent people from going into hospital in the first place. We have made a £200 million investment in the AI lab to reduce the burden on doctors in the first place and to make use of the benefits of AI in diagnostics. A number of centres up and down the country are trialling this to reduce the burden on clinicians so that they can become more human and work on their caring responsibilities. We are also trialling a dementia care test bed, so that there is support for carers and so that people with dementia can remain in their own home. This is going on in Surrey and has been hugely successful; it is a very exciting development.

Lord Crisp (CB): My Lords, given that the NHS is seeking to shift to being a more community and primary care-based organisation, can the Minister say more about what investment is going into community and primary care in capital terms?

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: We have been looking at providing additional funding and support to councils to meet the rising demands and to continue to stabilise the social care system. We announced access to an additional £1.5 billion of funding for adults and social care, and we will be considering this further in the spending review.

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Lab): My Lords, the noble Baroness will be aware that there was a spike in the incidence of flu just before Christmas; I do not know whether it has diminished, but it certainly was quite high. As a consequence, a number of people who perhaps would have much preferred not to go to hospital were forced to do so. She might like to know that, in one London hospital to which one of my family was obliged to go, the queue for A&E was out into the street. Many of those people were ill and should not have been outside in the cold. The reason for it was partly to do with availability of staff but more to do with the availability of chairs. Does she understand that hospitals need capacity beyond what their expectation might be of how many people will turn up, precisely to cope when there is a spike of this kind?

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: The noble Baroness is right that there has been a significant increase in demand over recent years. That is partly why we have secured the significant funding increase from the Treasury of £33.9 billion, which we will be enshrining in law for the first time to give certainty to hospitals. It is why we are increasing the capital investment, which will address some of the challenges that she has raised, and it is also why we have run a vigorous flu vaccination programme to prevent people from getting into that problem in the first place. We recognise that we need to reduce the demand from those going into A&E unnecessarily and to support those very hard-working staff who were in those situations over Christmas and the new year. We thank them for their hard work over that period.

Fracking Question

11.14 am

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the moratorium on fracking will become a ban.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Northern Ireland Office (Lord Duncan of Springbank) (Con): My Lords, the Government have no plans to turn the moratorium on shale gas extraction into a ban. The Government have always been clear that we will be led by science, will continue to take a precautionary approach and will support shale gas exploration only if it can be

done in a safe and sustainable way. The moratorium is intended to give a clear message to the sector and to local communities that fracking, within the current corpus of scientific evidence, will not be taken forward in England.

Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb (GP): The very welcome delay to carrying on with fracking means that we have to move a bit faster in reducing our dependence on gas, so will the Government ban new builds having gas central heating and perhaps look at subsidising heat pumps and renewable energy? It is all in the *Green New Deal*, if the Minister would like a copy.

Lord Duncan of Springbank: The noble Baroness raises an important point. Let me stress at the beginning that we need to decarbonise, and moving from coal to the lighter hydrocarbons is one way of doing so. It has ensured that the US has met and measured its own decarbonisation very well. We will look at how to decarbonise our internal central heating processes and anticipate putting new ideas forward very soon.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (Con): My Lords, is it sensible for the Government to continue with the moratorium when we are so dependent on gas supplies from the Middle East? Are we not lucky that the noble Baroness, Lady Jones, was not here when we discovered North Sea oil?

Lord Duncan of Springbank: I would not like to comment on the age of the noble Baroness, Lady Jones, in this regard—I mean that in a complimentary way. We currently have a number of sources of gas to ensure that we are not dependent upon any one. We have our own domestic, indigenous gas from the North Sea; we have piped gas, LNG; and of course we bring in gas from the Middle East. We have such a broad base that we are not wholly dependent upon any one and therefore we can be sure that we will be safe into the future.

Baroness Parminter (LD): The Government may not ban fracking, but do they agree with the National Audit Office's recent report that states that fracking has no demonstrable benefit for local people, communities or the environment?

Lord Duncan of Springbank: It is a question that I cannot answer, because at present there are no fracking sites in the United Kingdom that are in any way functional. The question of how we invest in local communities has already been realised by the onshore wind sector; we have seen significant benefit to local communities through investment in those communities by companies that have located their wind farms there.

Lord West of Spithead (Lab): My Lords, does the Minister agree that there is a strategic benefit in being able to produce gas ourselves? At the moment we see that Germany, for example, is in a very poor position, because she is reliant on gas from Russia. It puts her in a poor strategic position.

Lord Duncan of Springbank: The answer to that question is yes. Many years ago when I was a geologist I found myself digging out fossil insects in central Colorado. That was designated a strategic naval reserve, because it was oil shale and in a crisis it could be removed for the US Navy. It is vital.

Baroness McIntosh of Pickering (Con): My Lords, I congratulate my noble friend and the Government on introducing this moratorium. It is great news for North Yorkshire, particularly where fracking was going to be considered in a national park, which I believe is totally inappropriate. Will the Government look at energy from waste and the work going on at the Allerton Park facility? This is generating huge amounts of electricity from household and other waste, but it is going into the national grid. To make energy from waste more palatable for local communities, will the Government allow the electricity that is being generated to go to houses that lie closest to Allerton Park itself?

Lord Duncan of Springbank: To answer the first part of my noble friend's question, waste will become an important generator of electricity and we need to recognise its value. We need to consider how district heating may be based upon such approaches, which may indeed benefit those in the proximate area—the local community—and we will give further consideration to that.

Lord Grantchester (Lab): The Government have indicated that the moratorium could be temporary if new research can show that fracking can be carried out safely. What exactly would the Government like to see for fracking to be able to restart?

Lord Duncan of Springbank: There is a long and short answer to that. I shall try to give the short one. We would need a geo-mechanical survey of the specific basins concerned and the Oil and Gas Authority would have to oversee the determination of the criteria for such an examination. We would have to make sure that whatever emerged from that would guarantee the safety and sustainability of the resource and of the local communities. At present, it is not the intention of the Government to commission such work, but we understand that certain companies may themselves undertake it. They must do so within the limits set by the Oil and Gas Authority.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Lab Co-op): My Lords, could the Minister as a fellow Scotsman clear up a mystery for me? Is the position of the Scottish Government a ban or a moratorium?

Lord Duncan of Springbank: I would not like to inquire too far into the mystical workings of the Scottish Government. As the noble Lord will be aware, the situation is clear: they have declared it to be a ban but have been shown in court to be guilty only of a moratorium.

Baroness Neville-Rolfe (Con): My Lords, there has been speculation that there might be more support for nuclear, which is a zero-carbon source of energy. Could the Minister comment on that?

Lord Duncan of Springbank: Yes, nuclear must be part of our wider energy mix. It is a zero-carbon approach and we will continue to invest not just in the plants we have seen so far but in different smaller-scale investments. We are also very interested in fusion and will continue to be so.

Lord Greaves (LD): My Lords, given that the moratorium seems to be going on for a long time, what can local residents around the Preston New Road site in Lancashire expect to happen in the near and medium term? Also, are the areas that have been given licences for exploratory drilling, which is not fracking per se, still able to go ahead with that?

Lord Duncan of Springbank: Cuadrilla has removed all its fracking equipment from the Preston New Road site and no work whatever is anticipated to continue there. The noble Lord will be aware that drilling can take place for a whole range of reasons, not just for the wider energy world. We will continue to monitor it to the highest possible standards where it can continue to be done.

Lord Geddes (Con): My Lords, could the Minister advise the House of Her Majesty's Government's view on tidal energy?

Lord Duncan of Springbank: Love it—we should be doing a lot more of it.

Children: Rights and Well-being *Question*

11.21 am

Asked by Baroness Massey of Darwen

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following their ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, what plans they have to promote children's rights and well-being across government departments in this Parliament.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education (Lord Agnew of Oulton) (Con): My Lords, we remain strongly committed to delivering a framework of actions across government to promote children's rights and well-being. We have successfully delivered a range of measures, including establishing a UNCRC action group and launching a children's rights training package and an impact assessment template across the Civil Service. We will continue to promote these tools during 2020, including via the action group.

Baroness Massey of Darwen (Lab): My Lords, I thank the Minister for his reply, which I find worthy but somewhat incomplete. Is he aware that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the UK ratified in 1991, had its 30th anniversary last year? Is he also aware that in 2016 the Committee on the Rights of the Child reviewed the UK's record of achievement in relation to the convention as regards, for example, children in care, child mental health,

[BARONESS MASSEY OF DARWEN]

youth justice and child poverty? We were criticised for having no overall strategy or action plan for children, as recommended in the convention. The next review of the UK's achievement will be in 2021. Will the new Government take the opportunity to set up before 2021 a committee to form an action plan and strategy for children across government departments, with a lead Minister to oversee it, to assess and improve our performance in helping children thrive and achieve? There is much support and enthusiasm for such action across the children's sector. How will the Government respond?

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My Lords, there is a broad range of work across government that promotes children's rights and well-being, which is set out in the report that we provided to the UN in November last year at the conference to mark the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC, as the noble Baroness mentioned. The report summarises the work of 14 government departments. My department has strong working relationships with other departments on children's rights. I am confident that these will continue in the run-up to the next reporting cycle in 2021.

Baroness Boycott (CB): My Lords, I declare an interest as the chair of Feeding Britain. We recently saw new and disturbing academic research. Children in Britain who are on free school meals are allocated £2.20 or £2.30, depending on where the school is. It has come to light that councils are now so broke because of the cuts that they are taking around 50p of that allocation for their needs. When the money then gets to the school, it is also so broke because of budget cuts that it nicks another 50p. This is not malice but just need. In too many instances now, the actual value of the food that we are serving to our hungry, needy kids—as is their right—is 82p. Can the Government assure us that they will look into these figures and ring-fence that amount? Food is always the bit that gets cut, either by a hungry mother or, in this case, a hungry council.

Lord Agnew of Oulton: I am certainly happy to look into the figures that the noble Baroness refers to. If she has any example of a local authority where she feels that excessive amounts are being top-sliced away from food provision, I would be interested to hear of it. I have not seen examples of that myself.

The Lord Bishop of Rochester: My Lords, I have two particular groups of children in mind whose well-being is often compromised. The first are those who have a parent or other primary carer on the cusp of going into custody. What plans do Her Majesty's Government have to ensure that sentencers, including magistrates, are aware of the new guidance from the Sentencing Council on this matter? On looked-after children, what intentions do Her Majesty's Government have to further promote the vocation—it is a vocation—to become a foster carer or an adopter?

Lord Agnew of Oulton: On the right reverend Prelate's first question, I will certainly check with officials that the justice system is aware of the provisions that he refers to. Looked-after children is an issue of increasing

priority for the Government, as was mentioned in our recent manifesto, and I completely agree that they are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. One of the initiatives that I have encouraged, for example, is the far greater use of local authorities teaming up with boarding schools which offer 40% bursaries to encourage some of these vulnerable children to join their institutions. We have seen evidence of a dramatic improvement in the life chances of those children.

Lord Storey (LD): My Lords, with a 28% increase in the number of children in care, a 53% increase in the number of children on child protection plans and, as we heard yesterday, a 70% increase in the number of children being excluded from school, are we taking our obligations seriously?

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My Lords, we are committed to social care; it is one of our top priorities. In the settlement for 2020-21, we see the largest rise in core spending since 2015; a real-terms increase of 4.3%. On top of that, we are investing £84 million in targeted, evidence-based interventions to improve the support provided to vulnerable children and their families and to enable more children to stay at home, thriving with those families.

Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate (Con): My Lords, in 1996, I had the privilege of representing this country at the congress that took place on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Stockholm. We in this country were proud of our presentation on that occasion, and we should continue to be proud of the efforts we have made in relation to the rights of the child, both domestically and elsewhere. Is it not a good idea that we should perhaps have a more comprehensive review, to make sure that we bring together in a more co-ordinated fashion all the elements throughout our departments which protect children?

Lord Agnew of Oulton: I agree with my noble friend that this is a continuous effort that needs to go across government. We know that government can be weak across departmental initiatives, and I completely agree that we should do everything we can to strengthen that.

Baroness Lister of Burtsett (Lab): My Lords, in view of the recent High Court judgment that the exorbitant fees charged to children who register that they are entitled to citizenship are unlawful because due regard was not given to the best interests of the child, what steps are the Government now taking to ensure that all government policy-making gives primary consideration to the best interests of children, in line with the UN convention?

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My Lords, we are confident that we comply with all the main conventions of the UNCRC. A recent CRAE report praised the work that we are doing in government. I quote from its summary report:

“More encouragingly, the Department for Education ... has taken positive steps to raise awareness and understanding of children's rights across Whitehall and to encourage policy makers to take children's rights into account in decision-making.”

Sexual Violence Overseas: Treatment of Victims

Question

11.29 am

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the treatment of British victims of alleged sexual violence in foreign countries, following the recent case in Cyprus.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) (Con): My Lords, we take any report of rape or sexual assault seriously. Our staff explain local policing and legal procedures. We can attend the police station with and support victims and ensure that they can access medical care. We also work with specialist support organisations, such as our funded partners, and fund bespoke projects to improve the treatment of victims by authorities in other countries.

The Lord Bishop of St Albans: I thank the Minister for his reply. The media reports of this young British woman convicted in Cyprus have caused alarm in many circles. What are Her Majesty's Government doing to ensure that this does not deter victims in this country from coming forward to the police when they need to report something? Secondly, and more specifically on the case of the Cyprus woman, we were in touch with her lawyers yesterday. They are positive about the support given by Her Majesty's Government but there is the question of what support she will now be given for her appeal to clear her name. What can Her Majesty's Government do to help her with that?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, on the second question asked by the right reverend Prelate, obviously I cannot go into specific details because it is ongoing. He raised the important issue of ensuring that, because of the experience we have seen from this case, no victim of sexual violence—be it at home or abroad—feels that there is a barrier or, indeed, feels reluctant to come forward. It is clear that if someone is sexually assaulted or raped, they should come forward. Abroad, we will offer full support, as we have done in this case; here in the United Kingdom, I know that my colleagues at the Home Office will take the issue very seriously. If you have been assaulted, come forward and report it.

Lord Morris of Aberavon (Lab): My Lords, as a criminal lawyer, I have some concerns about some aspects of this case. Can the Government tell us what advice can be given on expediting the appeal?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Obviously, the noble and learned Lord speaks from experience. I have already alluded to, and I am sure he will respect, the fact that I cannot go into specific detail. I can say that the FCO provides full consular support to any individual who has gone through such an experience. This case was no exception; indeed, we offered full consular support to the individual and her family in both the United Kingdom and Cyprus.

Baroness Warsi (Con): My Lords, can my noble friend go any further in explaining: what specific support was given to this particular victim and her family; whether, as in other cases, any support was given to the police in investigating this matter; and whether, as well as supporting the appeal process, the Government will make any representation to the Cypriot authorities as to whether it is possible to reopen the original investigation and allegation of rape?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My noble friend asks some important questions. Of course, first and foremost, we welcome the return of the victim. As I said, there is a limit to the detail I can go into but, as the victim's family has acknowledged, the FCO provided strong support in Cyprus. We are also considering what more we can do with the authorities in Cyprus and in other countries to ensure what we have here, which is a victim-centred approach to the criminal justice process. I know that my noble friend has raised concerns, particularly about some of the processes that the victim was involved in in Cyprus; they are a matter of concern for all of us.

Baroness Hussein-Ece (LD): My Lords, the Minister said in his opening response to the right reverend Prelate that the high commissioner there could, and did, offer support during the investigation. However, reports I have read and reports from my contacts in Cyprus indicate that the young woman—the teenager—involved was questioned by the police for some nine hours with no legal representation. What support did the high commission provide and what representation did it make to address what appears to be a grotesque miscarriage of justice? What advice is being given to young people travelling to places such as Ayia Napa on how they can best safeguard themselves and what they can do if they are victims of sexual violence?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The noble Baroness has raised valid concerns which are being looked at directly, but I cannot go into further detail about the process as it is still ongoing. I assure her that while the particular lady concerned was in Cyprus, full support was offered to her family here in the UK as well as directly to her in Cyprus. The issues around the case are obviously of deep concern. On the noble Baroness's wider question, we recognise how vulnerable those who have been sexually assaulted in a foreign country can be and therefore we provide support tailored to the individual circumstances of each case. As I said earlier, our approach is victim-led and is based on the person's needs. For example, we provide information on what professional help is available locally and in the UK, and we are providing funding for a rape crisis organisation to ensure that it can act as a means of support wherever victims are in the world.

Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top (Lab): My Lords, will the Government think about what happens after a court case? My experience over recent years of several organisations working with young women who have been subjected to sexual exploitation, grooming and so on in this country is that once the court case is over, the availability of resources to support those then very damaged young women is missing because the state

[BARONESS ARMSTRONG OF HILL TOP] feels that its responsibilities are finished. Will the Minister have a look at this issue because clearly this young woman and lots of other young women, having suffered what they suffered, will need support for years to come?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I agree with the noble Baroness that anyone who has been through any kind of assault or sexual violence needs support. In this case, allegations of rape were raised quite directly. Sexual assault is serious and is not something that ends for the victim once the court case has been resolved. I will certainly take back the helpful remarks made by the noble Baroness. For her information and indeed for the House in general, we also look at how we can improve processes on the ground, so we are now funding specific projects in different countries to train local authorities on issues around language and cultural sensitivities and to train the police in the collection of evidence.

Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill [HL]

First Reading

11.37 am

A Bill to make provision about airspace change proposals and about the licensing regime for air traffic services under Part 1 of the Transport Act 2000, to confer police powers relating to unmanned aircraft and requirements in Air Navigation Orders and to provide for fixed penalties for certain offences relating to unmanned aircraft.

The Bill was introduced by Baroness Vere of Norbiton, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Financial Services (Duty of Care) Bill [HL]

First Reading

11.38 am

A Bill to require the Financial Conduct Authority to make rules for authorised persons to owe a duty of care to consumers in their regulated activities.

The Bill was introduced by Lord Sharkey, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Asylum Support (Prescribed Period) Bill [HL]

First Reading

11.38 am

A Bill to introduce a minimum period of 56 days before an asylum claim is considered to be determined for the purpose of ending asylum support.

The Bill was introduced by Baroness Lister of Burtersett, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Access to Palliative Care and Treatment of Children Bill [HL]

First Reading

11.38 am

A Bill to make provision for NHS service commissioners to ensure that persons for whom they have responsibility for commissioning physical and mental health services have access to specialist and generalist palliative care and support services; to enable hospices to access pharmaceutical services on the same basis as other services commissioned by a clinical commissioning group; and to make provision for treatment of children with a life-limiting illness.

The Bill was introduced by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Marriage (Approved Organisations) Bill [HL]

First Reading

11.39 am

A Bill to amend the law on marriage to permit authorised belief organisations to solemnise marriages.

The Bill was introduced by Baroness Meacher, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill [HL]

First Reading

11.39 am

A Bill to make provision for leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom to be granted to the family members of refugees and of people granted humanitarian protection; and to provide for legal aid to be made available in such cases.

The Bill was introduced by Baroness Hamwee, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Business of the House

Motion on Standing Orders

11.40 am

Moved by Lord Ashton of Hyde

That, in the event of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill having been brought from the House of Commons:

(1) Standing Order 40(1) (*Arrangement of the Order Paper*) be dispensed with on Wednesday 15 January and Tuesday 21 January to enable proceedings on that Bill to be taken before oral questions on those days;

(2) Standing Order 40(4) (so far as it relates to Thursdays) and (5) (*Arrangement of the Order Paper*) be dispensed with on Thursday 16 January to allow proceedings on that Bill to have precedence over other motions and orders that day; and

(3) Standing Order 46 (*No two stages of a Bill to be taken on one day*) and Standing Order 48 (*Amendments on Third Reading*) be dispensed with on Tuesday 21 January to allow the Report stage and Third Reading of that Bill to be taken on that day and to allow manuscript amendments to be tabled and moved on Third Reading.

Lord Ashton of Hyde (Con): My Lords, on behalf of my noble friend the Leader of the House, I beg to move the Motion standing in her name on the Order Paper. In doing so, I will make a brief business statement about the consideration of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill. I stress that the arrangements for the Bill were advertised before Christmas and discussed and agreed through the usual channels.

The Bill will receive its First Reading later today. Thanks to the arrangements put in place by the Legislation Office, noble Lords will be able to table amendments for the Committee stage from 10 am tomorrow. The Bill will have its Second Reading on Monday 13 January. A speakers' list is still open, and noble Lords can sign up in the usual way until 4 pm tomorrow. The Bill will then be in Committee on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The House will sit at 11 am on Wednesday 15 January to provide some additional time. Oral Questions will take place at the usual time of 3 pm. Proceedings on the Bill will then continue the following week, with the Report stage on Monday 20 and Tuesday 21 January and Third Reading also taken on the 21st. The House will meet early, at 11 am, on Tuesday 21 January—again, to provide some additional time. The full arrangements for the tabling of amendments have been published via this week's *Forthcoming Business*.

Motion agreed.

Arrangement of Business *Announcement of Recess Dates*

11.42 am

Lord Ashton of Hyde (Con): My Lords, I have another short statement to make this morning, about recess dates. A note of all the dates I am about to announce is available in the Printed Paper Office. For the record, the following dates are, of course, subject to the eternal Chief Whip's caveat that they are dependent on the progress of business—and I expect the House to be busy this year.

We will rise at the conclusion of business on Thursday 13 February and return on Monday 24 February. For Easter, we will rise at the conclusion of business on Wednesday 1 April and return on Tuesday 21 April. There will be a long weekend for the Victory in Europe Day anniversary when, unusually, the bank holiday is on Friday rather than Monday; we will rise at the conclusion of business on Wednesday 6 May and return on Monday 11 May. For Whitsun, we will rise at the conclusion of business on Thursday 21 May and return on Tuesday 2 June. We will then rise at the end of business on Tuesday 21 July for the Summer Recess and return on Tuesday 8 September. For the Conference Recess, we will rise at the conclusion of business on

Thursday 17 September and return on Tuesday 13 October. I hope that giving as much notice as possible of the expected sitting pattern for the majority of 2020 will assist all noble Lords.

Deputy Chairmen of Committees

House of Lords Commission

Communications and Digital Committee

Conduct Committee

Constitution Committee

Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee

Economic Affairs Committee

European Union Committee

Finance Committee

Hybrid Instruments Committee

International Relations and Defence Committee

Liaison Committee

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) Board

Procedure Committee

Science and Technology Committee

Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee

Services Committee

Standing Orders (Private Bills) Committee *Membership Motions*

11.44 am

Moved by The Senior Deputy Speaker

Deputy Chairmen of Committees

That, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed as the panel of members to act as Deputy Chairmen of Committees for this session:

Andrews, B; Ashton of Hyde, L; Brougham and Vaux, L; Dear, L; Faulkner of Worcester, L; Finlay of Llandaff, B; Fookes, B; Garden of Frogmal, B; Geddes, L; Haskel, L; Henig, B; Kinnoull, E;

Lexden, L; McAvoy, L; McIntosh of Hudnall, B; Morris of Bolton, B; Newlove, B; Palmer of Childs Hill, L; Pitkeathley, B; Rogan, L; Simon, V; Ullswater, V.

House of Lords Commission

That a Select Committee be appointed to provide high-level strategic and political direction for the House of Lords Administration on behalf of the House and that, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed to the Committee:

Doocey, B; Evans of Bowes Park, B; Fowler, L. (*Chair*); Judge, L; Laming, L; McFall of Alcluith, L. (*Deputy Chair*); McIntosh of Hudnall, B; Newby, L; Smith of Basildon, B; Wakeham, L.

That Liz Hewitt and Mathew Duncan be appointed as external members of the Committee;

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House.

Communications and Digital Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the media, digital and creative industries and that, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed to the Committee:

Allen of Kensington, L; Bull, B; Colville of Culross, V; Gilbert of Panteg, L. (*Chair*); Gordon of Strathblane, L; Grender, B; McInnes of Kilwinning, L; McIntosh of Hudnall, B; Meyer, B; Quin, B; Scott of Bybrook, B; Storey, L; Worcester, Bp.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have power to appoint specialist advisers;

That the Committee have power to adjourn from place to place;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House;

That the evidence taken by the Committee in the last session of Parliament be referred to the Committee;

That the evidence taken by the Committee be published, if the Committee so wishes.

Conduct Committee

That a Conduct Committee be appointed and that, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed to the Committee:

Anelay of St Johns, B; Brown of Eaton-under-Heywood, L; Donaghy, B; Hussein-Ece, B; Mance, L. (*Chair*);

That the following be appointed as lay external members of the Committee:

Cindy Butts; Mark Castle OBE; Andrea Coomber; Vanessa Davies.

That the quorum of the Committee shall be three Lords members and two lay members;

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House;

That the evidence taken by the Committee be published, if the Committee so wishes.

Constitution Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed to examine the constitutional implications of public bills coming before the House; and to keep under review the operation of the constitution and constitutional aspects of devolution; and that, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed to the Committee:

Beith, L; Corston, B; Drake, B; Dunlop, L; Faulks, L; Fookes, B; Hennessy of Nympsfield, L; Howarth of Newport, L; Howell of Guildford, L; Pannick, L; Taylor of Bolton, B. (*Chair*); True, L; Wallace of Tankerness, L.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have power to appoint specialist advisers;

That the Committee have power to adjourn from place to place;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House;

That the evidence taken by the Committee in the last session of Parliament be referred to the Committee;

That the evidence taken by the Committee be published, if the Committee so wishes.

Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed:

(i) To report whether the provisions of any bill inappropriately delegate legislative power, or whether they subject the exercise of legislative power to an inappropriate degree of parliamentary scrutiny;

(ii) To report on documents and draft orders laid before Parliament under or by virtue of:

(a) sections 14 and 18 of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006,

(b) section 7(2) or section 19 of the Localism Act 2011, or

(c) section 5E(2) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004; and to perform, in respect of such draft orders, and in respect of subordinate provisions orders made or proposed to be made under the Regulatory Reform Act 2001, the functions performed in respect of other instruments and draft instruments by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments; and

(iii) To report on documents and draft orders laid before Parliament under or by virtue of:

(a) section 85 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998,

(b) section 17 of the Local Government Act 1999,

(c) section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000,

(d) section 98 of the Local Government Act 2003, or

(e) section 102 of the Local Transport Act 2008.

That, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed to the Committee:

Andrews, B; Blencathra, L. (*Chair*); Browning, B; Goddard of Stockport, L; Haselhurst, L; Haskel, L; Meacher, B; Rowlands, L; Thurlow, L; Tope, L.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have power to appoint specialist advisers;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House;

That the evidence taken by the Committee be published, if the Committee so wishes.

Economic Affairs Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed to consider economic affairs and business affairs and that, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed to the Committee:

Bowles of Berkhamsted, B; Burns, L; Chandos, V; Cunningham of Felling, L; Darling of Roulanish, L; Forsyth of Drumlean, L. (*Chair*); Fox, L; Harding of Winscombe, B; Kingsmill, B; Livingston of Parkhead, L; Skidelsky, L; Stern of Brentford, L; Tugendhat, L.

That the Committee have power to appoint a sub-committee and to refer to it any of the matters within the Committee's terms of reference; that the Committee have power to appoint the Chair of the sub-committee;

That the Committee have power to co-opt any member to serve on the Committee or a sub-committee;

That the Committee and its sub-committees have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee and its sub-committees have power to appoint specialist advisers;

That the Committee and its sub-committees have power to adjourn from place to place;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House;

That the evidence taken by the Committee in the last session of Parliament be referred to the Committee;

That the evidence taken by the Committee or its sub-committees be published, if the Committee so wishes.

European Union Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed:

(1) To consider European Union documents deposited in the House by a Minister, and other matters relating to the European Union;

The expression "European Union document" includes in particular:

(a) a document submitted by an institution of the European Union to another institution and put by either into the public domain;

(b) a draft legislative act or a proposal for amendment of such an act; and

(c) a draft decision relating to the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union under Title V of the Treaty on European Union;

The Committee may waive the requirement to deposit a document, or class of documents, by agreement with the European Scrutiny Committee of the House of Commons;

(2) To assist the House in relation to the procedure for the submission of Reasoned Opinions under Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union and the Protocol on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;

(3) To represent the House as appropriate in interparliamentary cooperation within the European Union;

That, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed to the Committee:

Brown of Cambridge, B; Cavendish of Furness, L; Couttie, B; Donaghy, B; Faulkner of Worcester, L; Hamwee, B; Jay of Ewelme, L; Kerr of Kinlochard, L; Kinnoull, E. (*Chair*); Lamont of Lerwick, L; Morris of Aberavon, L; Neville-Rolfe, B; Oates, L; Primarolo, B; Ricketts, L; Sharkey, L; Teverson, L; Verma, B; Wood of Anfield, L.

That the Committee have power to appoint sub-committees and to refer to them any matters within its terms of reference; that the Committee have power to appoint the Chairs of sub-committees, but that the sub-committees have power to appoint their own Chairs for the purpose of particular inquiries; that the quorum of each sub-committee be two;

That the Committee have power to co-opt any member to serve on a sub-committee;

That the Committee and its sub-committees have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have power to appoint specialist advisers;

That the Committee and its sub-committees have power to adjourn from place to place;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House;

That the evidence taken by the Committee or its sub-committees in the last session of Parliament be referred to the Committee or its sub-committees;

That the evidence taken by the Committee or its sub-committees be published, if the Committee so wishes.

Finance Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed to support the House of Lords Commission by:

(1) Considering expenditure on services provided from the Estimate for the House of Lords,

(2) Reporting to the Commission on the forecast outturn, Estimate and financial plan submitted by the Management Board,

(3) Monitoring the financial performance of the House Administration, and

(4) Reporting to the Commission on the financial implications of significant proposals;

That, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed to the Committee:

Colgrain, L; Collins of Highbury, L; Cope of Berkeley, L; Courtown, E; Cromwell, L; Cunningham of Felling, L; Doocey, B. (*Chair*); Goudie, B; Kerslake, L; Stoneham of Droxford, L.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House.

Hybrid Instruments Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed to consider hybrid instruments and that, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members together with the Senior Deputy Speaker be appointed to the Committee:

Addington, L; Dykes, L; Grantchester, L; Harrison, L; Jenkin of Kennington, B; Swinfen, L.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House; and

That the evidence taken by the Committee be published, if the Committee so wishes.

International Relations and Defence Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the United Kingdom's international relations and issues relating to UK defence policy and that, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed to the Committee:

Alton of Liverpool, L; Anelay of St Johns, B. (*Chair*); Blackstone, B; Fall, B; Grocott, L; Hannay of Chiswick, L; Helic, B; Mendelsohn, L; Purvis of Tweed, L; Rawlings, B; Reid of Cardowan, L; Smith of Newnham, B.

That the Committee have power to appoint specialist advisers;

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have power to adjourn from place to place;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House;

That the evidence taken by the Committee in the last session of Parliament be referred to the Committee;

That the evidence taken by the Committee be published, if the Committee so wishes.

Liaison Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed to advise the House on the resources required for select committee work and to allocate resources between select committees; to review the select committee work of the House; to consider requests for Special Inquiry Committees and report to the House with recommendations; to ensure effective co-ordination between the two Houses; and to consider the availability of members to serve on committees;

That, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members together with the Chairman of Committees be appointed to the Committee:

Bradley, L; Hayter of Kentish Town, B; Howe, E; Judge, L; Lang of Monkton, L; Low of Dalston, L; Smith of Hindhead, L; Tyler, L; Walmsley, B.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have power to appoint specialist advisers;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House.

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) Board

That, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following Lords be appointed to the Board of the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST):

Haskel, L; Oxburgh, L; Patel, L; Winston, L.

Procedure Committee

That a Select Committee on Procedure of the House be appointed and that, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members together with the Senior Deputy Speaker be appointed to the Committee:

Ashton of Hyde, L; Bew, L; Eames, L; Evans of Bowes Park, B; Foulkes of Cumnock, L; Fowler, L; Geddes, L; Harris of Richmond, B; Judge, L; McAvoy, L; Mancroft, L; Morris of Aberavon, L; Newby, L; Smith of Basildon, B; Stoneham of Droxford, L; Thomas of Winchester, B; Ullswater, V; Warwick of Undercliffe, B.

and that the following members be appointed as alternate members:

Browning, B; Finlay of Llandaff, B; Scriven, L; Turnbull, L.

That the Committee have power to appoint sub-committees and that the Committee have power to appoint the Chairs of sub-committees;

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House.

Science and Technology Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed to consider science and technology and that, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed to the Committee:

Borwick, L; Browne of Ladyton, L; Hilton of Eggardon, B; Hollick, L; Kakkar, L; Mair, L; Manningham-Buller, B; Patel, L. (*Chair*); Penn, B; Ridley, V; Rock, B; Sheehan, B; Walmsley, B; Young of Old Scone, B.

That the Committee have power to appoint sub-committees and that the Committee have power to appoint the Chairs of sub-committees;

That the Committee have power to co-opt any member to serve on the Committee or a sub-committee;

That the Committee and its sub-committees have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee and its sub-committees have power to appoint specialist advisers;

That the Committee and its sub-committees have power to adjourn from place to place;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House;

That the evidence taken by the Committee or its sub-committees in the last session of Parliament be referred to the Committee or its sub-committees; That the evidence taken by the Committee or its sub-committees be published, if the Committee so wishes.

Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed to scrutinise secondary legislation.

(1) The Committee shall report on draft instruments and memoranda laid before Parliament under sections 8, 9 and 23(1) of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall lapse upon the expiry of the power to make instruments under sections 8, 9 and 23(1) of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

(3) The Committee shall, with the exception of those instruments in paragraphs (5) and (6), scrutinise—

(a) every instrument (whether or not a statutory instrument), or draft of an instrument, which is laid before each House of Parliament and upon which proceedings may be, or might have been, taken in either House of Parliament under an Act of Parliament;

(b) every proposal which is in the form of a draft of such an instrument and is laid before each House of Parliament under an Act of Parliament, with a view to determining whether or not the special attention of the House should be drawn to it on any of the grounds specified in paragraph (4).

(4) The grounds on which an instrument, draft or proposal may be drawn to the special attention of the House are—

(a) that it is politically or legally important or gives rise to issues of public policy likely to be of interest to the House;

(b) that it may be inappropriate in view of changed circumstances since the enactment of the parent Act;

(c) that it may inappropriately implement European Union legislation;

(d) that it may imperfectly achieve its policy objectives;

(e) that the explanatory material laid in support provides insufficient information to gain a clear understanding about the instrument's policy objective and intended implementation;

(f) that there appear to be inadequacies in the consultation process which relates to the instrument;

(g) that the instrument appears to deal inappropriately with deficiencies in retained EU law.

(5) The exceptions are—

(a) remedial orders, and draft remedial orders, under section 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998;

(b) draft orders under sections 14 and 18 of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006, and subordinate provisions orders made or proposed to be made under the Regulatory Reform Act 2001;

(c) Measures under the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919 and instruments made, and drafts of instruments to be made, under them.

(6) The Committee shall report on draft orders and documents laid before Parliament under section 11(1) of the Public Bodies Act 2011 in accordance with the procedures set out in sections 11(5) and (6). The Committee may also consider and report on any material changes in a draft order laid under section 11(8) of the Act.

(7) The Committee shall also consider such other general matters relating to the effective scrutiny of secondary legislation and arising from the performance of its functions under paragraphs (1) to (6) as the Committee considers appropriate, except matters within the orders of reference of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments.

That the Committee have power to appoint sub-committees and to refer to them any matters within its terms of reference; that the Committee have power to appoint the Chairs of sub-committees; that the quorum of each sub-committee be two;

The Committee's power to appoint sub-committees shall lapse upon the expiry of the power to make new instruments under sections 8, 9 and 23(1) of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and shall lapse entirely upon expiry of the last such remaining power;

That the Committee have power to co-opt any member to serve on a sub-committee;

That the Committee and its sub-committees have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee and its sub-committees have power to appoint specialist advisers;

That the Committee and its sub-committees have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee and its sub-committees be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House;

That the evidence taken by the Committee or its sub-committees in the last session of Parliament be referred to the Committee or its sub-committees;

That the evidence taken by the Committee or its sub-committees be published, if the Committee or its sub-committees so wish.

That, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed to the Committee:

Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville, B; Chartres, L; Cunningham of Felling, L; Faulkner of Worcester, L;

Hanworth, V; Hodgson of Astley Abbots, L. (*Chair*); Kirkwood of Kirkhope, L; Lindsay, E; Lisvane, L; Sherbourne of Didsbury, L; Watkins of Tavistock, B.

Services Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed to support the House of Lords Commission by:

(1) Agreeing day-to-day policy on member-facing services,

(2) Providing advice on strategic policy decisions when sought by the Commission, and

(3) Overseeing the delivery and implementation of both;

That, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members be appointed to the Committee:

Ashton of Hyde, L; Borwick, L; Campbell-Savours, L; Judge, L; Kirkwood of Kirkhope, L; Laming, L. (*Chair*); Morris of Bolton, B; Stoneham of Droxford, L; Touhig, L; Wheeler, B.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House.

Standing Orders (Private Bills) Committee

That a Select Committee on the Standing Orders relating to private bills be appointed and that, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following members together with the Senior Deputy Speaker be appointed to the Committee:

Fellowes, L; Geddes, L; McColl of Dulwich, L; Naseby, L; Rodgers of Quarry Bank, L; Simon, V.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the Committee have leave to report from time to time;

That the reports of the Committee be printed, regardless of any adjournment of the House;

That the evidence taken by the Committee be published, if the Committee so wishes.

The Senior Deputy Speaker (Lord McFall of Alcluith): My Lords, in order to provide a supersonic start to the establishment of Select Committees, I beg to move the 18 Motions standing in my name on the Order Paper.

Motions agreed.

Football Association and Bet365

Statement

11.44 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Baroness Barran) (Con): My Lords, with the leave of your Lordships, I will repeat the Answer to an Urgent Question asked earlier today in another place. The Answer is as follows:

“Mr Speaker, recent reports on the streaming of FA Cup matches by online bookmakers have rightly caused concern across this House. This is relating to a media

rights deal, agreed by the FA with IMG in early 2017, within which IMG could sell on live footage or clips of certain FA Cup matches to commercial partners.

Bet365 and six other betting operators acquired these rights from IMG to use from the start of the 2018-19 season. It is right that sporting organisations have the freedom to benefit commercially from their products and negotiate their own broadcasting deals, but football authorities also have an important responsibility to ensure that fans are protected from the risks of problem gambling. Since this deal was agreed, the FA has rightly reviewed its position on commercial relationships with gambling businesses. It has ended a commercial partnership with Ladbrokes, and it has announced that it will be reviewing its processes for tendering rights from the 2024-25 season onwards—and it is absolutely correct that it does so.

The Secretary of State and I have made our views quite clear, yesterday and previously, on the wider responsibilities that both the sport and gambling sectors have to their fans, to their customers and to wider communities, so we welcome the fact that industry has responded to public concern by introducing a whistle-to-whistle ban on TV advertising during daytime sport, and that the FA introduced a rule last year that prevents players, managers and members of staff, in any capacity, from deliberately taking part in audio or audio-visual advertising to actively encourage betting, because, while many people enjoy gambling as a leisure pursuit, we cannot forget that it carries a high risk of harm and can seriously impact individuals, families and communities. So all of us—the Government, gambling companies and sporting authorities—need to keep this momentum going so we can protect vulnerable people from the risk of gambling-related harm.”

Lord Griffiths of Burry Port (Lab): My Lords, I can only say that I am flabbergasted by all that this imports and how it impacts upon us. Goaded by the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of St Albans, the question of gambling in various forms and its dangers have been aired and debated in this House. A committee is currently looking at the harm that gambling does, and it can be quantified and dealt with in other parts of our organisation.

I could not give a fig about the commercial or contractual relations between gambling companies and the way that this matter has been siphoned down from one holding body to seven different gambling companies. That is far too theological for me, and I will leave it to members of the church by law established. However, in the Statement, there is a recognition by the Football Association that it must review its processes of tendering for the 2024-25 season, and we expect, from the notes that we are hearing, that things will be different thereafter.

Not only that, Her Majesty’s Government have recognised the correctness of that procedure and we must therefore expect concord between the Government and the FA at that time. But if it is going to be wrong then, it is wrong now. It should not have happened, and I would like to hear a note of urgency in the way that the Minister replies to this debate. She must bring out all her guns in order to bring together the top people in the major organisations that are implementing all of this in order that they understand that this House thinks very ill of this proposal and wishes it undone.

Baroness Barran: The noble Lord makes important points about the timing of all of this, and I acknowledge the important role that your Lordships’ House has played in bringing issues of problem gambling to the fore. I am sure that noble Lords will continue to do that. The noble Lord talked about timing. My honourable friend the Minister for Sport in the other place spoke to the FA this morning and will be meeting its representatives next week. He made it extremely clear that he expects them to explore every possible avenue to bring this situation to an end as quickly as possible.

Lord Addington (LD): My Lords, I agree with the general tone of what has been said so far about gambling being potentially damaging and that we should not be advertising it on something that is seen by many of the young. But will the Government undertake to remove some of the financial burden that falls on groups such as the FA to make sure that we can play grass-roots sport? The FA has to fund and support grass-roots pitches when, in places such as Germany, local government does that. Will the Government look round and see that government action will make this sort of activity more likely if you are mean with supporting things such as grass-roots sport?

Baroness Barran: The Government have taken the issue of grass-roots sport very seriously and recently announced more than £500 million of investment in exactly that.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (Con): My Lords, 25 years ago, when I was in charge of gaming, among other things, at the Home Office, the rule was that operators were not allowed to stimulate demand. Bookmakers were not even allowed to be in the *Yellow Pages*. This has now got completely out of hand and we need to return to that system. The National Lottery was supposed to be just about the National Lottery—but, if you try to buy a ticket online, all sorts of instant gaming solutions are available. The Government need to grip this and go back—if not to 1996, then certainly to bring in restrictions on misuse, of which this is just the most egregious example.

Baroness Barran: My noble friend had an even more interesting career at the Home Office than I imagined. We have announced that there will be a review of the Gambling Act. My honourable friend the Minister for Sport said this morning that nothing was off the table in terms of that review, and we also announced in the manifesto that we would address the issue of using credit cards to gamble. So the Government have heard this loud and clear and are keen to act.

The Lord Bishop of St Albans: My Lords, the huge rise in what many campaigners are calling the gamblification of sport is happening rapidly before our eyes. The Gambling Commission itself has identified 55,000 teenagers in this country suffering from gambling-related harm and 430,000 adults. Simon Stevens, the head of the NHS, has pointed out that it is costing a hard-pressed NHS up to £1.2 billion a year. Just yesterday, a new gambling clinic opened in Sunderland funded by the NHS. Will this review, which we are grateful that Her Majesty’s Government have promised, include the issue of the gamblification of sport and

[THE LORD BISHOP OF ST ALBANS]

look at things such as logos on shirts and wraparound adverts around pitches—all of which are excluded at the moment, which make a mockery of the whistle-to-whistle ban that we were promised?

Baroness Barran: I can only repeat that nothing is off the table in the review of the Act, so I would assume that exactly those issues of the gambification—if that is a word—of sport and the examples the right reverend Prelate gives will be addressed. To be clear, the issues that came up over the weekend do not apply to under-18s—but, even so, I take his point.

Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top (Lab): My Lords, I grew up in a household where football dominated our weekends. We were football fanatics, and I am afraid that has lived with me. That is true for a lot of children and young people. As the right reverend Prelate said, my home city of Sunderland is suffering from this. People do not start out as vulnerable. In my day, nobody associated gambling with football. It was not an issue. I grew up in a Methodist household, so that made it a bit easier. We never did raffle tickets, and I have never placed a bet in my life. However, for young children growing up now, it is seen as part of football. That is what the Government have to tackle so that young people do not see it as a normal thing that, if they are interested in football, they get involved in gambling. That is what the Government have to tackle.

Baroness Barran: The Government are going to try to tackle that. There is wide acknowledgement that the gambling regulations were set up for an analogue age. We are now in a digital age and the goalposts—not to make too awful a pun—have moved substantially. Perhaps I can in some small part reassure the House in that the FA will be broadcasting those games that are currently available only through betting sites in 2021 on its own site. I know that does not address the noble Baroness's point, but it will happen and will mean that young people will not need to go to a betting site to view those games.

Baroness Butler-Sloss (CB): My Lords, how quickly is this review going to take place?

Baroness Barran: I apologise, but I cannot give a definite date—but there is a clear sense of urgency.

Lord Moynihan (Con): My Lords, this Urgent Question reflects how much has changed since this third-party contract was signed in, I believe, 2014-15 and was rolled forward in 2017. When the Secretary of State and the Minister for Sport sit down next week with the FA, will they urgently review what changes to the Gambling Act are necessary? In the meantime, will they also approach Bet365, which was mentioned by my noble friend Lord Forsyth as stimulating demand. That company has revenues of £3 billion. The conditionality attached to this contract is that people have either to place a bet or to put £5 into a new account 24 hours before kick-off. Could the Government ask Bet365 immediately to rescind those two conditions, which stimulate demand?

Baroness Barran: On my noble friend's first point, I repeat that that will be part of the review. On the conversation directly with Bet365, I will need to check. When my honourable friend was asked on this point in the other place, he responded that the FA was in constant contact with Bet365. I am genuinely unclear to what extent we can interfere in an existing commercial contract—but we are very clear with the FA, and will be again next week, that we wish it to take every possible measure to deal with this as quickly as possible.

Queen's Speech

Debate (4th Day)

11.59 am

Moved on Thursday 19 December 2019 by Lord Lamont of Lerwick

That an Humble Address be presented to Her Majesty as follows:

“Most Gracious Sovereign—We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, beg leave to thank Your Majesty for the most gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.”

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford) (Con): My Lords, it is a great honour to open this debate on Her Majesty's gracious Speech. I am delighted to be joined by my noble friend Lord Younger, who will, I know, brilliantly close what I am sure will be a constructive and lively debate. We will consider in detail the Government's proposed approach to economic affairs, business and public services. The key theme linking all those areas is the overarching objective to invest in our future prosperity. Given that, I am sure that there will be unanimous support for that priority across the House, and I look forward to hearing your Lordships' expert contributions on its implementation.

There is no question but that the gracious Speech sets out an ambitious agenda for reform. There might be some who will be tempted to give an opinion on that but I will not apologise for what is a challenging and bold approach and for a Government who are restless for opportunity and renewal. This is a Government who are re-energised, reinvigorated and refocused on the right priorities, with a driving purpose to deliver real change for British people up and down this country.

If we put aside for just one moment the small matter of Brexit, noble Lords will not be surprised to hear me say that there can be no higher priority than the NHS. It is therefore my pleasure to open this debate by updating the House on the Government's plans for improving healthcare.

As noble Lords will no doubt be aware, we have already committed to increase NHS funding, amounting to an extra £33.9 billion in cash terms annually by 2023-24. This is the single largest commitment to the health service ever undertaken by a peacetime British Government. Furthermore, in the first 100 days of this Parliament, we will bring forward legislation to enshrine this multiyear funding settlement in law. This is the first time that a Government have delivered such

a commitment in legislation and its purpose is to give unprecedented financial certainty and to allow the NHS to plan with security for years to come.

The NHS long-term plan has been drawn up by those who know the NHS best, so that we can guarantee that it is not just about money but about how we spend it effectively. It has been drawn up by health and care staff, and patients and their families, along with experts in their fields. It sets out an approach for making sure that this extra funding goes as far as possible, ensuring that every pound is invested in the things that matter most.

Supporting the NHS in delivering the long-term plan is a priority for the Government and we are carefully considering options for targeted legislation to enable this. These targeted changes will reduce bureaucracy and improve collaboration across the NHS, ensuring that it evolves to meet the challenges of prevention, integration and technology, and enabling local partners to work together to deliver a healthier nation where we can care for people throughout their lives.

A key part of this strategy is, as we have debated many times in this place, fixing our social care system, which is clearly under pressure and which, in turn, contributes to the unprecedented demand on the NHS. To meet this rising demand, we are already providing councils with access to an additional £1.5 billion for social care next year. This comprises an additional £1 billion of grant funding for both adults' and children's social care, and a proposed 2% to enable councils to access a further £500 million from 2020-21. Of course, this is not only about money. We are determined to find a long-term solution to meet the challenges in social care to ensure that every person is treated with dignity and offered the security that they deserve. Therefore, alongside the additional funding, we will seek to build cross-party consensus to bring forward the necessary legislation to implement social care reform. For the avoidance of doubt, we have pledged that these reforms will ensure that no one needing care will be forced to sell their home to pay for it.

Furthermore, the Government have promised to put mental health on an equal footing with physical health. As the Mental Health Act is nearly 40 years old, modernisation of this Act is critical. Therefore, we will publish a White Paper early this year, setting out the Government's response to Simon Wessely's independent review and our vision for wide-ranging reform. We will then bring forward a new mental health Bill to amend the Act. This work is important but it is also complex. Given our experience—in this place particularly—with the Mental Capacity Act, I think we can all agree that it is right that these long-term changes are made with care and consensus. Through these reforms, we hope and intend to empower patients and remove inequalities in our mental health system.

In my role as a Minister for Health, I have particular responsibility for promoting innovation across the industry. We all have reasons to be grateful for the medical innovations that have become available through the NHS over its 70-year history, from the first clinical trial into scurvy, to proton beam therapy and mass vaccination programmes. The Medicines and Medical

Devices Bill will give us the necessary powers in UK law to update the current regulatory systems for human and veterinary medicines, clinical trials and medical devices. The Bill will enable us to cement our position as a world leader in the licensing and regulation of innovative medicines and medical devices after we leave the European Union, and will ensure that we have a regulatory system with robust standards and patient safety at its heart. The Bill is very much part of our agenda to modernise regulation, supporting early clinical trials and the production of personalised medicines but also the development of ever more sophisticated and safe medical devices.

I am proud to say that Britain is a nation of innovators, with many world-changing innovations and inventions pioneered here in the United Kingdom. The Government are committed to continuing to push the frontiers of science and technology via boosting R&D funding and developing proposals for a new, high-risk funding body to ensure that we remain at the forefront and competitive globally. We are equally ambitious in the scale of our commitment to the environment. We are the first country to legislate for long-term climate targets; we are world leaders in offshore wind and green finance; and there are now nearly 400,000 jobs in low-carbon industries and their supply chains. We will continue to lead the way in tackling climate change, encouraging new industries that will boost our productivity and growth as an early supplier of new, low-carbon technologies globally.

Our future, though, depends on the strength of our great cities. We have promised a White Paper on devolution, and I think all of us in this place agree that there is a powerful case for empowering every region and levelling up opportunity across every corner of this country. To unleash the potential across city centres in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, we need to invest in the factors that contribute to economic growth: a strong labour market, education, land for housing, infrastructure and more.

Our labour market is in its strongest position in years, with a UK employment rate of over 76%, almost three-quarters of which is in full-time jobs, but we are committed to going even further. This Government are determined to make the United Kingdom the best place to work in the world. Through the employment rights Bill, we will continue to deliver on our pledge to bring about the greatest reform of workers' rights in 20 years. The gracious Speech confirms the Chancellor's promise that the national living wage will increase and that, provided economic conditions allow, it will reach two-thirds of median earnings within five years. Also, within five years, the Government plan to expand the reach of the national living wage to everyone aged 21 and over. Taken together, we expect these changes to benefit 4 million low-paid workers. As assured in our manifesto, the Government will also increase the national insurance threshold to £9,500 next year—a tax cut for 31 million people, with a typical employee paying around £100 less in 2020-21.

Record numbers of people are now working and saving for retirement, with 87% of employees saving into a workplace pension in 2018, an increase of 55% since 2012. This shows that people are preparing

[BARONESS BLACKWOOD OF NORTH OXFORD]

for their future but, even with this success, we know that we must do more. Everyone in this place has commented on this in my hearing. That is why the Pension Schemes Bill will put protection of people's pensions at its heart and sets out the next phase of pensions reform, building on consensus across the pensions industry and the political spectrum. On a personal level, I also very much welcome the urgent review undertaken by the Department of Health and Social Care and HM Treasury into the annual allowance taper to fix the pensions system so that senior clinicians can take on extra shifts without the fear of an unexpected tax bill.

Our nation's productivity is no more and no less than the combined talents and efforts of people up and down this country. Therefore, the next part of our plan to make Britain fit for the future is to improve the quality of our education system. Importantly, the OECD's PISA results show that the UK already outperforms the OECD's average for reading, maths and science, and that performance has recently improved significantly in maths. It is especially welcome that this has been driven by improvements for lower-attaining pupils. However, our work is far from finished. That is why we have announced a cash boost to schools of £2.6 billion next year, rising to an additional £7.1 billion in 2022-23. This means that per-pupil funding in every school will increase in cash terms, and it will rise higher than inflation in most schools. The settlement underlines our determination to recognise teaching as the high-value prestigious profession that it is. It ensures that pay can increase for all teachers, with teachers' starting salaries increasing to £30,000 by 2022-23. That represents an increase of up to 25%. On further education, we have already introduced the first part of the national retraining scheme and we will invest an additional £3 billion in the National Skills Fund, which will build on existing reforms to ensure that British workers are equipped with the skills they need to thrive and prosper for a lifetime in work.

Key to ensuring a lifetime of prosperity, to recruitment and to raising the productivity of our country is building more homes and creating a fairer property market. We know that this is true. In the last year, therefore, we have delivered over 241,000 additional homes. That is the highest level in over 30 years. During this Parliament, we will implement measures to encourage shared ownership, help local families on to the housing ladder and speed up the build of affordable housing. This Government are working to deliver a rental system fit for the future, which is why we are introducing the Renters' Reform Bill to protect tenants and support landlords to provide the good-quality homes that we know this nation needs. It is also necessary that we undertake urgent action to respond to Dame Judith Hackett's independent review of building regulations and fire safety. Working together to learn the lessons of Grenfell, we will bring forward a building safety Bill and a fire safety Bill as soon as possible. I know that the House understands the urgency of those steps.

Turning to transport, Her Majesty's gracious Speech contained a series of measures to tackle urban congestion and transport links—it is no good trying to boost productivity if people cannot get to work on time—both

here in the UK and with trading partners around the world. Our ageing airspace system has not been updated since the 1960s, so the Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill will bring forward measures to modernise airspace, making flights faster, cleaner and quieter and giving the police greater enforcement powers to effectively tackle the unlawful use of unmanned aircrafts, including drones.

Earlier this year we successfully brought home 150,000 Thomas Cook passengers stranded overseas in the largest ever peacetime repatriation. But that operation was complex and costly, so we will bring forward a number of reforms to deal with airline insolvency that will provide oversight of airlines in financial trouble and help passengers to return home speedily and efficiently. Furthermore, we are determined to protect passengers from the misery of transport strikes, so we have announced plans to keep a minimum number of services running during transport strikes, ensuring that unions can no longer hold the travelling public to ransom. We will also implement widespread reform to the rail industry, following the Williams review, to improve performance and reliability, simplify fares and ticketing and introduce a stronger railway commercial model.

This Government are steadfastly committed to a path of budget responsibility in the context of what I have outlined as an ambitious reform agenda. Our economic plan will be underpinned by a responsible fiscal strategy, investing in public services and infrastructure while keeping borrowing and debt under control. As a country we are in a strong position, not by accident but by design. The International Monetary Fund forecasts that this year the UK economy will grow faster than those of France, Germany, Italy and Japan. The deficit has reduced by four-fifths since 2009-10. We have seen the economy grow every year since 2010. There are 3.7 million more people in work now than there were in 2010, and the proportion of low-paid jobs is at its lowest in 20 years.

All this is good news that I am sure will be welcomed by every Member of this House, and thanks to this we can now invest more in growing our economy and public services. That is why this Government are proposing a step change in infrastructure investment to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth. We will implement an infrastructure revolution, helping to ensure that productivity and opportunity are spread to every part of this country. That is why the gracious Speech has confirmed plans to publish a national infrastructure strategy, which will act as a blueprint for the future of infrastructure investment across the whole of the United Kingdom. It will examine how, through infrastructure investment, we can address that most critical and pressing of challenges—decarbonisation—and set out plans to turbocharge gigabit-capable broadband rollout and improve energy and transport infrastructure.

In closing, it is my fervent belief that Her Majesty's gracious Speech affirms our commitment to invest in an ambitious agenda and level up opportunity and quality of life in every corner of the United Kingdom. We will invest to reform education to deliver social mobility. We will invest to build homes, infrastructure and economic opportunity to help raise living standards.

We will invest in our NHS to make it the most sustainable and high-quality healthcare system in the world. I know that as legislation comes forward there will be expert and challenging debates in this place in which the collective wisdom and experience of the House will be called on to the full. I also know that in this place we share a common commitment to a fairer, more innovative and prosperous Britain. I look forward to delivering on that with each and every Member in this Chamber.

Lord Davies of Stamford (Lab): My Lords, before the noble Baroness sits down, following her remarks on the NHS, can she tell the House whether the Government propose to leave the European Medicines Agency? If so, will pharmaceutical companies registering a new compound, having gone through the procedure with the European Medicines Agency, have to replicate the process and cost by going through the same procedures here? Or will the Government accept the EMA's registration, even though we no longer have any influence over the management, policies or strategy of the agency?

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: I apologise, but I think the noble Lord slightly missed his moment and I had sat down. However, I know my noble friend Lord Younger will respond in his closing remarks.

12.17 pm

Lord Griffiths of Burry Port (Lab): My Lords, I express my gratitude to the noble Baroness for the wide-ranging announcements in the speech she just delivered. I rise with some trepidation and no little sense of honour and privilege as I introduce our side of this debate.

We have a new Prime Minister. He has certainly earned the right to sit in the driving seat—we cannot deny that—but our job on these Benches is to remind him to fasten his seatbelt. We are all passengers on board now and must remain vigilant.

So many subjects crop up in this compendium agenda item, but I will limit myself to just three. My noble friends will no doubt pick up on others, and expert interventions from around the House will deal with a great deal. I will concentrate on education, the internet and transport.

I have been a school governor, a trustee and, for the last 10 years—and here I declare an interest; it is all in the register—chairman of the board of the Central Foundation Schools. I want to say that, because I believe it has given me a front-row seat, allowing me to see and be part of the reinvigoration of failing schools that have risen to take their place among the best schools in the country through initiatives such as Teach First, City Challenge and the establishment of academies in their first iteration.

We must also acknowledge the contribution made by the Liberal Democrats through the introduction of the pupil premium in their time in the coalition Government and thank them for this. In London and other cities I know, those initiatives and items have turned schools that were at a loose tether and in measures into front-ranking and high-achieving schools. It has been an honour for me to put in the spadework to achieve those objectives.

In doing so, we have been able to define a model for education that works. We do not have to invent anything de novo. Just as much as a rail system, an airport terminal, broadband accessibility or other things mentioned in the Minister's speech, I believe that education simply has to be viewed as part of our national infrastructure. It is not just roads and bridges; if you have an infrastructure strategy, it must include education.

From my own personal involvement in education over the decades, I can attest that investing in education yields measurable and immeasurable outcomes of the first order: skills, efficiency, culture, productivity, aspiration, mobility, personal development, well-being and citizenship. All this and more can be directly attributable to a properly focused and functioning education system. Alas, we have lived through 10 years when a lot of the progress looks to be coming towards disintegration. I have heard the measures proposed. The proposal to “ensure every child has access to a high-quality education”

was clearly stated, with some figures put on it by the Minister. But the promise to

“increase levels of funding per pupil in every school”

while being welcome will leave us by 2022-23 only just at the levels that the Labour Government left as per-pupil expenditure in 2009-10. We have to recognise that what seem like alarming increases are increases of a relative nature.

At the same time, school budgets are having to pick up extra costs such as national insurance and pension increases. Pupil premium inputs have not increased with inflation and changes to the benefit system have diminished the number of pupil premiums without significantly compensating the families concerned. While we acknowledge the proper demands and expectations of Ofsted—of course we do—schools are telling me that they do not have the financial resources to implement them. Budgets for schools in the maintained sector are set in April, but in September for academies, while changes in teachers' pay are decided in the summer. A simple thing could bring both budgeting exercises in line with each other, which would be an achievement in its own right. So budgeting becomes very hazardous for maintained schools, which have to take a guess at what the salaries are going to be later in the year.

“Education, education, education” is a mantra that we do not have to attribute to its source, but from an interview in the current number of the *New Statesman* I can add another sophism:

“Social mobility is something I care passionately about”, says the subject,

“and the key to social mobility is education.”

All I can say is that that can be attributed to someone who I want to call my noble friend, although he usually sits on the opposite Benches: the noble Lord, Lord Howard of Lympne. We were at school together and know the advantage in mobility that education can provide.

All of us want education to improve. Can the Minister who replies let us know, I wonder, whether he is aware of the factors that have led to the success of London schools? Will he be prepared, instead of levelling things down from an admittedly unequal distribution

[LORD GRIFFITHS OF BURRY PORT]

of resource so that everybody gets the lowest common denominator, to level up to the success levels that we can now quantify and recognise from good practice over the last 10 years?

It was spelled out in the manifesto or the Queen's Speech that

"We will legislate to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online—protecting children ... and ... the most vulnerable ... and ensuring there is no safe space for terrorists to hide online".

The duty of care has been well delineated in the online harms White Paper; of course we welcome these commitments and will do our best to support them. But we are not best assured by the turnover of those holding office as Secretary of State for this part of the Government's work. It seems to be a launching pad for people with aspirations beyond DCMS—but what am I? I do not know anything about politics.

Nor do we feel able to continue the fruitful conversation already begun in this area until we have sight of the results of the consultation which, let us remind ourselves, ended in July last year. I attended seminars and conferences. I have held discussions with various interested parties throughout the period and since. We are told that more detailed discussion between the Government and unnamed "stakeholders" has been going on. This is a matter that demands cross-party, non-partisan collaboration. It is too important an area of our national life for it to become prey to the goings-on of party politics. I do not like being kept out of the loop. I hope that the promised pre-legislative opportunity will materialise before a final shape emerges in the form of a Bill. We need to get this provision right, or as right as we can make it, and it is vital for us not to cut corners as we find our way forward. I must plead with the Minister to give us some timetabling precision on this point.

The Government have pledged

"to bring full fibre and gigabit-capable broadband to every home and business across the UK by 2025".

I thought that I had a good vocabulary; it has been enriched since people put me in charge of this brief. We ought all of us to gasp with astonishment at this seemingly simple promise for two reasons. First, the Government have brought forward their previous commitment from 2033 to 2025—by eight years. That means that if the target stated is to be reached—while I am not very good at internet gigabit stuff, I got 100% in arithmetic at O-level, so I can do this bit—BT's current rate of progress, at 80,000 homes per month, will have to be increased fivefold to 400,000 homes per month. Have the Government received the nod from BT Openreach that this is achievable? Has it been costed? Will the £5 billion mentioned in the Conservatives' manifesto be enough to do the job? There is so much more that needs to be said on these matters that I leave it to other noble Lords who will surely follow on later.

I come finally to transport, and I am not going into the aeroplane side of things. The proposed railway minimum service legislation sets a dangerous precedent on the right to strike. Nobody likes to be inconvenienced by strikes, especially on the railways. I am a regular user of Southern Railway and have been as frustrated

as many others in this House by these actions, but this Government's attempt to restrict the collective bargaining of rail workers, to scapegoat them, is reprehensible. Surely it is time to sort out the mess of underfunding and franchising that has characterised the entire history of our railway system since its privatisation in the early 1990s. Here is another Tory mess, I am afraid to say, that needs to be looked at in the round rather than dealt with by populist measures aimed against the workforce. Can the Government assure the House that we will not see a race to the bottom of deregulation and a slashing of workers' rights in this and other areas, especially in the post-Brexit era?

The arguments for and against the continuation of the HS2 project have been very much in the news, and I commend the dissentient report made public earlier this week by my noble friend Lord Berkeley. However that project turns out and whatever decision is made—high speed, high cost; that is what it seems like—it should not be at the expense of the vast improvements needed in the commuter and inter-regional networks around our major cities in the Midlands and north of England. This is a time for joined-up thinking to produce joined-up transport systems. There can be no serious regeneration without adequate infrastructure of this kind. The House will welcome some reassurance and commitment on these points.

I look forward to sitting through the next endless number of hours as I listen to other people's more splintered views, as I have been able to luxuriate in a few extra minutes. With that, I take my leave.

12.29 pm

Lord Fox (LD): My Lords, after what might be described as a sluggish arrival of Bills and legislation to your Lordships' House over the past few years, the Queen's Speech sets out a dazzling array of Bills and legislation, which the Chief Whip said he expects to keep us very busy. We should welcome the fact that we are moving to address legislation because it quite rightly deals with some very important issues for this country.

After the dazzling speeches of the noble Baroness, Lady Blackwood, and the noble Lord, Lord Griffiths, and with regard to the 70 other people who will follow me, I will have a self-limiting ordinance and will try to speak quickly and limit what I say around the business, energy and industrial strategy portfolio that I represent. Others on these Benches will of course cover other areas. I am trying with this speech, in the spirit of positivity, to get more information and some sense of how this legislation will flow and about some of the unanswered questions that have come up.

The noble Baroness, Lady Blackwood, spoke with great brio on the employment rights Bill. Indeed, if it is as good as she tells us it will be then I am sure we will all welcome it. However, I share some of the reservations that the noble Lord, Lord Griffiths, just set out, in that once these measures start to come before your Lordships, there will be a reining back. This is, as the noble Baroness knows, an area in which the EU has had a strong influence over the United Kingdom's rules. We will be judging this Bill not just by what it contains but by when it comes. Perhaps the noble Viscount, Lord Younger, can give us some idea

of the conveyor belt of these Bills and of what will be coming when. That will give us some sense of the priorities within the lump of Bills in this Queen's Speech. The background notes for the Bill state that the purpose of the employment Bill is to

“protect and enhance workers' rights as the UK leaves the EU”.

As far as I can see, the list of main elements of the Bill does not include the protection of retained EU workers' rights. Perhaps the Government can clarify where they stand on that.

The financial services Bill aims to maintain the UK's regulatory standards and ensure that we remain open to markets when we leave the EU. This is “remain” and “maintain”—in other words, we are pushing toothpaste back into the tube. I will avoid the obvious Brexit jibe here, but does the Minister think that we will in fact maintain the access we currently enjoy to the European financial services market? What grounds does the Minister have for that opinion?

The national security and investment Bill seeks to establish a notification system whereby businesses would flag transactions with potential security concerns. This is something we should all be concerned about, and indeed have been in the past. Given Her Majesty's Government's recent conduct—as Ministers will remember—around waving through the Cobham deal and its takeover by a US investor, I think I join other noble Lords in being sceptical about the Government's intention. It is all very well increasing the Government's powers and giving them the ability to apply conditions, or indeed to block deals, but if the Secretary of State chooses not to do that and to bend the knee to the market, then those powers are essentially useless. Perhaps the Minister can help me with a thought experiment: can the Minister name one British business that would be protected by this rule that would not, or could not, in fact be protected by existing legislation?

The science, space and research Bill is really important, and elements of this Bill have been perhaps the most trailed in the newspapers. I speak of the Government's so-called ARPA approach to a big investment. We are told that there will be £800 million invested in something, and that that something will be in the north. The details will follow, no doubt, in this Bill. However, what has not been mentioned is the role of UK Research and Innovation. As noble Lords will remember, we went through a very long legislative process to establish UKRI. It was given a co-ordinating role in order to simplify and focus the research activities of this country. If noble Lords want to see how complex the current research and development funding structure in this country is, there is a report from the Science and Technology Select Committee that has one of the most mindbendingly complex box-and-wire diagrams imaginable. This seems to add more complexity and to call into question the role of UKRI. Can we have some clarification around that? In any case, £800 million does not reproduce the level of investment we are getting through the European Union, particularly through Horizon 2020 looking forward. Will Ministers also guarantee that, beyond the current assurances, which have been very well accepted by the research community, research organisations will have access to at least as much as the total funds that are coming from Europe?

While we are on the subject of UKRI, two words that have been all over other Queen's Speeches we have heard but have not appeared in this one are “industrial strategy”. I do not see those two words in conjunction anywhere in the Queen's Speech. Is this a slip of the drafting pen? When the current Chancellor of the Exchequer was briefly Secretary of State for BEIS, he proscribed the term. Are the Government proscribing the words “industrial strategy”, or are they merely hiding their light under a bushel? The Queen's Speech does mention a couple of new sector deals. If there is not an industrial strategy, in what context are those sector deals to be delivered? I seek some clarity. Industrial strategy was, or is, the purview of UKRI, so what is its role going forward, particularly in the context of this ARPA-style research organisation that is coming? Where does industrial strategy lie? While we are in this area, what is the status of existing sector deals? Will they be honoured? Many of them stretch far into this Parliament and, indeed, probably beyond, so where are they and will they be honoured?

The Made Smarter review was very important in the area of revitalising regional economies, but it too was not mentioned in the Queen's Speech, so what is its status? I shall not go into the details of the national infrastructure strategy Bill, but the area I would like the Government to focus on is energy strategy. It is absolutely clear, even before the targets we have set ourselves on zero carbon, that this country is bereft of an energy strategy. We absolutely need a stand-alone energy strategy, so can the Minister fill us in on when we might expect that process to start, when we might actually have that debate and when the industries that will have to deliver this strategy can actually start work? It is already too late in many cases, and we need to move. Leaving aside conversations about all the other elements of infrastructure, that should be top of this Government's pile.

By any measure, this package is formidable in terms of objectives. I am sure that if this were “Yes Minister”, the civil servant would say, “Very ambitious, Prime Minister”, yet the election campaign stoked expectation even higher, and this will be the challenge. The noble Baroness, Lady Blackwood, talked about challenges. The challenge is going to be public expectation of delivery—that is the phrase *du jour* that we must use. Those expectations will have to be delivered in a difficult climate. Not only are all these Bills coming, but there is the small matter of free trade agreement negotiations going on, at least with the European Union, if not with other parallels. They are designed simply to reproduce what we have already or to deliver the equivalent economic basis. Meanwhile, economic growth, with all due respect to the other numbers trotted out just now, slowed to about 0.4% between the second and third quarters of 2019, with construction and manufacturing struggling in particular, and the service sector essentially holding its breath at the moment to see what happens.

National expectations have been pushed up, and we on these Benches will work hard with the legislation that comes our way and do our best to make sure that these Bills get the scrutiny that the country deserves.

12.40 pm

The Lord Bishop of London: My Lords, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak during this debate on Her Majesty's gracious Speech. I note my interests, which I have declared, and I will limit my comments purely to health and social care.

I welcome Her Majesty's Government's focus on the NHS: health, social care and the workforce. I also welcome the additional funding. However, we must not be misled into thinking that this is a funding bonanza; it will serve only to stabilise NHS services. Between April and September, for all nine NHS cancer targets the lowest percentage of patients was treated on time since the standards were introduced. All 118 A&E units fell below the 95% threshold in November as the NHS posted its worst performance since targets were introduced more than a decade ago. We have a long way to go simply to stabilise the status quo. Are Her Majesty's Government confident that the action outlined will make up the ground that is required?

The NHS is only as good as its workforce, and I am glad to see the focus on recruitment, training and immigration. However, issues related to immigration must be acted on as soon as possible. The new NHS visa is welcome, but it is a limited response to the need to recruit international staff to meet pressing workforce shortages. Health workers coming to the UK still need to pay the immigration surcharge, which is set to increase to £625 per person every year, on top of £464 for a visa. I wonder whether more needs to be done.

Her Majesty's Government's commitment to bring forward draft legislation to support the implementation of the NHS long-term plan is to be commended. As already mentioned, this should be based on the targeted proposals NHS England has developed. This will make it easier for NHS organisations to collaborate with not only each other but their partners in local communities to improve services for the people they serve. However, as any nurse working in a hospital today knows, too often patients, many of them vulnerable, cannot be discharged, despite being medically fit, because they have nowhere safe to go. A strategy for social care and its workforce is also needed.

The additional £1 billion is welcome, but in a sense it may give only a short-term boost to social care services for adults and children. I wonder whether it is enough to meet the rising demand for care while maintaining quality and accessibility of services. I am reassured to see that there is a cross-party approach to seeking consensus on social care reform, but it will take tremendous commitment, tenacity and creativity if the Prime Minister is going to honour his promise to fix the social care system once and for all and to bring forward meaningful proposals for reform. I look forward to lending my support to this work.

Would Her Majesty's Government consider bringing forward proposals for health and social care integration? As the British Medical Association states:

"Challenges for Britain's health do not end in GP surgeries or hospitals and the Government needs a credible long-term plan on how to care for people at home and in communities."

Given the scale of the task of merely maintaining the current situation and the combined demands on healthcare

needs, such a plan is increasingly important. Plans should be there to see health in its wider community context.

The diocese of London is collaborating on a pioneering project with Health Education England to place mental health students in faith communities in the Grenfell area to enable mutual learning. We need more such initiatives. They free up capacity, relieve pressure on various parts of the NHS and also contribute to the health of the community. I wonder whether more progress could be made to commission, partner and champion with local charities and churches to provide services to support the vulnerable and at-risk groups and to look at health and well-being in broader terms.

Finally, I hope that the implications of the European Union withdrawal Bill on policy and legislative business do not distract from improving the NHS, health and social care. Improving health and social care is good not just for the individual but for the nation.

12.46 pm

Baroness Bull (CB): My Lords, in the days following Her Majesty's gracious Speech, noble Lords may have missed the announcement of 0.3% as UK statistic of the decade. It represents UK productivity's average annual growth, down over 10 years from 2%. According to the Royal Statistical Society's Hetan Shah, it is

"the most important boring statistic that you have never heard of."

Productivity did not feature much in election campaigns, but it should have. High productivity growth leads to higher wage growth and more money for public services. Shah is not alone in linking low productivity with social discord. The University of Sheffield's Richard Jones suggests that it is not

"far-fetched to ascribe our current dysfunctional and bitter political environment ... to a decade of stagnation in productivity growth."

I therefore welcome the commitment to boost productivity through new investment and R&D tax incentives. As the notes on the Speech explain:

"R&D is vital to a productive economy—firms that invest in R&D have around 13 per cent higher productivity than those firms that do not".

The Government intend to

"prioritise investment in industries of the future where the UK can take a commanding lead"—

life sciences, clean energy, space, design, computing, robotics and AI. But in focusing on the cutting edge, they need to take care not to ignore everyday and foundational areas where poor productivity is a drain on the economy: low-wage, low-skill industries such as catering and retail; the public sector, which makes up one-fifth of the economy; or health and social care, where advances in biomedical science need to be balanced with research that improves productivity in the system.

Too narrow a focus on becoming a "global science superpower" also risks excluding areas of existing dominance. This includes the creative industries, which generate 5.5% of the economy and contribute across every region of the UK. Yet they are absent from the Queen's Speech—as they were from the last—and are seemingly excluded from any additional support for research and development. Creative businesses undertake almost as much R&D as manufacturing, but as much of it relies on arts, humanities and social science research,

it does not qualify for targeted R&D tax relief. This is because in applying R&D definitions that draw on the *Frascati Manual*, HMRC requires that R&D relates to scientific or technological delivery, despite the manual's wider scope. Arts, humanities and social sciences are specifically excluded, and are deemed "not science for the purpose of these Guidelines."

This narrow definition excludes advances in knowledge that lead to production of experiences or to enhanced understanding of human behaviour.

The benefits of a unified R&D definition across all knowledge domains go beyond the support of legitimate innovation in the creative sectors, and I am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Duncan, for agreeing to meet on this. A unified definition would ensure that technological solutions are informed by insights into human behaviour, making adoption more likely; it would also encourage knowledge exchange across disciplines where innovation often occurs.

The correlation between creativity and scientific discovery is well understood, including, I know, by the noble Baroness, Lady Blackwood. Galileo was a poet; Newton was a painter; and Leonardo was both, and more. A 2008 study of 40 Nobel laureates in science found them three times more likely to have arts and crafts avocations than other scientists. Several observed that

"purely academic skills are not sufficient to train a person for creative scientific work."

This makes obvious sense: it takes creative thinking to come up with new hypotheses and to imagine the experiments that will prove them.

Given this, the Government's decision to opt out of the PISA 2021 test for creative thinking is surely a mistake. This is a unique opportunity to collect internationally comparable data and increase understanding of how education best develops creative thinking—vital for the workforce of the future and vital in solving global challenges. It is an opportunity that the Government should not turn down.

The Conservative manifesto promised to promote creativity in schools, but measures to do so are noticeably absent from the Queen's Speech. Reversing the decision to opt out of the PISA 2021 test for creative thinking would be a first step in addressing this. I am sure noble Lords will agree that it would be unfortunate if, in our efforts for the UK to become the global science superpower, we were to lose our position as a global superstar in creativity.

12.51 pm

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (Con): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Baroness. She always makes interesting speeches, some of which she and I have discussed over cups of tea outside the Chamber. Given the exigencies of the five-minute limit, I hope she will forgive me if I do not take up her points and instead go straight to the issues that I wish to raise with the Government as they set out their plans for the next five years.

In summary, I want to draw the Government's attention to some weakness in the way our economic system currently operates and make some suggestions for its improvement. At the outset, I want to make it clear that I am a strong supporter and defender of the

market-led economic system, but the fact that I am such a strong defender and supporter does not mean that I think it is incapable of improvement or above reproach. I must say, I have had to reach the conclusion that the system, in its present configuration and in recent years, has not delivered rewards sufficiently fairly across all sectors of society and all regions of the country.

On behalf of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn hinted at some of this during the last general election campaign. The fact that his solutions were, frankly, beyond ridiculous should not blind us to the somewhat unpleasant fact that, nevertheless, there are questions that require a substantive response. Such a response will certainly be needed from this new Conservative Government if we are to keep faith with those voters who turned the red wall into a blue one. There is, therefore, a pressing need to create what might usefully be described as a more responsible capitalism. I congratulate the Government on the approach and tone that they have adopted so far. These are, however, early days, and I note that familiar country phrase: fine words butter no parsnips.

What practical steps should the Government now take? First, they should, without delay, introduce legislation to reconstruct the UK's inadequate audit regime. There is general agreement, supported by the Government's own reviews, that the present system no longer retains public confidence. A proper audit regime is an essential building block in the establishment of a more responsible capitalist system, so it is particularly disappointing that the Government intend to bring forward such legislation only, to use that famous Whitehall phrase, when time allows.

The Government could also usefully institute a much wider and in-depth consideration of the pinch points of modern capitalism. This could include: first, an analysis of the consequences of the different tax treatment of interest on borrowing, which is tax deductible, and on dividends, which is not; secondly, consideration of whether share purchases should give immediate rights of ownership of the enterprise or whether some period of longevity should be required; and, thirdly, consideration of the asymmetric nature of the risks in modern corporate activity, with some groups able to insulate themselves and some—mostly workers in factories—unable to do so. Finally, and perhaps most controversially, it could include consideration of whether limited liability status should become a privilege, not a right, so that in cases of particularly egregious personal behaviour, individuals could face the full consequences of their actions.

Responsible capitalism could not, will not and should not be created by government alone. It will require a wholehearted commitment by British industry and commerce, in particular its leaders and trade associations, to change the culture and end the sense of entitlement that has prevailed in recent years and has so disfigured the corporate scene. Profit of itself is not a business purpose; it is the result of creating and selling a product or a service that people wish to purchase. There is therefore in business a moral dimension, and a failure to make this distinction has damaged the reputation of our industrial and commercial sectors.

[LORD HODGSON OF ASTLEY ABBOTTS]

Let us take this week's example of Mr Neil Woodford, fund manager extraordinaire, whose fund has performed so badly that redemptions have been stopped and investors cannot withdraw their money. How can Mr Woodford look at himself in the mirror and say it is fair that he should personally withdraw £9 million-worth of dividends from his fund management company, let alone justify that to a wider audience and the wider world? Our market system can, should and must do better than that.

12.56 pm

Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe (Lab): My Lords, I welcome the opportunity to take part in this debate on the humble Address. I want to talk about housing. I declare my interest as chair of the National Housing Federation, the trade body for housing associations in England.

A week after the general election, it was reported that the number of homeless households in Britain had risen to over 68,000. At Christmas, more than 135,000 children did not wake up in a safe home to call their own. Each one of these children and their families need us to act now to invest in decent, affordable and high-quality housing. Given the ambition of this Government, I am hopeful that we will see the investment needed to build the homes that will fix the housing crisis.

The election made clear that voters want to see a change in the status quo. We have seen a real shake-up in traditional heartlands. These constituencies voted for a greater amount of investment in their schools, hospitals and infrastructure. I welcome the Government's commitment to high levels of investment in infrastructure, but this must include a bold and ambitious plan to fix the country's housing crisis.

The morning after the election, the Prime Minister made a welcome commitment to address the concerns of utmost importance to voters who may have voted for the Conservative Party for the first time. Polling by the National Housing Federation during the election revealed that 65% of undecided voters who backed Labour in the last election and voted leave in the EU referendum support the idea of spending billions of pounds a year on new social housing. This investment would not only be the right thing to do to help millions of families in England, it is also what voters have been asking for.

In the past 20 years, many communities in the north and the Midlands have been "left behind" while cities have thrived. I welcome the Government's plans, including regeneration, to level up the regions in England. Housing associations work as economic and social anchors in their communities. They build the vital homes we need, and, just as important, they support existing communities and empower their residents. They add £16 billion to the British economy each year and they support over 250,000 jobs distributed right across the country. Does the Minister agree that housing associations will play a key role in the Government's aim of levelling up the regions?

But of course our drive for new homes must not detract from ensuring that existing homes are of the utmost quality and safety. It is imperative that people

are safe and feel safe in their homes, and I am pleased to note two new pieces of legislation in the Queen's Speech that will contribute to this goal. Since the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, housing associations and indeed local authorities have worked swiftly to identify unsafe ACM cladding, and work has begun or been completed on the vast majority of these buildings in the social housing sector.

But we face failures throughout the building safety system well beyond ACM cladding, as the Hackitt review has shown. All social housing providers have made it an absolute priority to deal with the safety of entire buildings, together with tenants and residents. Not surprisingly, that presents considerable financial and operational challenges. We cannot ignore the sector's capacity to do this while continuing to build new affordable homes and investing in communities up and down the country.

The wholesale failure of the building safety system should not hamper the ability of housing associations and councils to build the affordable homes of the future. The Government's plans to resource remediation work must take this into account. It is a complex and extensive programme of work that needs renewed strategic leadership from government. For their part, housing associations remain committed to working in partnership to get this crucial work done. Let us all be clear in our focus on what matters most of all: the safety of the people who call these buildings their homes.

I am glad that the Government have reaffirmed their commitment to the affordable homes programme. Delivering hundreds of thousands of affordable homes needs the certainty of sustained support and specific funding for building homes for social rent. Ahead of the upcoming Budget, will the Minister speak with his Treasury colleagues to ensure that the affordable homes programme is financed effectively to build the homes this country needs?

The election result will continue to be dissected, but the Government have accepted the clear message for change and a greater political focus and action on the communities that have been ignored for too long. We know that when you have a safe, quality and affordable home to live in, everything else follows—as the Minister herself quite rightly said. It is right that the Government are finally listening to these voters, and I hope that we will see the investment desperately needed to deliver the meaningful change these communities have been calling for.

1.01 pm

Baroness Thomas of Winchester (LD): My Lords, I shall speak briefly about the Government's national disability strategy, the plan for which was published in an additional paper with the gracious Speech. The plan makes some very bold promises, saying that it wants to

"use all the levers of Government to support disabled people to achieve their potential",

and that it will be developed with disabled people, disability organisations and charities and will include housing, education and transport. This is obviously good news, particularly if all government departments

are to be involved. But the Government must put some real energy and determination into following through what they are proposing, and we need regular updates to find out exactly how they are going about this task. Who will be in overall charge of formulating the strategy? Will it be the Minister for Disabled People? Is there a rigorous timeframe?

If I sound somewhat sceptical, it is because we have been here or hereabouts before and nothing much has happened. Look at housing; here I echo what the noble Baroness, Lady Warwick, said. We spent last year hearing promises about a consultation on housing that would include accessible and adaptable housing, but this has not even started yet. Why was the Bill to exempt public lavatories from paying business rates withdrawn? This was another blow to helping disabled people have the confidence to get out and about. I hope it will be reintroduced as soon as possible.

I see that there is to be a Green Paper about the benefits system and how that affects disabled people. One specific measure is that a PIP award will now have a minimum award length to stop constant assessments—I should think so too. But the whole PIP process needs to be looked at afresh. It is nothing short of a scandal that 75% of PIP appeals are overturned at the tribunal stage. I ask the Minister to commit to a review of the whole PIP process, including the training of assessors. There is a very long waiting time for tribunals, which are expensive for the Government and stressful for claimants, so getting the initial assessments right and reviewing the points system must be of prime importance.

I hope the Minister, in replying to this, will not be tempted to recite the amount the Government are now spending on disability benefits, because this does not automatically make it the right amount. If the Government are really serious in wanting disabled people to be able to fulfil their potential, they must be prepared to put money behind any proposals they put forward for development in the new strategy. Most importantly, they must involve and consult disabled people every step of the way.

1.05 pm

The Lord Bishop of Southwark: My Lords, I wish to raise the issue of local services that are likely to have a positive impact on serious youth violence, in particular knife crime. I appreciate that the criminal justice system was key to yesterday's debate on the gracious Speech, and indeed the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Rochester touched briefly on knife crime in that context. However, I wish to concentrate not on policing per se, nor on the actions of the courts, prison or probation services, but on those of other local agencies.

Clergy from all churches, and ministers of other religions too, are locally based in the communities affected, as are lay ministers, church youth workers and volunteers. Clergy take the funerals, comfort the bereaved, go into schools and seek to provide safe spaces for people to explore a richer and fuller meaning for their life and an identity that recognises the divine image in the other.

The year 2019 was terrible for knife crime in the capital. I was involved in the funerals of two of the victims. The extinguishing of a life, the grief of those

who remain, the criminality of the perpetrators and the pervasive and corrosive insecurity these events create for our young people are all too evident.

It is not possible to demonstrate that cuts in funding inevitably lead to violence, but adequate provision for youth services that stress the value of teamwork, structure, mutual respect as a matter of course, value beyond self and the normality of loss and gain bears fruit that will last. They are the immersion in a positive way of life.

I agree with the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Rochester that the proposal for the serious violence Bill to mandate multiagency working is very welcome. But as a range of national charities pointed out in February 2019, between 2010-11 and 2017-18 local authority spending on children and young people's services fell by 16%, from £10.3 billion to £8.6 billion. In comparison, the funding provided to them fell by 29% in the same period. Within that, there has been a shift from early intervention through children's centres and family support to late intervention in safeguarding and children in care. There is some way more to go beyond the Government's election promise of an additional £500 million if the desired impact is to be made.

For those deeply involved in our local communities, the efforts of the Mayor of London through his violence reduction unit, Young Londoners Fund, educational toolkits for schools and the London Needs You Alive online campaign all need our support. The Stepping Stones programme supporting at-risk young people in transition from primary to secondary school is the sort of initiative additional funding should support.

For our part, in the diocese of Southwark we are working with the group Oxygen on providing a 10-week anti-crime programme in schools. We are working with Power the Fight to train clergy and youth workers to provide spaces for young people in churches. The Southwark diocesan board for education is piloting training across 10 Church of England schools on adverse childhood experiences and contextual safeguarding, in a programme developed by the Children's Society and EduCare to raise teachers' awareness of safeguarding and adverse experiences of young people, to improve their life chances. The diocese of Southwark supports the Ascension Trust's Synergy Network, and its pioneering CEO, Les Isaac, who founded Street Pastors and will next month launch a dedicated website as a network of resources for those doing youth work across the capital.

I trust that members of the Government will be sensitive to the funding of local government youth services and those who seek to enable our young people to flourish.

1.10 pm

Lord Bates (Con): My Lords, over the past three years, our national self-confidence and self-belief have taken one heck of a beating. We have been pummelled by a daily dosage of doom, doubt, division and despair. I believe that this time is, mercifully, drawing to a close, so the question before us now is: how do we rebuild and reunite? Some will argue for legislation, but I want to make the case for realising a much more powerful motivator of human endeavour: optimism and belief.

[LORD BATES]

Here I must declare an interest. I am an incurable optimist. I always have been; even my blood group is B positive. This is a genetic trait which is shared by all who happen to follow Newcastle United Football Club; it is pretty essential. Great turnarounds, be they in businesses, schools or sports teams, are more often than not the result of leadership; reinstilling self-belief, self-confidence, an ambition or a vision, or giving new purpose. Those qualities are the need of the hour. The hugely successful GREAT campaign, launched in 2012 at the great Olympics and Paralympics, tells people in 140 countries around the world how great Britain truly is. It is time that we brought that campaign home and reminded ourselves what a great country we are privileged to live in and that our best days lie ahead of us, not behind us.

When *Forbes* does its annual survey, it ranks Britain as the number one place in the world to do business. The World Bank ranks Britain second only to the United States in the G7 for ease of doing business. For these reasons and more, the UK is the number one location in Europe for attracting foreign direct investment. It is third in the world, after the United States and China. The UK is home to two of the top-three universities in the world. One of those universities, Cambridge, has produced more Nobel Prize winners than the entire nation of France. The Royal College of Art and Design was the number one college for art and design in the world in 2019. In December last year, the UK overtook the United States as the top destination for overseas students in the world. English is the number one spoken language in the world. It is the language of international trade. London is a world-leading international financial centre. In 2017, an international survey ranked the NHS as the best healthcare system, with Sweden and Switzerland's coming sixth. London is ranked second only to Tokyo as the most innovative city in the world. When it comes to technology, the UK has produced as many billion-dollar technology companies—or “unicorns”—as Germany, France, Israel and Sweden combined.

The Premier League is the most watched football league in the world, Edinburgh the largest arts festival, Glastonbury the largest outdoor festival. “Game of Thrones” is filmed in Belfast, “Doctor Who” is made in Cardiff, “Downton Abbey” is made in Hampshire and 007 is made in secret, of course. Of the 10 teams that compete in Formula 1 motor racing, seven of them are based in the UK. At the Rio Olympics, Team GB ranked second in the medals table, behind the United States. In the Rio Paralympic Games—Games founded at Stoke Mandeville, Team GB ranked second, behind China. Both teams can go one better in Tokyo later this year.

Internationally and politically, the UK is a significant player. It is a P5 member of the UN Security Council, a G7 country, a member of the Commonwealth—a unique family of 53 nations and 2 billion people—and the only country that meets both its 2% military NATO commitment and its 0.7% development aid commitment. It was the first to enshrine the net-zero commitment in law, while reducing its carbon emissions by 42% since 1990, which is more than any other industrialised country.

No other country can present such a list of credentials. Britain is indeed a great country, with its best days ahead of us, not behind us. Overseas investors, businesses and students believe in Britain, and we should believe in ourselves. We should unfetter the voices of hope, optimism and ambition, to inspire us to even greater heights, powered by the boundless renewable energy, resolve and creativity of all its great British people.

1.15 pm

Baroness Drake (Lab): My Lords, what an act to follow.

The Queen's Speech embraces policies directed at supporting working families, but I want to raise a growing systemic problem within our economy which the gracious Speech does not fully capture: the decline in household financial resilience—by which I mean the ability to cope financially when faced with a sudden fall in income or unavoidable rise in expenditure—and to reflect on a route to address it.

I recently chaired a steering group study into household financial resilience, under the governance of the Money and Pensions Service. Its membership ranged from the finance industry to Toynbee Hall, and was ably supported by Alan Woods, a retired senior civil servant from the DWP. The study examined findings from a wide range of respected sources through the lens of financial resilience, demonstrating the widespread nature of financial shocks and income volatility and indicating that low financial resilience is a substantial and widespread problem.

Growing evidence reveals that a single adverse event can push a household over the edge. Low financial resilience is not reserved to those on low incomes; it has travelled up the income scale. Each year some 4 million to 6 million working-age people suffer a life event which can cause an income shock by reason of illness, job loss, relationship breakdown, death of a partner, or caring responsibilities. A further sizeable group experience other life events which disrupt household finances. Over 70% of those in regular work face significant volatility in monthly earnings. Some households are well placed to weather the storm, but many lack the resilience to do so.

A range of factors can increase financial resilience—such as access to employment benefits, state benefits, private insurance, savings, affordable credit, help from family and fewer pre-existing debts—but the evidence reveals that all those factors are weakening, shifting greater responsibility for resilience on to the individual, which many are ill-prepared to meet. The labour market is changing. Self-employment has risen to around 5 million, 60% of private sector employees work for SMEs, nearly 9 million in micro-businesses, and a growing number of workers lack standard employment protections. Fewer work for large businesses, which traditionally offered benefits that mitigated income shocks. Yes, more people have felt the benefits of employment, but there is a long-term decline in employer provision of occupational benefits, in both coverage and value, such as sick pay, redundancy pay and death benefits. Only 28% of employers provide more than the statutory sick pay of £94.25 a week.

Work is increasingly less secure and earnings less predictable. Means-tested benefits have fallen in real terms, help with housing and mortgage costs is restricted, 11.5 million adults have less than £100 in savings, and the FCA found that only 3% of adults had income protection and only 4% had mortgage protection insurance.

Owner occupation can boost resilience, but it has declined markedly among working age groups over the past 15 years. Low financial resilience matters because it can lead to problem debt, poor health, children's loss of well-being and housing problems, and adverse effects on employers, utility providers, financial institutions and the economy.

I am not arguing specific policies but highlighting the evidence which demonstrates that falls in household financial resilience have been an unintended or unrecognised consequence of both socioeconomic and public policy changes. Addressing the problem requires a sound analytical basis, but current measuring of household resilience is insufficient to authoritatively inform policy. There is a compelling case for the Office for National Statistics to introduce a financial resilience index, which would: map the level of resilience in households and track changes over time, highlight segments where action is most needed, improve understanding of the underlying causes and drivers of low resilience, and provide a basis against which policies or actions could be tested.

I hope that the Minister will agree that, to improve the socioeconomic experiences of households, we need to measure and fully understand the problem of falling household financial resilience—and currently we do not.

1.21 pm

Baroness Jolly (LD): My Lords, I declare my relevant interests in the register: chair of a learning disability charity providing services for people with a learning disability and president of RoSPA.

It may surprise noble Lords to hear that there are more accidents in the home than in any other setting, and they affect the most vulnerable, so I welcome the building safety Bill. It is much needed and, I hope, an opportunity to recognise how modifying low-cost housing design features and specifications can save lives.

Naturally, following the Grenfell tragedy, there is a focus on fire safety and cladding, and this is vitally important. However, I draw attention to the fact that, for every fire-related hospital admission in England, 234 are caused by accidental falls. Indeed, falls make up 60% of total accident-related hospital admissions. Simple regulation and guidelines have the potential to ensure that tragic accidents, which most often involve infants or the elderly, are avoided and we can all feel safe in our own home. I refer the House to measures outlined in RoSPA's Safer by Design guidelines for how this can be achieved.

I note that a new employment Bill was announced in the gracious Speech, which has the stated purpose to protect and enhance workers' rights. However, the accompanying briefing document lacked detail about how that would apply to the most fundamental of all

workers' rights—the right to go home safe and healthy at the end of the working day. Will the Minister clarify that the Bill will contain the measures about a worker's right to work in a safe environment that were taken out of the October EU withdrawal Bill when the December Bill was published?

There is much to be welcomed in the Government's health plans in the Queen's Speech. However, as with all these things, the devil will be in the detail, and I am sure that the combined expertise of this House will leave the Bills better than when they arrive. Although funding pledges enshrined in law are welcome, I regret that there is no clear plan to address issues of capital funding or public health. The Government pledge to build 40 new hospitals, but clarity is needed on the issue of funding for general infrastructure, and this includes expensive medical equipment such as CAT scanners—and, as the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of London said, we also urgently need to address the issue of staffing. The Government's plans to introduce fast-track visas for healthcare workers are in the right direction. But the policy does not go far enough, given the scale of the current crisis facing the NHS. With more than 100,000 current vacancies and a nursing shortage of 40,000, we need urgent action. With the UK's approaching exit from the European Union, this issue will only become more urgent.

It is important that it is made clear exactly who is responsible for the recruitment and retention of staff, and who will be held accountable if the Government fail to meet their ambitious targets. In Questions yesterday, the Minister suggested that it was the Secretary of State, but I wondered which organisation this had been devolved to.

I also urge the department to engage meaningfully in a reflection about international health worker recruitment processes. The UK has a responsibility to recruit in an ethical way. This means ensuring that our efforts in international health development and health system building are not undermined by the drain of health workers from lower-income or understaffed countries.

It is encouraging to see mental health services mentioned in the Queen's Speech, and the rewrite of the Mental Health Act that Sir Simon Wessely has been involved in is long overdue. I would also like to see the issue of the transition from adolescent to adult services given due consideration. Mental health conditions do not recognise arbitrary age boundaries. Although such transitions are often handled well, support and continuity can be an issue. Staffing issues are also prevalent in this sector, with 10% of full-time consultant posts in psychiatry being vacant and a shortage of mental health social workers and community nurses. We also need to ensure that young people receive prompt diagnosis, so that mental health services can provide timely early support, preventing the need for crisis management later in life.

The Government's new visas do not include staff who wish to work in social care, many of whom will fall below the Government's £30,000 threshold for points-based immigration. How do the Government intend to address the gaps in the stretched social care workforce and ensure that work is valued? As providers

[BARONESS JOLLY]

of learning disability services, we often have difficult conversations with our commissioners to ensure that we can offer the service levels required by the Care Quality Commission. Local authorities are underfunded and are unable to work within their budgets for service provision. That means that the services provided are often not up to standard. The new Government's majority presents an opportunity to introduce reforms that have been widely recognised as necessary for years. Now is the time for action and I look forward to hearing the Government's proposals in the very near future so that collaboration can begin.

1.27 pm

Baroness Blower (Lab) (Maiden Speech): My Lords, I rise to make this brief maiden speech and in doing so I wish to thank my noble friends Lord Dubs and Lord Knight for their assistance both prior to and at my introduction, which I am bound to say now seems a long time ago. I also wish to place on record my thanks for the warm welcome I received on entering your Lordships' House and to thank the staff of the House, whom I have found unfailingly patient and helpful in all circumstances.

I know that much expertise and wisdom is gathered here, from which I hope to learn and to which, in some small part, I hope in time to contribute. Having served as general secretary of the National Union of Teachers and serving currently as president of the European Region of Education International, which covers the education unions in 52 countries, my interest is indeed in education, although I am quite prepared to accept that there are noble Lords who have a far greater in-depth knowledge and experience of many phases and sectors of education than I do.

Given that a young person's domestic circumstances contribute in part to their potential success or lack of it in the education system, I am also interested in and concerned about child poverty and adverse childhood experiences. Figures on child poverty in every constituency are available from the organisation End Child Poverty. They indicate that overall 4.1 million children are trapped in poverty in the UK—30% of children in the UK, or the equivalent of nine in every class of 30. That is an unthinkable high number. Child poverty fell consistently from 1998 to 2010, but is now on the rise with the Institute for Fiscal Studies predicting that 5.2 million children will be living in poverty by 2022.

While social and economic disadvantage should never be proposed as an excuse for lack of education success, it is certainly a contributory factor and reason. In a survey of its members, the National Education Union asked what impacts on children's learning could be attributed to poverty. Some 78% of respondents talked about fatigue in children and students; 76% talked of very poor concentration; and 57%—significantly more than half—talked of students experiencing hunger. Hungry children find it much more difficult to learn.

While it is laudable that there are warm words from the Government about ensuring that

“every child receives the best possible education—wherever they grow up”,

these will remain nothing more than words without a determined poverty reduction strategy. There is an indication of increased spending in education; however, analysis by the School Cuts coalition demonstrates that 83% of schools will still be worse off in April 2020 than they were in April 2015, in real terms. Schools will have £20 billion less spending power in 2020-21 than they did in 2015-16, and this when pupil numbers are rising. Compared with 2015, we have 420,000 more pupils in schools and, by the way, there are 3,500 fewer teachers. Recruitment and retention of teachers continues to be a problem, with almost a third of teachers—32% to be precise—leaving within the first five years of joining the profession. Numbers in teacher training recruitment continue to fall. The Government have indicated a commitment to raise teachers' starting salaries to £30,000 by 2022-23. However, this will return pay only to its 2010 level, in real terms.

Anyone can see, therefore, that we really need a funding system based on the bottom-up need of what it really costs to educate all our children and young people. In Australia, some years ago, David Gonski, a businessman, was commissioned by the Government to look at a funding model. His commission ascertained what input was really needed to work out the actual amount that we need to educate everybody. Noble Lords who have had the opportunity to look at the Library briefing on children's rights know that there have been enormous problems with this over the years. It means both a focus on poverty reduction and significant spending on education, which is the investment that we need in our nation's future and a significant matter. The £780 million to address issues of special needs may well be insufficient.

1.33 pm

Lord Dubs (Lab): My Lords, it is a great pleasure to follow my noble friend Lady Blower and to congratulate her on her maiden speech. She was being unduly modest, because she has an enormous amount of educational experience, not just, as she said, as general secretary of the National Union of Teachers; she has also taught in a number of comprehensive schools in the London area. To say that other noble Lords have more knowledge of education than she has is to be unduly modest. She will make an enormous contribution to educational debates, thinking and policy in this House, and we look forward to hearing from her on many future occasions.

I will speak about social care. The gracious Speech included a reference to social care and the Government seeking cross-party consensus. That is fine, but we have been waiting for something to happen on social care for years. There have been reports, commissions and bodies talking about social care. What has happened to the long-awaited White or Green Paper that the Government promised quite a long time ago? Could the Minister tell us whether it is still going to happen and, if so, when?

If one talks to people of our age or older, one will know that most in this country are concerned about what will happen to them when, or if, they get to the point that they cannot look after themselves unaided. There is a deep concern. According to the British Social Attitudes survey, only 23% of people are satisfied

with social care. There is a real gap in the system and concern for the future. Of course there is a need for more money. The Government are talking about an extra £1 billion a year, but most people who have looked at it say that we are nearer to needing about £8 billion a year, rather than £1 billion, to provide a decent standard of care. That is the sum required to return to the standards of 2009-10.

Eligibility for social care is very much a postcode lottery. It depends on which local authority one lives in and all sorts of random factors. No wonder there is concern. It also depends a great deal on unpaid carers. They give up their jobs to do care work and get £60 a week for that. It is pretty miserable. Care staff are not always able to work on Christmas Day or New Year's Day. Retention is poor and many are non-UK nationals. I wonder what will happen to them post Brexit.

Everybody talks about better integration of health and social care. We hear the expression "bed blocking". There are enormous costs to bed blocking. If there is no seamless transition from hospital to social care, which is provided by local authorities, people tend to stay in hospital. I know of the experiences of people who were in hospital for quite a long time—probably unnecessarily, had there been better transition to care outside hospital. I heard one estimate that a night in hospital costs £350, a night in a care home £85, and a night at home with care support under £20. People often have to contribute to their care but, because by staying in hospital they do not have to so, paradoxically, they save a bit of money, but it is not an efficient and humane way of proceeding. It is also erratic, because people with dementia have to pay for everything themselves and people with other illnesses do not. I understand that a good model has been developed in Manchester, which has a better way of integrating health and social care. It would take legislation to bring it about fully, but it needs to be looked at.

I looked into some other things, such as records. We have very little information about social care and few hard facts. Most of what we know is based on estimates—approximations, almost guesswork. For example, local authorities have different methods of collecting data. Nothing is standardised, so one cannot even compare one local authority to another. I challenge anybody to look at the form for eligibility for social care produced by a local authority. I have seen one—it probably takes a PhD or two to complete. They are very difficult, and people who are deprived and disadvantaged cannot always do that. There is a terminology difference as well between NHS support and social care. Surely we all agree that reform must be evidence-based.

There is pressure in the system, because the health service dominates, in a way. The health service needs far more money, but it has power to attract more money than local authorities can for social care. Local authorities are hard-pressed enough as it is. I urge that we should have proper records; be generous in saying that social care has to work properly; and that we must integrate health and social care. We would save money and provide much better care. For heaven's sake, let us get on with it.

1.38 pm

Baroness Howe of Idlicote (CB): My Lords, I welcome the Government's commitment to introduce its online harms Bill

"to improve internet safety for all",

but, equally, stress that I remain deeply concerned by their failure to implement Part 3 of the Digital Economy Act. The rationale for focusing on the new Bill instead seems to be a desire to put attempts to protect children from pornographic websites on the same footing as attempts to protect them on social media platforms. It is entirely right to seek to promote safety in both contexts, but a basic error to suggest that both challenges should be addressed in the same way. The internet is complicated and one-size-fits-all policies simply will not work.

The focus of what I have read about the Government's plans for online harms revolves around social media companies and fining them if they do not do what they are supposed to do under a new legal duty of care. An article in the *Times* on 31 December suggested that Ofcom is going to draw up legally enforceable codes of practice that will include protecting children from accessing pornography. This approach may work for social media platforms if they have bases in the UK but it will be absolutely useless at engaging with the challenge of protecting children from pornographic websites.

Initially when the Digital Economy Bill was introduced in another place, the proposal was that statutory age-verification requirements should be enforced through fines, but a cross-party group of MPs pointed out that this would never work because the top 50 pornographic websites accessed in the UK are all based in other jurisdictions. One could certainly threaten fines but it would be quite impossible to enforce them in a way that would concentrate the minds of website providers because, based in other jurisdictions, they could simply ignore them.

Because of that, MPs amended the Bill to give the regulator the option of IP blocking. This would enable the regulator to tell a site based in say, Russia, that if it failed to introduce robust age-verification checks within a certain timeframe, the regulator would block it from accessing the UK market. Children would be protected either by the site being blocked after the specified timeframe or, more probably, by the site deciding that it would make more sense for it to introduce proper age-verification checks rather than risk disruption of its UK income stream. The Government readily accepted the amendment because the case for it was unanswerable.

I say again that I welcome the fact that the Government want to address online safety with respect to social media platforms through their new Bill. This must not, however, be used as an excuse not to proceed with implementing Part 3 of the Digital Economy Bill, which provides the very best way of dealing with the different challenge of protecting children from pornographic websites.

The failure to implement this legislation is particularly concerning because, rather than being a distant aspiration, it is all there on the statute book. The only thing standing in the way of statutory age verification with

[BARONESS HOWE OF IDLICOTE]

respect to pornographic websites is the Government's delay in relaying the BBFC age-verification guidance before Parliament and setting an implementation date. Having the capacity to deal with this problem—thanks to Part 3 of the Digital Economy Act—yet not bothering to avail ourselves of it does not reflect at all well on either the Government or British society as a whole. The Government must stop procrastinating over child safety with respect to pornographic websites and get on with implementing Part 3.

Mindful of that, on 21 January I will introduce my Digital Economy Act 2017 (commencement of Part 3) Bill, the simple purpose of which will be to implement Part 3 of the Digital Economy Act. I hope that that will not be necessary and that the Minister will today confirm that, notwithstanding the new online safety Bill, the Government will now press ahead with implementation themselves. I very much look forward to hearing what the Minister has to say.

1.43 pm

Lord Hunt of Wirral (Con): My Lords, first, I declare my interests, as detailed in the register—in particular, as a partner in the international commercial law firm DAC Beachcroft.

As a one-nation Conservative, I strongly welcome the Government's renewed commitment to our public services, but those public services must necessarily be built upon the strong foundations that only a flourishing economy can provide. As we gird ourselves for the post-Brexit world, whatever our views might have been before the 2016 referendum, we now have to work together to ensure that our economy is as prepared as possible to flourish in this new world.

My specialist subject is financial services—a sector in which the UK excels. I say to the noble Lord, Lord Fox, who raised the issue at the start of the debate, that I believe that financial services are ready to strengthen their position if only the Government will take a number of key steps. It is a sector in which regulation plays an all-important role. The erstwhile Financial Services Authority was obliged to have regard to “the desirability of maintaining the competitive position of the United Kingdom”.

When the FSA was superseded, however, no such obligation was retained. I therefore echo the excellent 11th report from the 2017-19 Session of our European Union Committee and its recommendation in paragraph 225, which says that

“it may become clear that regulators are unduly constrained by their current objectives. We recommend that the Government consider and consult on the desirability of adding a duty to promote international competitiveness to these objectives.”

That recommendation, preferably shorn of its caveats, could be vital for our future success. It was based upon a wealth of informed submissions—for instance, from the Association of British Insurers, which stated: “We believe both regulators”, meaning the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority, “should be equipped with a clear remit for UK competitiveness ... once we leave the EU.”

That view is widely expressed, with growing vehemence and intensity, right across the financial services industry. Regulators in our main rival territories, such as Bermuda,

Switzerland and Singapore, are already subject to a similar obligation and it does not imply a dilution of standards. On the contrary, our competitive edge relies on a delicate balance between a hard-won reputation for integrity, quality and reliability and our ability to be flexible, to adapt and to innovate. I strongly press my noble friend the Minister to go back to the future by using the forthcoming financial services Bill to impose a similar obligation on the FCA and the PRA to restore that vital balance of objectives.

Something that would definitely serve to improve competitiveness would be a period of regulatory stability and, above all, proportionate regulation. In its last manifesto, the British Insurance Brokers' Association, where I have just relinquished my role as chair, made that point eloquently and persuasively.

In summary, this legislative programme adumbrates measures that have the potential to heal the ugly rift that has opened up in this country between the haves and have-nots, between north and south, and between remainers and leavers. In my opinion, a party that now represents not only traditional strongholds such as Wells, Wimbledon and Wycombe but also those new bastions of Bassetlaw, Bishop Auckland and Blyth Valley has both a unique opportunity and a unique responsibility to rebuild one nation.

1.48 pm

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Lab): My Lords, I have to say that the Conservative Party did not do so well in Birmingham.

It is a great pleasure to declare my interests as a member of the GMC, a trustee of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and president of GS1, the barcoding association responsible for the Scan4Safety programme.

I greatly welcome my noble friend Lady Blower. She made a brilliant maiden speech, and debates on education will be very much strengthened by her presence.

I welcome the emphasis in the Queen's Speech on the NHS but it is the absence of any concrete proposals on social care that causes most concern. Frankly, the search for cross-party consensus seems to be no more than a promise to put it once more into the long grass. A number of my noble friends have talked about this. I urge the Government to go back to Dilnot. They commissioned Dilnot. He produced an excellent report, which was acclaimed. We legislated for it in this House. It is on the statute book. If we were to combine Dilnot with a more generous means test and more resources to local authorities to fund adult social care, it would not be perfect but, my goodness, it would be an improvement on the current iniquitous system.

I also welcome the return of the health service safety investigations Bill. It will be eagerly anticipated. Of course, it calls into question the Government's patient safety strategy as a whole. I express my concern to the Minister that the strategy published just a few months ago claimed that the past 20 years have seen great progress in patient safety but no evidence was given. Talking to people on the ground—doctors and nurses—they are concerned that patient safety is compromised every day because of the huge pressures on the system. I was struck by the note sent out by the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital just before

Christmas, which told staff to make the “least unsafe decision” following a huge rise in admissions. Every day, up and down the country, NHS staff are having to make unpalatable decisions about priorities and about how to deal with the pressures and patient safety is clearly being brought into question.

I very much agreed with the noble Lord, Lord Hunt, when he talked about financial regulation. I believe the same sentiment should apply to medicines and medical devices regulation. We are promised a Bill, but the key question is whether regulation in the UK will continue to be aligned with the EU. We have had great advantages from that. Many overseas companies have invested in the UK, partly because of our life science sector and partly because regulation—either licensing or receiving a device’s charter mark—has meant that they could go into Europe and the licensing would be accepted. Despite the fact that the NHS is a poor adopter of new medicines, devices and innovations, it made the UK an attractive country in which to do business.

The Government say that they no longer want us to be aligned to the EU. What does this mean for medicines and medical devices regulation? Let us say that a US global pharmaceutical company had invested a lot of money in the UK; does it mean that, in future, it can continue to invest in the UK and get a licence from our regulator but would then have to seek a separate licence with different criteria in the rest of the EU? If that is the case, I can tell the Minister that investment will stop. If companies have to come here first, invest in R&D, go through all our regulatory procedures and then have to go to Europe and go through different processes, they will simply not come to the UK any more. This is a very important issue, which I look forward to debating when we get the Bill.

On NHS funding, I simply echo the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of London. The 3.4% per annum over five years can do no more than stabilise the current situation. As she said, we are failing lamentably on all the core targets and there are no signs as yet that we will get anywhere near meeting them. I welcome that Bill because we will want to amend it to ensure that the NHS has funding for the long term to meet all the pressures that it needs to face.

1.54 pm

The Lord Bishop of Gloucester: My Lords, I begin by congratulating the noble Baroness, Lady Blower, on her excellent maiden speech.

I shall focus on children and vulnerable women; I draw noble Lords’ attention to my entry on the register of interests. My headlines are that we need policy that supports and enables early intervention and effective partnerships. Experiences that we have at an early age shape who we are. The Children’s Society has been measuring children’s well-being for more than a decade, and during much of that time children’s well-being has been in decline. This is not simply about children; it is about how we shape the sort of communities we want to see.

How is government looking at every policy and all legislation in the light of what they mean for children? This is about present well-being and its future impact.

Some 690,000 children under five live in a home where a parent has experienced poor mental health, substance misuse or domestic abuse. These and other issues are listed as ACEs, or adverse childhood experiences, which other noble Lords have referred to. Their consequences echo through a child’s life and across generations.

We know, for example, that the majority of women in prison report having experienced some form of abuse as a child. The Nelson Trust, of which I am president, estimates that 78% of women who access their women’s centres present with four or more ACEs. Two-thirds of the women supported by the Nelson Trust are mothers of children, so this is about the future as well as the present.

Even if we look at children with no ACEs, standard support for parents is given by HMRC, the DWP, NHS, Public Health England and possibly a children’s centre. This system is not easy to navigate, and those agencies do not share a common framework. The challenge increases for families in more complex situations, with even more agencies involved.

Children who underachieve in all early-years measures at five are three times more likely to have social care involvement at the age of nine. Thus, there is an ever-growing demand for statutory services, and the national cost of intervention that comes too late is huge. In my diocese, Gloucestershire County Council is expected to overspend on children’s services this year, yet between 2010 and 2018 spending on non-statutory children’s services, such as children’s centres and youth provision, fell by 60%.

How will the Government attend to early intervention and the strategic deployment of resources to reduce and prevent problems further down the line? Of course, improving children’s life chances will not happen overnight, nor simply through important legislation such as tax reform. It is vital that government action supports and enables the work of professionals in education, health and care as well as the vital provision by charities, including local churches and other faith organisations. There also needs to be an increased emphasis on inter-agency work.

As lead bishop for women’s prisons, I have a particular interest in how we can reduce the possibility of children growing up to be those at risk of offending. I also have an interest in what services are being provided for those who have offended or are at risk of offending. In both areas, early intervention and effective partnership should be a goal for government across public services. I shall give two examples from my diocese. First, the Nelson Trust partners with 18 agencies to provide outreach to women in sex work, resulting in very positive outcomes. Research by Lancaster University found that 95% of those outcomes could not have been achieved without access to a women’s centre—the only non-statutory service involved. Secondly, the Action on ACEs Gloucestershire initiative has attracted interest from around the UK. It is enabling a trauma-informed approach across services ranging from fire and rescue through to maternity provision and voluntary groups. The toolkit to enable conversations with children, adults and families has been piloted by more than 30 organisations.

[THE LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER]

I must close, but I hope that the Government will take time to listen to people affected by these issues—not least children and young people—learn from best practice and provide funding to replicate successful interventions which are about effective partnership and early intervention. As the Chancellor prepares for the Budget in March, I hope that he will consider how wise investment, made at an early stage and managed effectively, will pay dividends.

1.59 pm

Lord Storey (LD): My Lords, I for one was in the main delighted with the education part of the Queen's Speech. Its opening statement,

“To ensure every child has access to a high-quality education”, and the statement that

“A great education is fundamental to the success of children, their families and our communities, as well as the success of our country”

set the right tone. The severe funding issues that schools and colleges have faced is now being addressed, and we must never allow schools to face such a financial crisis again. The focus on further education and technical education was welcome. At long last, the Cinderella of our education service is finally going to the ball.

I have said many times that the most important resource in our education system is the quality of our teachers. Good teachers inspire, motivate and drive ambition and learning forward. Good school and college leaders create places of learning where teachers and their pupils thrive. Yet we have a very serious teacher recruitment crisis. The Department for Education forecasts that, over the next six years, pupil numbers are set to increase by almost 20%. The number of children in classes of 36 or more is increasing at an alarming rate. Many schools across England regularly have classes of over 40, and only 80% of the number of secondary trainees were recruited last year. We are in the middle of a significant teacher shortage. We must prevent a crisis from becoming a catastrophe.

The days when a teaching career was seen as the most aspirational in society appear to be over. However, in other European countries, teachers are highly valued. We need the best minds teaching young people, from the nursery to the sixth form, so why are we experiencing a recruitment crisis? Is the answer better salaries? That must go some way to attracting those who want to teach, but it is not clear that more money will attract more teachers, considering the impact that bursaries have had thus far.

Teachers working today feel undervalued. When I speak to teachers, the main issue they cite is not the money but the workload. Stressful teachers do not make for productive or happy teachers. If we are to achieve the Queen's Speech peroration, we need well-trained, well-paid, highly motivated and highly regarded teachers. Without them, class sizes will continue to increase, subject specialist shortages will continue to grow, and the drop-out rate of teachers will accelerate.

We hear a lot about inspections and testing. Of course schools need to be inspected and children tested so that we can find out how to support and help children, but it is about how we do this so that schools and teachers are less stressed, more valued and more

productive. It is my hope that in this new Parliament the Government will be less dogmatic in their approach to education. Let us recognise that we have a varied system in the types of school that provide for our children, and that maintained community schools should not be seen as educational pariahs waiting to be picked off and converted into academies as soon as they put an academic foot wrong.

By the way, it is interesting that maintained community schools in England outperformed academies and free schools in the national exams taken at the end of year 6. Department for Education figures show that last summer, among pupils taking stage 2 standardised tests in maths and English, known as SATS, those in maintained community schools on average performed better than those in academies. Interestingly, free schools—the Government's flagship means of opening a new school—also compared poorly with maintained community schools. It is worth noting, however, that the gap relating to pupils whose first language is not English has almost disappeared, which is well worth celebrating.

I want to touch briefly on a couple of other issues that are not covered in the Queen's Speech but are of huge importance: alternative education and academic integrity. The Minister will be aware that there has been a 50% surge in permanent exclusions from schools in England. These children are placed in alternative provision, but many of those alternative providers are unregistered and therefore uninspected. There are often appalling practices in child safeguarding and pupil registration that go completely unchecked. Two hours a day on an iPad is not education. It is unacceptable in the 21st century that public money should be used to pay these unregistered providers. Shame on central government and local authorities for allowing that to happen. It is not surprising that the children who are being recruited into gangs and county-lines crime may be a significant factor in the increasing levels of knife crime.

We are proud of our universities; we boast some of the finest in the world. It is vital that we do all in our power to safeguard their academic integrity. So why are we allowing companies to help students to cheat? The growing presence of essay mills and contract cheating is alarming. We should make sure that these activities are closed down. The damage that they are doing to higher education is extremely dangerous. No wonder 45 vice-chancellors and heads of organisations in UK higher education wrote to Damian Hinds urging that action be taken against the essay mill companies.

I welcome the rhetoric in the Queen's Speech, and I hope it is matched by the reality. Our children are our future. We must make sure that every child really does matter.

2.05 pm

The Earl of Clancarty (CB): My Lords, I congratulate the noble Baroness, Lady Blower, on her excellent speech. We absolutely need her expertise in education.

My topics are, unashamedly, Brexit and culture, both of which appear to be banned words. I hope that the omission of the category “culture” on the Order Paper is not an omen for the future of the department. If we cannot properly hold the Government to account

regarding policies in relation to the arts and media, we will be in trouble. Like the noble Baroness, Lady Bull, I am also concerned that the Minister's opening speech omitted the creative industries, which are so hugely important to us economically and culturally.

The election has not changed my mind about Brexit being a truly terrible idea. In the Answer given to my Oral Question on British workers on Tuesday, what I found particularly disturbing was the lack of any note of regret from the Government about the loss not of hundreds but of thousands of jobs as reported in the recent survey of the seasonal tourism sector. That is just one sector, and it is before the transition period has even begun. Many of those jobs were opportunities for young British people from all walks of life who one fears will not now have the opportunities that they wanted to work in Europe.

Leaving the single market will also affect many working in the creative industries, many of whom will be young people with great talents not earning anything like £30,000, if that is to be a reciprocated cut-off point. It is young people who will suffer from a hard Brexit more than anyone. The Government should acknowledge this, and they need to consult more closely representatives of the British freelancing communities, including workers in the creative industries, about what can be done to protect the work on which many of their current livelihoods depend.

In a recent letter to the *Guardian*, a correspondent made the point that if Mr Johnson had offered membership of the single market as a compromise, remainers would grudgingly have accepted that. If Mr Johnson wishes to

“urge ... closure and ... let the healing begin”,

he is going about it in a strange way. There will be no healing from a hard Brexit. Remainers have not gone away even if the political power lies now with Brexiteers.

I turn specifically to culture. It is often said that money is not everything, but in so many areas that are currently suffering from chronic underinvestment, it is, at this moment in time, mostly everything. For a while, the most pressing issue for arts and cultural organisations has been underfunding as a direct result of local authority cuts. Local museums are struggling and almost 800 libraries have closed since 2010. Without these cuts, Hertfordshire County Council would not have made the unforgivable decision last year to sell its schools art loan collection. It will be a litmus test of whether austerity is really over whether these cuts are reversed, but I am not holding my breath. In all the other areas that local councils support, such as social care, a significant reversal of these cuts is clearly necessary.

I welcome Nicholas Serota's focus on individual creators in the interview he recently gave to the *Guardian* prior to next month's 10-year strategy for the Arts Council. When money is scarce, it is primarily the creators alongside the institutions that we need to protect and nurture.

It is inevitable that all our national museums will eventually drop funding from the fossil fuel industries, so the problem may well arise that there is a diminishing pool of possible sponsors that will be acceptable to the public. That is something the Government need to be

thinking about. Our national museums are wonderful institutions that need our support. I hope also that free admission, which is so popular with the public, will continue.

Concerning education, will the Government respond to the Durham commission on creativity and education and its recommendations? I welcome the continued funding of music hubs but, in the end, hubs are not the solution when what is required is universal access to the arts in schools. I, and I am sure others in this House, will continue to fight for the rounded education that the EBacc denies and which students deserve.

I have one further question, further to the speech of the noble Baroness, Lady Bull. Can companies working in the arts and creative industries claim current R&D credits if what they are doing involves, for example, testing out new technology? The more acceptable ways we can find to maximise the funding of arts organisations, the better.

2.10 pm

The Lord Bishop of Portsmouth: My Lords, it is stating the obvious to say that these are turbulent, uncertain times, perhaps the most turbulent in living memory, even when that memory belongs to Members of your Lordships' House—a particular, special demographic. It is striking in the face of so much that is uncertain and unknown that the Government's rhetoric is of clarity, confidence, and even dash. However, while the terrain might be new, much of the rhetoric is from an older school. What is novel is from whom it comes.

The gracious Speech spoke of the Government delivering on “the people's priorities”, words accompanied by the unmistakable sound of metaphorical tanks being driven with some purpose on to a lawn previously occupied by others. This represents a striking act of linguistic appropriation, but those occupying their new territory would be wise to exercise caution when speaking of the people as a single, homogeneous entity. Indeed, if Brexit has shown us anything, it is that the people are not one and that the bonds that tie us together—or that we thought tied us together—have become frayed and even broken.

We must thus applaud the Prime Minister's repeated commitment to serve and heal one nation, a welcome recognition that we are all connected, bound together and obliged to one another. It is a welcome recognition too that the Government must seek to reconcile difference and dispute. We can welcome the spirit even if we differ on the nature of those obligations and perhaps the paternalism that underlies many ideas of one-nation politics. When Disraeli coined this phrase, it was precisely because this was not one nation. It was not a nation at one with itself, not least because of the obligations of those who had were not being discharged towards those who had not.

I was therefore delighted by the commitment to give the full living wage to those over the age of 21 rather than 25, but I urge the Government to put this into effect more quickly than the long grass of five years' time. If fairness is promised in the system of taxation, so must it be in the world of work. A fair day's work for a fair day's pay does not seem too much to ask if you are 21, 41, 51, or whatever.

[THE LORD BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH]

My inspection of the Speech and its ancillary briefing suggested that some crucial support in building and sustaining one nation is absent, notably welfare and benefits—on which the Government are silent beyond the welcome review of PIP and disabled people. This is especially so in the wake of the Conservative Party's manifesto commitments. One nation includes us all: hard-working families, businesses, those who cannot for whatever reason work, and especially those who raise children in poverty.

Civil society is doing a tremendous amount and, if you will forgive a plug for my diocese, I pay tribute to the efforts of so many there, particularly the work of Churches Homeless Action, headed up by Canon Bob White in Portsmouth. Over Christmas, it again spearheaded a scheme encouraging donations of shop vouchers and distributing them to those who have not. These were distributed so that these individuals have dignity, because they can choose how to use them. It met with an overwhelming response from the people of the city to support those in need at Christmas.

In another place, the Prime Minister described the get Brexit done programme in terms of a microwave meal, ready to cook. Rather than the Prime Minister's convenience food, I prefer the rather healthier, if eccentric, maxim used earlier by the noble Lord, Lord Hodgson, that "fine words butter no parsnips". I look forward to seeing how this avowedly one-nation Government propose to butter their parsnips and serve the people.

2.15 pm

Lord Wakeham (Con): My Lords, the last few times I have spoken in this House, I have been preceded by a bishop. I wonder if those who draw up these lists have been trying to send me a message. I enjoyed, as I always do, the speech of the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Portsmouth. I live just outside his diocese.

I am very pleased that the Government have made clear that they intend to develop proposals for company audits and reporting. First, I should declare an interest. I am a chartered accountant and have been for so long that they do not even ask me to pay a subscription any more. I used to do audits and worked in my youth in one of the major audit companies, but that is all very long in the past.

The Government are right to develop these areas and include a stronger regulator with powers necessary to reform the sector. It is clear that there have been a series of serious financial crashes of substantial companies, in which their reported information was seriously in error. This is bad for everyone but particularly for the employees of the company, its suppliers and other creditors.

Public trust in business is essential and the Government commissioned three independent reports in 2018: the *Independent Review of the Financial Reporting Council* led by Sir John Kingman, the Competition and Markets Authority's study of competition in the audit market, and the independent review into the quality and effectiveness of audits led by Sir Donald Brydon. These reports must have convinced everybody who had any doubt that the age of the audit report produced for the benefit of shareholders and required to show a true and fair view was old hat and had been for many

years. Of course, shareholders are important, but so too are employees, creditors, banks, the tax authorities and many others. A redefinition of audit and its purposes is required and, as Sir Donald says, this can only be done by legislation.

However, I have one or two points which I hope the Government will take into account before proceeding with the legislation. First, it should never be forgotten that the accounts of a company are the responsibility of the directors. Auditors may miss things or not get things right, but the prime responsibility rests firmly with the directors. Steps need to be taken to bolster this. I would increase the responsibility of audit committees, and particularly the chairman of an audit committee who, in a big company, should be sufficiently experienced and qualified to bring to the attention of the directors and the auditors matters which require careful and expert consideration and judgment. These reports are very helpful and, as Sir Donald Brydon sets out, many important improvements need to be made.

However, there are one or two matters on which the Government need to be cautious. I am not fully persuaded that auditing needs to become a separate profession. Wide experience is needed if a company is to get its accounts and reporting right, but so is that experience necessary to the persons working on these matters in a company. Of course, there need to be proper rules about conflicts of interest and auditor independence is essential. I would also not want to be too prescriptive about the frequency with which auditors are required to be changed. I ask the Government to look at some of the overseas experience of this, where new auditors sometimes make mistakes in their first years which would not have been made previously. I much agree that there needs to be a fresh and wider redefinition of audit and its purpose, which covers much more than just financial statements. I very much look forward to seeing the Bill which the Government are to bring forward.

2.20 pm

Lord Hain (Lab): My Lords, I too congratulate my noble friend Lady Blower on an excellent speech and look forward to her regular critiques of this Government's dreadful schools funding record.

In the election, I campaigned for candidates in Cardiff, Newport and Gower in south Wales, and in Battersea and Putney in south London. There was a clean sweep for Labour in each but a truly terrible result across the entire country, our loss of 59 MPs leaving a mountain of seats to win and form a Government again. But Labour's fundamental values remain, in my view, by far the best ones for the country, including ending the economic idiocy of 10 years of grinding, completely unnecessary and massively damaging austerity.

Some of us, including the noble Lord, Lord Skidelsky, made the case for ending austerity years ago. We did so in 2013 when George Osborne was squeezing the UK economy tighter than any in the advanced western world, and in 2015 when he was preparing to increase the Tory cuts in national spending from the £140 billion, which he and his successor Philip Hammond actually undertook, to the £200 billion by 2020 that Osborne planned in his last Budget, and which David Cameron

endorsed in his memoir. In his September 2019 spending review, the new Chancellor pledged to raise public spending next year by nearly £14 billion. This is a miserly, derisory 10% of the total cut in national spending due to public spending cuts and tax rises since the Tories took office in 2010. Frankly, it is insulting to pretend that we are witnessing the end of austerity.

Moreover, 80% of the Government's 10-year austerity programme has been in public spending cuts. Yet Downing Street is already briefing that the highlight of the new Chancellor's budget will be tax cuts. With the NHS stretched to breaking point, with social care criminally underfunded—as my noble friend Lord Hunt pointed out—with millions desperate for housing, with volunteers overwhelmed by demand at food banks, with Britain's skills, productivity and infrastructure poor, with schools reducing teaching days during the week to keep going, with all of these spiralling problems crying out for public investment and spending, it says everything that needs to be said about Boris Johnson's priorities in the Queen's Speech by going for tax cuts.

Labour has pressed consistently over the last five years for faster, fairer and greener growth, for a big boost to public investment in infrastructure, skills and green initiatives to stimulate Britain's slowing economy, so that national output once again expands at the 3% annual rate it grew at during the last Labour decade before the global financial crisis. We are the ones who insisted that the squeeze on public services had gone too far and that current spending on staff numbers and facilities needed urgently to be raised, if Britain's social safety net and the basic features of a civilised society were to be restored. We accepted that paying for better public services would mean higher taxes for some. I made the case for reforming national insurance by scrapping the upper earnings limit and introducing a financial transactions tax, to make the tax system fairer and lift the burden of paying for public services off the low paid.

The Queen's Speech says that the Government's top priority is to take Britain out of the EU at the end of January. Actually, we will still be in the EU until at least the end of the year—but no matter. Boris Johnson has never been one for sticking to the facts. Plenty of hard bargaining lies ahead before Britain's future trading relationship with the EU is settled. There will be a big price to be paid for frictionless trade with a club of which we are no longer a member. No one expects the EU to stand idly by while the Prime Minister pursues his vision of a post-Brexit Britain: a low-tax, lightly regulated Singapore-upon-Thames haven on the EU's doorstep, intent on winning a race to the bottom. Boris Johnson did not get his EU withdrawal agreement by suddenly becoming a shrewder poker player than Michel Barnier. He got an agreement by doing a deal and giving ground that he swore he would never concede, notably and shamefully on Northern Ireland. I expect him either to do more of the same by the end of this year or to end up with the hardest of hard-right Brexits, or no deal—both utterly disastrous.

2.25 pm

Baroness Maddock (LD): My Lords, I declare my interests as a vice-president of the Local Government Association and a vice-president of National Energy

Action. Deciding on which day to speak in the Queen's Speech debate was a bit tricky, as I wish to raise the Government's fuel poverty strategy for England. That cuts across the areas of climate change, social justice, housing standards, health and funding. I first raised these issues over 25 years ago when I was in the Commons. Indeed, my Private Member's Bill, which became the Home Energy Conservation Act, was designed to help Governments tackle these issues.

Sadly, we still have a huge problem and a high level of excess winter deaths due to cold homes, in spite of being one of the richest countries in the world. We still have many people with severe health problems due to cold, damp homes: 10.9% of households in England are in fuel poverty; 35% of fuel-poor households live in the private rented sector. This is proportionately higher than the percentage of private rented sector homes across England, at 20%. What is more, fuel-poor households occupy 58% of the privately rented properties which are classed as bands F and G for energy efficiency—the worst. On average, this group would require a reduction in their fuel bills of over £1,000 per year not to be classed as fuel poor. In the owner-occupied sector, we find 47% of fuel-poor households, and in social housing it is 18%.

In England, there are three main programmes related to helping householders pay their energy bills and install energy efficiency measures: the energy company obligation, which has £0.7 billion a year; the warm home discount, with £0.3 billion per year; and winter fuel payments of £1.8 billion a year. But three times as much money is spent assisting householders to pay their bills than to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Furthermore, these funds are poorly targeted. The winter fuel payment goes to pensioners, yet 80% of fuel-poor households are not pensioners. Will the Government commit to increasing funds and retargeting them towards those most in need and, importantly, increasing funds focused on energy efficiency? This would be in line with their recent commitment to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

I note that the Conservative Party manifesto committed the Government to spend £9.2 billion to improve the energy efficiency of homes, schools and hospitals. While the Government's Queen's Speech programme includes an environment Bill and a renters' reform Bill—both very welcome—there is no mention so far of issues pertaining to fuel poverty and the energy efficiency of our homes in these Bills.

The Committee on Climate Change has made recommendations on measures to improve the energy efficiency of our homes—a real problem, as we have a very high proportion of older properties—but targets have been missed. Do the Government expect to meet their 2020 milestone, as set out in the fuel poverty strategy of 2015, to ensure that as many fuel-poor households as is reasonably practicable reach the level of band E efficiency? Given that household fuel bills have risen by 40% in the last five years, and that the price cap introduced to close the gap between the most expensive and cheapest bills has led many suppliers to raise their average prices—particularly the big six, which make up a large majority of the market—tackling fuel poverty is as urgent as ever.

[BARONESS MADDOCK]

In those areas in the north that returned Conservative MPs at the recent election, this is a very real issue. As a resident of Berwick-upon-Tweed, I can tell the House that it is regularly 5 degrees colder, or more, in the north than down here in London—I come every week to get a bit of a warm-up.

There were several references to climate change and the 2050 zero carbon target in Tuesday's debate on the Queen's Speech. There was much concentration in those remarks on decarbonising fuel, with very little said about reducing the amount of power we use and making our buildings more efficient.

We have had various plans over the years to make our homes more energy efficient, but I have seen Governments duck getting to grips with this issue for nearly a quarter of a century. I have not been very optimistic about it—like the noble Lord, Lord Bates, I have B positive blood—but will I go on being disappointed, or will the new Government finally get to grips with an issue which is a disgrace in a country which is one of the richest in the world? I was interested to hear the noble Lord, Lord Bates, in his very good speech earlier, give us a whole list of ways in which we are a very successful country, but we have not managed to crack this yet.

2.30 pm

Lord Freyberg (CB): My Lords, I wish to restrict my remarks on the gracious Speech to health. With a new year and a new Government, I thought it an appropriate moment briefly to discuss trust and transparency in the context of the NHS, given how prominently it featured during the election campaign.

The election campaign involved numerous pledges from opposition parties about data protection and ethics and, in particular, measures intended explicitly to provide the public with confidence about the extent to which health data controlled by the NHS would feature in trade negotiations post Brexit or be subject to new provisions designed to “reign in” the perceived excesses of big pharma and tech. The Conservative Party, now the Government, took a different tack and pledged significant—although, as yet, unspecified—investment in R&D and the fourth industrial revolution.

Against this backdrop, the campaign saw significant press coverage of “health data deals” entered into by the Government, as well as talk of meetings attended by senior officials and representatives of global businesses to explore how best to “exploit” the value of UK health data, valued at an estimated £10 billion by Ernst & Young in recent months. I encourage colleagues to take a look at the online reactions to this coverage from privacy advocates, tech experts and front-line professionals working in health, as well as from the general public. For me, it highlighted a number of important issues.

First, we have a way to go before we can be assured that people are adequately informed of their rights and the measures that we have put in place to date to protect them. Secondly, we have a way to go before we can be assured that we can count on the trust that is, when all else is said and done, the real asset to which I am referring today. Thirdly, we have even further to go

before we can be assured whether and how people want health data deployed, in conjunction with third parties, to stimulate the research and innovation that I know we would all wish to encourage. Here, it seems that transparency is fundamental to our cause. I therefore ask the Minister, in response to the gracious Speech, how the Government plan to build and maintain public trust over the months ahead and whether he will commit today to promoting radical transparency with that in mind.

I look forward to further detail of the Government's medicines and medical devices Bill over the coming months, which I am sure, like me, colleagues will take a keen interest in debating. I note also that, as I speak, the Government are busy recruiting personnel to staff the national centre of expertise, to be hosted by NHSX, which will offer legal and commercial advice to NHS organisations in recognition of the data deals they are expected to enter into with third parties over the coming period—something that I have long encouraged. However, how will the national centre of expertise, with its remit to develop a national policy framework, take steps to ensure that whatever results is fit for purpose in a fast-evolving and inherently global marketplace, driving significant investment flows into data-driven health research and innovation?

In particular, I am keen to understand what the Minister makes of recent developments pertaining to health data in China and India, and data localisation restrictions on sensitive personal and biometric data. Replying on behalf of DCMS on 7 January to my Question for Written Answer, the noble Baroness, Lady Barran, stated:

“The Government considers that in the UK, data localisation should be limited to cases that are specific and well-justified”.

Perhaps the Minister might expand on this Answer and set out in more detail what the Government mean by this and what areas might fall into this category. I would also welcome his assessment of measures in California's new data protection law which afford individuals the right to restrict “sale” of data about them by organisations that they nevertheless consent to process it.

Finally, I ask the Minister to reassure noble Lords that the Government have no plans to lower the bar either in the course of taking back control of the UK's data protection laws, or in negotiating future trade deals post Brexit.

2.35 pm

Lord Lingfield (Con): My Lords, I was pleased to see the promise in the Queen's Speech of more funds for education, particularly to read in the notes attached that support for special educational needs next year will include a 12% increase in funding. Of course, I welcome this entirely, but an injection of cash is not enough if the system of its allocation does not work well and enable it to reach those with severe special needs whom it is intended to benefit. I want to look today at several aspects of the system which need urgent review if the new funding is to give value for money and bring results.

Just over 10 years ago, I wrote for David Cameron a report which recommended that what were then called statements, which applied to educational special needs,

should also include resources for health and social care. As a result, the coalition Government brought in legislation for education, health and care plans.

There were many things wrong with the statement structure, but one good thing about it was that statements were portable by parents who moved across local authority boundaries. This was because they were issued on a standard document on which the individual's needs, and the provision to be made, could be set out. That did not guarantee a problem-free transfer but at least the child's requirements were clear and written down.

However, EHC plans are often simply not capable of being exported and much hardship and difficulty can be caused. What is a plan in Essex, for example, might not be the same as a plan in Kent or in Lambeth. We need a standard national form of plan which will provide as seamless a transfer as possible from one authority's provision to another's should parents move house across borders.

There are also reports that some authorities are failing to specify provision for education in EHC plans or are shifting it irregularly to the healthcare area of the plans rather than putting it in section F, which is meant for education. There is a statutory requirement for clear specification of provision so that it is transparent for parents and can be costed. Many local authorities appear to be in breach of the law. The tribunals judiciary constantly raises the issue of specification, and the majority of plans taken to it for adjudication simply lack proper itemisation of the services which must be provided. It may well be that some local authority staff are inadequately trained, or it may be, to take a more cynical view, that this is a deliberate policy to save money or duck responsibility. Whatever the answer, EHC plans must adhere to the law in this regard if children with special needs are not to be deprived of the new resources that the Government have promised for them.

One of the statutory duties required of authorities is to hold an annual review of every EHC plan to see whether its provisions are still needed and still appropriate. However, many seem to be failing in this very important task. Some research last year, based on FoI requests from 53 local authorities, suggests that only three of them could report that they had completed their annual reviews of plans in the majority of the previous year—2018. Seven had completed fewer than a quarter of the reviews, and one had completed none at all. If this is so, then for about 80% of EHC plans, it is not known whether the plans are working properly, are good value for money or are still appropriate for the vulnerable persons concerned. It is no wonder that, since these reforms became law in 2014, the number of appeals registered to the tribunals has doubled each year. In 2018-19, 5,900 appeals went through to completion—the largest number ever recorded. Local authorities won their cases in only 7.5% of those appeals.

EHC plans, where they are working, can be a great improvement over the old system. However, if the welcome increase in funding is to have maximum effect, then the issues that I have mentioned will require urgent remedy.

2.40 pm

Baroness Pitkeathley (Lab): My Lords, I had a bit of a waiting-for-a-bus moment when I listened to the Queen's Speech, because I felt I had waited 30 years for a mention in the gracious Speech, and then two came along at once. I refer to the two issues on which I contribute most in your Lordships' House: social care and carers.

I hope that a mention in the Queen's Speech, even if only a fleeting one, about ensuring that everybody has the dignity and security they deserve and that no one has to sell their home to fund care, means that the crisis in social care may finally be given the attention it needs so urgently. We have had five independent commissions, four White Papers, two Green Papers and endless other reports, yet no progress has been made, even though, as my noble friend Lord Hunt referred to, we have proposals agreed on the statute book in the form of the Dilnot commission. I hope that the noble Lord, Lord Warner, will say more about that.

I was heartened when the Prime Minister told us, when he became Prime Minister, that he had a "clear plan" to fix the problem. There was no plan. Instead, he pledged an extra £1 billion a year—the equivalent of yet another sticking plaster on an open wound of the kind we have seen before. The Local Government Association estimates that there will be a £3.6 billion gap in adult social care funding by 2024. Now the Prime Minister says that he will seek cross-party consensus. I hope that all parties will treat this with an open mind. We have had enough of the type of politicking that led to talk of the Labour death tax in 2010 and the Tory dementia tax in 2017. Such talk betrays the people who are vulnerable, lonely and in dire need. While Parliament has endlessly put this issue into the too-difficult box, tens of thousands of people have died waiting for a care package and tens of thousands of carers have sacrificed their own health and finances on the altar of the prevarication of legislators.

Carers contribute £132 billion to our economy, yet too many are burning out while they prop up an underfunded system. We must stop this now. The crisis is acute and growing worse by the day. The consensus that the Prime Minister says he is seeking is largely already there. There is broad agreement that public funding for social care needs must be significantly increased and that a balance needs to be struck between individual and collective responsibility for care costs. I draw your Lordships' attention to the excellent report by the noble Lord, Lord Forsyth, to which I hope he will refer.

When will the Government publish their plans for long-term reform? How will carers and those they care for be consulted? How will the Government seek this political consensus that they are talking about? This will of course take time and, as an urgent priority, the Government must invest the funding required to keep the social care system afloat until longer-term reforms are implemented. Will the Government meet the short-term funding gap for social care?

I turn to the welcome mention in the Queen's Speech of the employment Bill and measures to support working carers. Carers UK—I declare an interest as a vice-president—welcomed the announcement of the

[BARONESS PITKEATHLEY]

introduction of a new entitlement to one week's leave for unpaid carers. To be most effective, this entitlement must be paid and should be for up to 10 days per year. For the 5 million people in the United Kingdom who juggle working and unpaid caring, combining these responsibilities can be a real challenge, as is shown by the fact that 2.6 million people have already left their job to care for a loved one. Carers' leave would be beneficial for both carers, by helping them to stay in work, and for employers, by helping to improve staff well-being. Of course, this has a very good economic knock-on effect, by enabling carers to maintain their incomes, so as not to build up poverty for the future and therefore have another generation of poor pensioners. Do the Government agree that the new entitlement to carers' leave should be paid, and that the ability to have flexible working for carers makes very sound economic—as well as moral—good sense?

2.45 pm

Baroness Janke (LD): My Lords, when thinking about the debate today, I wondered what will change for the poorest and most vulnerable as a result of the new government agenda. For example, how will the 4.1 million children in poverty—referred to by the noble Baroness, Lady Blower, in her excellent maiden speech—benefit? Will food banks become redundant? Is the number of rough sleepers likely to go down? The answer seems rather depressing: that very little will change, particularly in the short term.

The hope is, however, that the rise in the minimum wage, which we welcome, will in time help some of those in most dire need. But we should not underestimate the scale and misery of poverty across the country. With low unemployment rates, 4 million workers live in poverty, an increase of 500,000 in the last five years. In-work poverty is rising faster than employment and is higher than at any time during the last 20 years. Some 60% of people in poverty live in a household where at least one person works, and 2.8 million people in poverty are in a household where both adults work. So the rise will be welcomed by many and seen as long overdue.

Policies such as the benefit cap and freeze, the two-child limit and the introduction of full job-seeking requirements for single parents of children as young as three have had a stark impact. In August 2018, two-thirds of those who had benefits capped were single parents. Single parents in the bottom 20% of income will have lost 25% of their 2010 income by 2021-22. As a result of tax and benefits changes, the poverty rate for children will jump to 62% by then if nothing changes.

Women earn, on average, 17.9% per hour less than men and make up 60% of workers receiving low pay. Reductions in social care services place a greater burden on primary care givers, who are also disproportionately women. Single-parent families, of whom 90% are women, are twice as likely to be in poverty as any other social group. Nearly half of those in poverty—6.9 million—are from families where someone has a disability. They have also been some of the hardest hit by austerity

measures. Changes to taxes and benefits will mean that some families are projected to lose £11,000 by 2021-22—more than 30% of their income.

It is shocking to British people in the 21st century that we should have 14 million people in poverty. The UK has the fifth-largest economy in the world, a leading centre of global finance and record low levels of employment, yet one-fifth of the population is in poverty, with 4 million people more than 50% below the poverty line. Historically, the UK has had a proud record in terms of a strong social safety net, yet this has been systematically removed over recent years. People who, in former times, found a resource base to support them when they were afflicted by a major catastrophe now find that there are only volunteers and charities with limited resources providing for their most basic needs. How can a country such as ours not be shamed by such a state of affairs, with our benefit service likened to the 19th-century workhouse made infamous by Dickens?

Worse still, the support services that used to be a lifeline for those in poverty have been almost completely removed: youth and community services, social care, debt counselling and libraries have all been closed in record numbers. Surely the Prime Minister's new golden age must tackle the record levels of poverty. There must be not just a commitment but a plan to actually do this: to rebuild an effective social safety net nationally and locally, to address the issues that lead to low pay and insecure employment and to ensure that disadvantaged and vulnerable people are not driven into the deepening despair, humiliation and desperation that poverty brings, as victims of a system with a safety net full of holes.

2.50 pm

Lord Rees of Ludlow (CB): My Lords, the Government's rhetoric indicates a welcome willingness to contemplate radical initiatives in research and education. That is especially crucial if we are to confront the energy challenge. The Climate Change Act's 2050 target is indeed daunting. We need not just to decarbonise existing levels of electricity production, but to treble production, to energise electrically powered transport and heating and to support the electrolytic production of hydrogen and hydrocarbons needed for long-distance aviation. We need innovation to get and store energy more efficiently from sun, wind and tides, and, given our traditional expertise in nuclear energy, to investigate fourth-generation concepts, such as small modular reactors, which could prove cheaper, more flexible and safer than existing nuclear reactors. The potential pay-off from fusion in the long term is so great that it is worth developing prototypes.

Climate change is potentially a threat to national security, so combating it deserves the scale of sustained effort that we commit to our national defences. This requires large-scale, long-term, mission-driven efforts in institutions like those that we have for defence R&D. In the United States, two successive Energy Secretaries, both, amazingly, world-class physicists, advocated establishing new national laboratories to spearhead energy innovation, along the lines of Los Alamos. That is what we need here: institutions, with long-term missions, devoted to a national goal,

crucial amplifiers of product-driven research in industry and journal-driven research in universities. For decades we have had the Culham laboratory for fusion research. The newly funded Faraday centre for battery development is welcome, but it should be the nucleus of a broader and larger venture to address other energy technologies, especially those where it is realistic for the UK to achieve a lead—and for computational modelling, too.

Real breakthroughs are needed in energy generation, storage and smart grids to meet the 2050 targets, but there is a stronger motivation. We produce only 1% of global CO₂ emissions—itself not crucial—but we produce more than 10% of the world's high-impact research. If a scaled-up and wisely prioritised programme led to cheaper carbon-free generation, India and other vast developing markets could leapfrog directly to clean energy rather than building coal-fired power stations. Our efforts could thereby make far more than a 1% difference to the world, and to our national economic benefit. It would be hard to conceive of a more inspiring challenge for young scientists and engineers or a better investment in the UK's future than devising clean and economical energy systems for the world. Likewise, incidentally, we can contribute disproportionately to another global challenge, sustainable food production, if we expand and deploy our world-leading expertise in genetics and plant science.

This leads to my final point. Our idealistic younger generation need the requisite expertise, which is why it is good that the Government have responded to the Augar report's recommendations about 16 to 19 year-olds' further education. That report suggested reforms of higher education as well. To promote lifelong learning, it recommended that everyone should be entitled to three years' support, to be taken at any stage. This would encourage flexibility and would mean, for instance, that those who leave university for any reason after two years are not tainted as wastage, but can get some certificate of credit and an entitlement to return and upgrade later in life. In his previous role, the Minister supported such reforms, so will the Government implement that part of the Augar report?

A key mantra for this country should be, "If we don't get smarter, we'll get poorer." With bold reforms to our education, and our innovative approach to R&D, we could aspire to contribute far more than our pro-rata share to solving global challenges and enhance our economy as well.

2.55 pm

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (Con): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Lord, Lord Rees of Ludlow. I was particularly impressed by his argument that we can influence climate change more than our contribution to carbon through research. It is a very powerful argument and certainly a new one to me. He is, of course, a cosmologist. I want to concentrate, in the short time I have, on social care. Sometimes I feel that officials in the Treasury have the noble Lord's perspective on time in respect of this issue.

I think it was Winston Churchill who first said that the state has a duty to provide a net below which no one can fall and a ladder to help them get out of the net. Like the noble Baroness, Lady Janke, I believe

that very strongly. Social care policy is about protecting our frailest and most vulnerable people, who cannot climb any ladders and whose quality of life depends on that net. Sadly, as several speakers have said, it is wholly inadequate, full of holes and now disintegrating under the inexorable pressure of demand. By 2040, for every working adult there will be almost one person over the age of 65. The cost of care for older people will double between now and 2035. This is not just an issue of an increasingly elderly population either. Almost half of expenditure on social care goes on people of working age, and that population will increase too. By 2025, there will be 150,000 more working-age adults with moderate or severe disabilities and 16,000 more with learning disabilities.

The system is completely broken, with Age UK estimating that 14% of elderly people have an unmet care need. The number of people receiving publicly funded care has actually fallen in recent years. In England there were 40,000 fewer such people in 2013 than there were in 2009—a 26% fall, despite an increase in demand. The fact is that it is the impact on the budget, not well-being, that now determines whether needs will be deemed eligible for support by local authorities. Just to get to where we were 10 years ago in quality and access to care would cost around £8 billion.

What is to be done? Since I left the Government at the invitation of the electorate in 1997, 12 Green Papers, White Papers and other consultations and five independent reviews have attempted to solve the issue of social care funding. All have pointed to the same answer: we need to find considerably more money and achieve a consensus between the Government and the Opposition to underpin a long-term, stable system. I very much welcome, therefore, the commitment in the gracious Speech to achieve that.

Last year, the Economic Affairs Committee, which I do the best I can to chair, was able to reach unanimous agreement on a way forward. Its membership included two former Chancellors of the Exchequer, two former Permanent Secretaries to the Treasury, a former Cabinet Secretary, a distinguished economist of the left, a retired FTSE 100 CEO, a non-executive director of the Bank of England and other highly experienced members. If we could find agreement, why can the political parties not? It would mean the state writing a big cheque and providing clarity about the future structure, and it would require a determined effort to simplify the system and remove many of the unfairnesses from it. Above all, it would require a major effort to educate the public.

The fact is that most people do not have a clue about the level of support they can expect if they are struck down by illness or fragility and find themselves unable to meet their own basic needs for washing, feeding, continence and mobility. The problem becomes apparent to the voter only when an elderly parent or perhaps a family member has a severe disability. The Local Government Association survey found that 48% of English adults did not even know what the term "social care" meant. The King's Fund found that people were shocked when the means test, the extent to which they were responsible for paying for their own care and the complexity of the system were explained to them.

[LORD FORSYTH OF DRUMLEAN]

There are real injustices in the system which need to be addressed. Self-funders in residential care are being charged 41% more than those who are publicly funded. It is a hidden tax on people who have saved throughout their working lives. In England, it is quite scandalous that access to basic free care is limited by diagnosis and not need; a person with cancer will be helped but someone with dementia or motor neurone disease will not until they have spent every penny down to £23,500. The means test does not include the family home as an asset if domiciliary care is provided, but it is counted for residential care, leaving some families faced with catastrophic costs losing everything.

The pay, treatment and training of the care workers is woefully inadequate. Care homes regularly lose dedicated men and women to stacking shelves in supermarkets and the turnover among staff is approaching 40%. There is a desperate need to invest in the social care workforce and ensure a joined-up approach to workforce planning. I know how wonderfully committed and poorly rewarded care workers are. It is a vocation for most of them, not just a job, and they deserve a proper career path and professional status, like nurses.

Today, yet another Bill or Green Paper is awaited from the Government and, like Billy Bunter's postal order, it has been endlessly delayed. With each delay the suffering increases, the pressure on unpaid carers grows, the supply of carer providers diminishes, the availability of qualified carers is reduced and the ability to put in place a system of social care that is sustainable and worthy of a civilised country is prejudiced.

To the Government's credit, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care wrote to me in September promising that the Government will set out plans in due course to fix the crisis in social care once and for all—to give every older person the dignity and security that they deserve and to protect children, parents and grandparents from the fear of having to sell their home to pay for the cost of care. These words are reflected in the gracious Speech. I hope and pray that they are soon turned into action.

3.02 pm

Lord Lipsey (Lab): My Lords, I entirely agree with the noble Lord, Lord Forsyth—it is not very often that I say that—on the importance of social care and many of the points he made on the subject. It is one of the two great issues facing us, the other being climate change. The advantage of social care is that it is entirely within our control. It does not have to depend on what other countries do; we can do it ourselves.

I was genuinely pleased when Boris Johnson said very soon after the election that he had a fully prepared plan for social care. We have been looking forward to that after five promised Green Papers down the pan. In fact, I have been looking forward to it since I sat on a royal commission 20 years ago. Now, apparently, we have it.

Unfortunately, when the Queen's Speech came along, it did not look quite so good. The first element referred to was an extra £1 billion for social care now. That is rather like sticking your little finger in a water cannon—it will go nowhere. The second element was ensuring that nobody had to sell their house to pay for care. But

nobody has to now. We passed in the last Parliament the deferred payment scheme so that nobody has to sell their house in their lifetime to pay for care. If they cannot pay for care, they can borrow from the local authority, and that is paid after they die. No individual ever has to pay for their own care by selling their house.

The third element was more attractive but slightly mysterious: he was going to seek a consensus on social care. I am in two minds about that. It is highly desirable that we get a consensus on social care, because then there will be a greater chance that people can plan on the basis of policy that they know will go forward for years to come, no matter what Government are in power, and that is a very good thing. However, there was a little suspicious bell that went off in my head that said, "Achieving consensus—what an opportunity for endless further delay." If the Government were serious in proposing it, it could be happening now. Labour published its plan for social care in its manifesto; I happen to think it is not a very good one in many respects, but it is a plan that is there and ready to debate. Although we have not seen the detail of it, we have the word of the Prime Minister—nothing could trump that, surely—that the Government have a prepared plan. This month, this week, this afternoon, the two sides could be sitting down together and hammering out a compromise consensus on the way forward for social care.

Two attempts have been made at achieving consensus on social care before, and two blew up. One blew up when the Tories suddenly decided halfway through the talks to call Labour's plans a "death tax". Labour got its revenge halfway through the next set of talks by declaring that the Government's plans were a "dementia tax". If we play politics with this thing, we will get nowhere with it. It is beyond and more serious than politics, but it requires a certain amount of political skill to solve.

The one concrete suggestion I would make is that, if we are to have such talks, there be a completely neutral chairman or mediator whose job is to try to bring the two sides together. Incidentally, I have some experience in this, although in a quite different context. The bookmakers and greyhound racing had been at complete loggerheads for 10 years about increasing the bookmakers' contributions. I, as a greyhound man, was asked by Tracey Crouch to see whether we could reach a solution. It was possible to do so because both sides knew that if they were the ones who messed things up, I would go public and say, "This is the bookmakers' fault" or "This is the greyhound industry being too greedy." You need a referee of that kind, of independent force and influence, so that the talks do not collapse into political chaos but result in the lasting solution which older people and their relatives so richly deserve.

3.07 pm

Baroness Pinnock (LD): My Lords, I draw the attention of the House to my registered interests as a councillor and a vice-chair of the Local Government Association. I too want to raise the issue of social care.

This is what happened in the town where I live just before Christmas. There was an elderly couple in their 90s, well known in the community, and sadly the woman had developed dementia and was in need of

considerable care and support. This care was provided by visits from social care and by her husband, who was himself frail. Sadly, he too became a victim of dementia. There was then what is described as a full care package, but for long periods of the day this increasingly vulnerable couple was regarded as being independent. One afternoon, the husband wandered out of the house in a confused state. At the next social care visit, the discovery was made that he had gone. It was dark. The police response was amazing; local people turned out to search. The next morning he was found in a side street, dead—a death without dignity, a social care tragedy.

I recount this because it amply illustrates the scandalous omission in this gracious Speech. In the past 20 years, there have been numerous commissions, reports and independent reviews on social care in England. We are still waiting for the Green Paper promised three years ago. The plan now is for more delay when what is needed is urgent action. Will the Minister at the very least assure the House that the Government will bring forward a Green Paper on the future funding of social care as a starting point for development of consensus on what has become a care service in crisis? For once, I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Forsyth.

The Government's response to this desperate funding shortage for social care is to pile an increasing burden on to council tax payers via a 2% precept specifically for social care, on top of the annual tax increase. This provides additional funding along with a welcome promise of £1 billion a year, but that is to be shared by adult and children's services, and we know that the funding gap for both services will be £7 billion in five years' time, so this extra funding will fail to bridge the gap.

That brings me on to funding for local government as a whole. It is also at a critical stage, and business rates provide a large part of the funding. While the larger rebates in business rates proposed for retailers and others are very welcome, will that mean an equivalent reduction in income for local government? If that is the case, the already critical state of local funding will become even more perilous. Will the Minister provide local government with an assurance that it will be compensated in full for loss of business rate income?

The Government's strategy for local government appears to be to starve it of funds but to fail to make provision to enable local government to develop other sources of income. The results are there for all to experience: potholed roads; fly-tipping on the increase; youth services cut to the bone or cut altogether; libraries closed; and vulnerable people not adequately cared for. Will the Minister be able to share with us the Government's plans for the future funding of local government?

Finally, I remain concerned that the Government are gradually removing the "local" from local government by creating more large unitary authorities. It would be prudent of them to recall that one of the drivers of the existing national mood is that people no longer feel that they can influence decisions that directly affect their lives. The cry to "take back control" is a powerful one, and local people may well take up that call—to the discomfiture of the current Government.

3.12 pm

Baroness Greengross (CB): My Lords, in my brief remarks today I will address three issues which are of major importance in the fields of health, social care and the way we meet carers' needs. I declare my interest in the International Longevity Centre UK and the ILC Global Alliance as entered in the register.

In the gracious Speech we learned that

"Steps will be taken to grow and support the National Health Service's workforce and a new visa will ensure qualified doctors, nurses and health professionals have fast-track entry to the United Kingdom."

It is vital that workforce shortages within the NHS are addressed. According to projections by the Nuffield Trust in 2019, there is a current shortage of one in 12 NHS staff. However, we also need to see continued commitments to prevention along the life course to ease pressures on the NHS, as outlined in the NHS long-term plan. New research by ILC-UK has found that across better-off countries in 2017 alone, 27.1 million years were lived with disability due to largely preventable diseases. That number is projected to increase by 17% in the next 25 years if we do not prioritise prevention across the life course. That is an imperative.

We also heard in the gracious Speech that the Government will

"seek cross-party consensus on proposals for long term reform of social care. They will ensure that the social care system provides everyone with the dignity and security they deserve and that no one who needs care has to sell their home to pay for it."

It was great to hear the strong message of the noble Lord, Lord Forsyth, on that point. Reform of adult social care is long overdue. As Age UK informed us, "the care system is broken";

it is ignoring 1.4 million people with an unmet need. Spending on adult social care by English local councils has fallen by 5% in real terms between the 2009-10 financial year and 2017-18, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies in 2018. Recent research carried out by ILC-UK and the Salvation Army found large gaps between upper-tier local authorities' spending power: in 2014, their spending power ranged from £31,368 in Lambeth Council to £5,762 in Dorset Council. That is totally unacceptable.

Lastly, we heard in the Queen's Speech:

"Measures will be brought forward to encourage flexible working, to introduce the entitlement to leave for unpaid carers and to help people save for later life".

Longer working lives could bring economic opportunities to the economy. Recent research by ILC-UK reveals that the earned income generated by people aged 50 and over may account for 40% of total earnings by 2040. However, research by ILC-UK in 2014 also showed that over 1 million people between 50 and 64 leave the workforce involuntarily due to health and care needs or caring responsibilities, at a huge economic cost to the country and social cost for both individuals and their families. As such, initiatives to support older workers to juggle work and caring responsibilities, improved occupational health services and opportunities to learn and retrain throughout people's careers are paramount to unlocking this economic potential. I hope that the Government will ensure, in line with government policy, that these important needs can be rapidly implemented.

3.17 pm

Baroness Neville-Rolfe (Con): My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Greengross, and other noble Lords who spoke on social care, but I will go elsewhere. I declare my business interests in the register.

I last spoke in a debate on a Queen's Speech as recently as October. Then, I criticised the Labour Party's declared plans to attack property rights. Fortunately, that threat has abated for the foreseeable future. It is also clear—I pay tribute to the Prime Minister—that Brexit will happen, allowing realistic plans to be made by the Government and economic actors right across the UK. With victory, however, comes responsibility. The country will expect the Government, with their comfortable majority, to get things moving again after the Brexit-induced paralysis of the past three years.

On public services, I very much welcome the new money for schools, surgeries, police, road and rail improvements, and especially GPs, as well as the multiyear settlement for the NHS and schools. We apparently face a major shake-up in government and the Civil Service. When I moved to business in 1997, I learned things that government lacked: lean thinking; innovation; customer focus; long-term forecasting based on dynamics and demographics; and how to lead, manage and motivate. While some of this toolkit of a successful global company can be adapted to government, the latter is of course more complex and requires a wider range of skills.

My concern about the direction of travel as reported in the press is that No. 10 may try to grab too much power and use it unsatisfactorily rather than ensuring that departments are fit for purpose and able to progress under effective Ministers. The truth is that Downing Street—I have worked there—does not know enough to run the country on its own.

To be a successful nation at a time when possibly as much as 40% of GDP is knowledge-based requires a first-class education system. It was a wake-up call when I discovered in 2014 that we were 24th in the PISA tables for maths, and not much better in reading or science. Mainly thanks to the brave Gove reforms, we are now 18th in maths, ahead of France, Germany and the US. My noble friend the Minister and the noble Baroness, Lady Bull, touched on PISA. I add that England consistently ranks above the higher-spending Scottish and Welsh systems. To compete, especially in Asia, we need to do more. We need good education for everyone from the most to the least talented. Our vocational education, including our apprenticeship system, continues to lag woefully behind many others.

The wrong sort of taxes can also be an issue, for example, business rates, where the tax is badly designed and its effects have been especially malign for retail. Given the prospect of more job losses, I was delighted to see the promise to bring forward fundamental change. Radical, rapid reform is essential.

Brexit gives us a wonderful opportunity to simplify our rule book. We need to make our bureaucrats more business-friendly rather than cautious and obsessed with obtaining and using new fining powers. Looking at the proposals on financial services, I worry that there seems to be more on regulatory protection than

is compatible with the stated intent of supporting the UK's competitiveness and its position as an international services centre.

Financial services is our biggest sector, representing £127 billion of GDP. Many regulatory changes, often Brussels-based, followed the financial crisis and brought in a period during which productivity in the financial sector plummeted. This obviously reflects the destruction of capital but also, I fear, the build-up of control and bureaucracy, especially for smaller players. Indeed, as we heard from my noble friend Lord Hodgson, that is not always effective. A change of leadership at every level is an opportunity. I hope that the new Governor of the Bank of England, Andrew Bailey, will tackle red tape better. He did this brilliantly with his simple regulatory Sandbox for new fintech businesses.

Finally, our regulation should start in our own back yard with HMRC. If well run, this could support business and frustrated taxpayers and actually raise more tax.

There have been many constructive references to climate change this week. I want to make one point. We need to shift from virtue signalling, as epitomised in last year's Bill on net zero, to action. We have had years of engagement, and during that period, we could have made much more progress with simple plans and encouragement to business.

This is the most wide-ranging of debates. I have not even had time to talk about online harms—highlighted in an amusing speech by the noble Lord, Lord Griffiths—antimicrobial resistance or health data. There is so much to do and to gain. Focus is essential. We have five years and we must use them well.

3.22 pm

Lord Berkeley (Lab): I wish the noble Baroness good luck in those five years.

My Lords, I declare an interest as a former chairman of the HS2 review. I will talk about railways and HS2, if I may, in the short time available. I welcome the references in the Queen's Speech to prioritising investment in infrastructure and giving

“communities more control over how investment is spent so that they can decide what is best for them.”

Ministers have supported that since then. In her opening speech, the Minister made it very clear. She said that you need investment so that people can get to work on time. That is very simple but it is absolutely the core of the whole matter.

I welcome the Government's commitment to the regions, particularly in transport. This is the first time we have seen that for decades, and it is pretty good. It needs doing because TransPennine Express has cancelled 40% of its services this month, or during some part of this month. Northern Rail is apparently about to be stripped of its franchises. How can you hold down a job if 40% of your trains on the days on which you want to go to work are cancelled? Who is to blame? It is easy to blame people. The rail operator blames a lack of trains but 400 electric coaches are sitting in sidings funded by the Department for Transport because electrification was cancelled. Those 400 coaches could be operating today. That does not include Crossrail, which is a separate subject for another day. We have

got to get our act together. This is about Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool and the north-east. As we know, the result is not good.

I am grateful to my noble friend Lord Griffiths for his positive comments about my HS2 report. I will not go into great detail today as there is not enough time—I will do it another time—but we need to consider how to deal with the poor economic performance in the north and parts of the Midlands and the effect that HS2 may or may not have. Therefore, what are the most important improvements to the rail network in those areas and is HS2 the best way of achieving them? We consulted widely within the review team but we have now got to a cost of £100 billion. HS2 does good things around Crewe and Manchester and Leeds and Sheffield, but is it the right answer further south?

This goes back to the fundamentals of the businesses in those areas. From talking to a lot of people, it is my perception that it is managing directors, and us politicians, who want to get to London more quickly, but the people who work in those businesses want to commute, and they probably commute daily whereas we do it perhaps weekly, or whatever. That is where the money needs to be spent. The Government could commit £50 billion over 20 years really to improve those services. So, Ministers have to answer this question: if HS2 needs £100 billion and regional rail services need £50 billion—if they have £150 billion, then fine, do the lot—which do they prioritise?

Lord Adonis (Lab): My Lords, my noble friend referred to localism and local decision-making but the Mayor of the West Midlands, the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the leader of Leeds City Council are strongly in favour of HS2 continuing. They prioritise it very highly. Does that not weigh with my noble friend?

Lord Berkeley: I am aware of those prioritisations. They want both. I have talked to them. However, when I asked them, “Do you want HS2 to get to London quicker or do you want better commuter services?”, they said, after a lot of thinking, that commuter services came first.

Lord Adonis: I do not accept that that is correct. If my noble friend asks the Mayor of the West Midlands, he will not find him prioritising other services over HS2.

Lord Berkeley: I will conclude. I am grateful to the Economic Affairs Committee, under the great chairmanship of the noble Lord, Lord Forsyth, for its excellent report. I hope that Ministers will read it, if they have not done so already, and I hope that we will have a debate on it. I hope that we will have another opportunity to debate this issue. It really is a question of money: do we have £150 billion or £75 billion? That is the decision for Ministers to make. I will be grateful if, when he winds up, the Minister can give me some idea of when that decision might be made.

3.27 pm

Lord Shipley (LD): My Lords, the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, made some very trenchant points, for which we should thank him.

The gracious Speech contained little to remedy the deep-seated problems affecting the delivery of public services, most of which relate to a lack of money. The Prime Minister's stated aim is to unite the country and level it up. That is to be welcomed, but I hope the Government understand that it will need a great deal of hard work and a huge injection of cash which, in the context of borrowing constraints for current spending, seems unlikely to be forthcoming.

I remind the House that I am a vice-president of the Local Government Association. I welcome the inclusion of Bills relating to renters' reform and ending no-fault evictions. I also welcome the building safety Bill and the fire safety Bill. However, I wonder about the proposed 30% discount for local people who are first-time buyers. It is clearly an attractive policy in principle, but it appears that it may be paid for by local councils through reducing the building of affordable and social homes for rent. That would not be a housing policy for a united country.

The fact is that many of the problems that are being faced by local communities that feel left behind will not be addressed by these Bills. The crisis of funding is stark and the cuts have gone too far. Since 2010, more than half of central government financial support to local government has been cut, effectively abolishing safety nets in the areas that need them most. Yet the Government have committed themselves to keeping taxes down with no increases promised in income tax, national insurance or VAT. Interestingly, council tax was not on that list, and I think we should conclude that the Government are intent on allowing council tax to rise above inflation over the period of this Parliament to help pay for the deficit in adult social care. Even the extra allocation just before Christmas did not meet the deficit forecast for next year.

We now learn that the reform of social care could take the whole of this Parliament, which means that we will have had almost 15 years of failure by the Conservative Party to decide upon a policy. I would ask the Minister where the fair funding review for local government is, where some of the decisions on the long-term future of business rates actually are, and what decisions are likely to be announced soon on the shared prosperity fund to replace lost European funding.

It is said that the Budget in March will be about an infrastructure revolution to help areas suffering poor connectivity and low private sector investment. I welcome that, but the Government should remember that towns that feel left behind have a preponderance of low-paid jobs and older populations as young people leave. Rebuilding local economies means that communities must be empowered. The decline caused by poor transport connections, low investment in education and low levels of skills in the face of large cuts to FE budgets has meant that access to better-paid jobs can be limited. In such areas, public spending can be high, but more often than not that reflects more spending by DWP and the NHS as they deal with the consequences of poor life chances.

[LORD SHIPLEY]

We need to create a virtuous circle that is led by investment in FE, skills and schools, alongside a major commitment by the private sector to invest in areas that have been in decline, perhaps utilising local authority pension funds. We also need a change in Treasury rules so that infrastructure investment decisions do not relate just to national economic growth and thus government tax revenues, but to improvements in well-being in specific places.

Finally, the Government have promised to devolve decision-making in England, and that is welcome. Devolution in England will drive local prioritisation of investment rather than wish-listing locally and blaming Whitehall when not everything can be afforded. We need Whitehall's role to be reversed from one of running England directly to one of empowering the constituent parts of England to make their own decisions on priorities. To that principle, we should add the right to raise specific local taxes.

3.32 pm

Lord Bichard (CB): My Lords, it is a new year with a new Government and there is new energy with new ideas and new policies, and even, we are told, some money. There is a sense of anticipation and, in the words of the Prime Minister, the dawning of a new golden age. What could possibly go wrong? Quite a lot could go wrong because, on past evidence, Governments in this country have found it very difficult to deliver projects, improved services, policies, targets or promises. We have become a nation that is good on ideas, ambitions and aspirations, but rather weak on achievement. As chair of the National Audit Office, I see countless examples of that week by week.

Take a look at some of our recent reports. Take a look at Crossrail, which is over budget and still not there. Take a look at HS2. Take a look at the starter home target of 200,000 houses, which delivered, well, none at all, actually. If you have time, take a look at the Great Western Railway modernisation or perhaps the decommissioning of our nuclear submarines. That has been a policy commitment since 1990, which so far has led to no vessels at all being decommissioned and untold riches being spent on stockpiling disused submarines. We now have more submarines in storage than in operation.

You can add to those recent failures universal credit, countless failed IT projects and, as many noble Lords have said in the debate, social care—or the lack of it. We are wasting billions of pounds when resources are tight and at the same time failing to deliver policies, many of which would help some of the most disadvantaged people in our society. So I often ask myself: why does this happen and what could we do to improve the current situation?

We at the National Audit Office are not actually interested in being mortuary attendants; we would actually quite like to improve public services. So I make a few suggestions to a new Government who may be in listening mode. For a start, we could make clear, from the very top of government, that delivering outcomes successfully matters just as much as endless policy commitments. We could be careful to ensure that policies and targets are stretching but achievable

rather than designed primarily to grab the headlines and capture short-term political advantage. We could limit legislation so that the programme for any Session of Parliament is realistic and manageable. We could do more to ensure that civil servants are equipped with the skills to deliver services and projects effectively. We could, for example, insist on officials being required to spend a reasonable amount of time in operational or project management posts before entering the Civil Service, because it was clear to me all those years ago when I was a civil servant that policy development mattered and was recognised much more than delivery, and I fear that that is still the case.

We could hold people, civil servants as well as Ministers, more accountable for failures and stop the recycling of incompetence. We could ensure that competent Ministers stay in post for longer than the current average of around 15 months and that civil servants are not constantly churned to benefit their careers at the expense of results. We could devolve more power closer to communities, because large centralised bureaucracies rarely deliver successfully, and, frankly, in recent times local government and the voluntary sector have shown themselves to be more competent, agile and trustworthy than large central government departments and agencies. We could do a lot more to learn the lessons of failure and from our mistakes rather than seek to explain away the inexplicable or defend the indefensible. Finally, we could better understand and exploit the potential of digital technology to transform health, social care and many other essential services.

There are many reasons why the reputations of both Westminster and Whitehall are at such a low ebb, but in part it is because people have lost trust in their ability to deliver improvements, not least in public services. Addressing that has to be a priority for this new Government, and success will not be achieved by yet more promises to do better or to try harder, or indeed by just throwing money at the problem. That is why I for one have welcomed the signals from No. 10 that the Prime Minister is supporting radical changes in the way we govern, even if I may not have used exactly the same words, but that support and interest needs to be sustained in the face of many other pressures. However, all revolutions have to start somewhere and maybe this one should start with the Government saying very clearly, "We will promise only what we can deliver, but we will deliver what we promise." Or to put it another way, "Let us promise a little less and deliver a lot more."

3.38 pm

Lord Tugendhat (Con): My Lords, the noble Lord, Lord Bichard, speaks very wisely with the voice of experience, and I hope very much that Ministers will pay attention to what he has just said. Notwithstanding the note of realism that he has injected into our debate, at the moment we are in a time of hope. The Government have a large majority and they can plan ahead in a way that has been impossible for Administrations in recent years. In that context, the role of the House of Lords is clear. We must accept that the Government have a mandate and we must offer our revisions, criticisms and advice not only in a constructive spirit but in a

way that is designed on the one hand to improve legislation and on the other to enable the Government to avoid mistakes. I hope that Ministers will accept the revisions, criticisms and advice that we offer in that spirit.

I will deal with just one particular point in the Government's programme: their aim of improving competitiveness, productivity and prosperity in the north of England. In that connection, I welcome what I read in the press of the Treasury's plans to reassess criteria for calculating the value for money of government investment in transport and infrastructure, away from focusing on overall national economic growth and towards improving the well-being of people in the north of England and, I hope, other regions as well. This follows a recommendation of your Lordships' Economic Affairs Committee, chaired by my noble friend Lord Forsyth, of which I am a member.

In giving my support wholeheartedly to that programme, I raise a few issues. One is that if the Government's ambitions for the north—and, I hope, other regions—are to be effective in the long run, they cannot all be controlled from London. There will have to be more devolution of decision-making. That may well pose difficulties.

Secondly, where possible, efforts must be made to ensure that locally based SMEs are allocated contracts in the procurement process. When one looks at the record of government in this respect, it is striking that, on the whole, locally based SMEs do not share substantially in some of the plans introduced and executed so far.

Thirdly—I speak under the surveillance of my noble friend Lord Forsyth from Scotland—I wonder whether there is not more we might be able to do for Scotland. Under the SNP Government, Scotland is falling behind England in a number of respects. It will also lose the funding it enjoys at present from the various European funds, in particular the regional fund. I wonder whether there might not be scope for the UK Government to step in and provide further assistance on public expenditure in a way that the European funds have hitherto done.

Finally, I regret the Prime Minister's election pledge not to raise income tax, VAT or national insurance—not because I want to see them go up, but because I believe that if the Government are to achieve their wider economic and social aims and to deliver to those who, as the Prime Minister has put it, have lent the Conservative Party their votes, higher taxes may well be required. I believe the public are ready for that; they want better public services and better infrastructure. If higher taxes are the price, they are willing to pay. As the old saying goes: "To govern is to choose." I hope that if the Government have to choose between their broader social and economic aims on the one hand and higher taxes on the other, the former will win out. I believe that is what the country wants.

3.43 pm

Lord Bradley (Lab): My Lords, declaring my interests in the register, I will briefly touch on three issues from the Queen's Speech relating to healthcare. I also congratulate my noble friend Lady Blower on her excellent maiden speech.

First, I turn to the intention to enshrine in law the National Health Service's multiyear funding settlement. This commitment and additional resources for the NHS are obviously always welcome, but in 2018-19 the outturn spend on mental health services was around only £12.2 billion, which is roughly £1 in every £10 of the overall NHS budget. If we are truly going to make the essential additional investment desperately needed in mental health services for both children and adults, would it not perhaps also be appropriate to enshrine in law the commitment to achieve parity of esteem and equality of access between mental health and physical health expenditure over the same funding period, rather than merely retain it as an aspiration in the NHS mandate?

Secondly, I turn to NHS investment. As pro-chancellor of the University of Salford, which has one the largest—and, dare I say, best—training departments for nurses in the country, I welcome the announcement to restore some level of bursaries for nurse training. However, I understand that there will be a delay in implementation until September this year. Universities recruit for such training at a number of points in the year, such as January and March, so it is likely that potential applicants will delay entry until September to understandably take advantage of the bursaries. However, this could further undermine the already fragile nurse workforce planning across the NHS. Will the Minister therefore consider the immediate restoration of the bursaries to ensure a more robust pipeline of nurses over the coming years and give more certainty to university recruitment?

Thirdly, I turn to the Mental Health Act and the commitment in the Queen's Speech to continue work to reform it. Such reform is urgent following the excellent review of the current Act by Sir Simon Wessely. I strongly support two of his recommendations regarding the interface between mental health and the criminal justice system, which are similar to recommendations I made in my independent report to government some 10 years ago. First, he recommended that by 2023-24 investment in mental health services, health-based places of safety and ambulances should allow for the removal of police cells as a place of safety under the Act and ensure that the majority of people detained under police powers are conveyed to places of safety by ambulance. This is obviously subject to satisfactory and safe alternative health-based places of safety being established. I totally agree with this recommendation.

Good progress has been made in this area, with the banning of the use of police cells as places of safety for children. However, to ensure that the recommendation is implemented, we need significant further investment in, for example, crisis care assessment units away from A&E departments—they are totally the wrong environment for people in mental health crises—and liaison and diversion services. These services have now reached 100% coverage of the country but should be further enhanced by, among other things, connection to speech and language therapy services and appropriate adult support, and the rapid development of the excellent reconnect programme for rehabilitation.

His second recommendation—that NHS England should take over the commissioning of health services in police custody; again, similar to my recommendation

[LORD BRADLEY]

—would significantly improve the co-ordination between mental health, learning disabilities and physical health assessment in police custody, and would be a key component in improving the quality and timeliness of crucial information about a person's complex needs as they pass, where appropriate, along the criminal justice pathway. Again, I hope that the Minister will support these recommendations and the early introduction of the Bill in order to reform the Mental Health Act at the earliest opportunity, following diligent consideration of the complex issues through the publication of the White Paper.

3.48 pm

Lord Clement-Jones (LD): My Lords, since we have just had the 12 days of Christmas, I want to use my five minutes to suggest 12 digital priorities for action by this new Government in the context of the Queen's Speech—I will do so in shorthand, necessarily.

The first priority is action on online harms and internet safety. Will the Government bring forward a draft Bill for scrutiny, and designate Ofcom as the regulator to ensure the necessary work on codes of practice? Will they commit to bring back age verification for adult sites and widen it to cover social media platforms? Will they comply with the revised AVMS directive?

The second priority is to speed up the broadband rollout. What timescale is envisaged in the pledge to accelerate the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband? Is it 100% by 2025, as promised by the Prime Minister in his leadership campaign?

The third priority is a moratorium on facial-recognition technology. The Home Office's own Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group has questioned the accuracy of live facial-recognition technology and noted its potential for biased decision-making. Will the Government agree to a moratorium as a vital first step before regulation?

The fourth priority is the control of algorithmic decision-making. The Government have published a guide to using artificial intelligence in the public sector. What plans do they have to monitor its use and ensure that there is compliance?

The fifth priority is data governance. There is increasing concern about access and security of personal data. Look at the current Travellex case: even sharing by the NHS gives rise to concern. We need to go well beyond the GDPR, with much more control over our personal information through personal data accounts, hubs of all things and data trusts. Will the Government continue to fund work on this by the Open Data Institute, the Alan Turing Institute and others?

The sixth priority is changes to corporate governance. AI can and should contribute positively to a purposeful form of capitalism which is not simply about the pursuit of profit. It is imperative that boards have the right skill sets in order to fulfil their oversight role and take accountability. Will the Government develop corporate governance for the AI age as part of their proposals on company audit and corporate reporting?

The seventh priority is a new approach to employment, skills and retraining. Whatever the scale of disruption by AI to the jobs market, retraining will be a lifelong necessity. What can the Minister tell us about the rollout of the national retraining scheme? How does it relate to the national skills fund? Have the Government considered the idea of personal learning accounts? How will the Government encourage greater diversity in the training and recruitment of AI specialists to minimise bias in training data and decision-making?

The eighth priority is the strengthening of data and digital competition, especially in digital advertising. When is the Government's response to the Furman report going to emerge? With which regulator will the new digital markets unit sit?

The ninth priority is the adoption of international norms on ethics. What is the Government's intention going forward with AI principles, such as those developed by the OECD and G20 last year and the potential of AI to help solve the UN's sustainable development goals?

The 10th priority is the reform of digital taxation. The Government plan to introduce a digital services tax, ensuring that tech giants pay their fair share. Will this support and build on the OECD's proposals? What are the Government's intentions in that respect?

The 11th priority is ensuring better digital understanding and media literacy. Do the Government's plans include teaching on how to use social media responsibly and provide advice and support for parents on how to help their children protect themselves online?

The final priority is a strong digital trade policy. Will the UK put the digital economy at the heart of its trade policy? Crucial areas such as data adequacy, tech skills from overseas, the EU digital services Act, data sovereignty and the US CLOUD Act will all need to be tackled in our trade policy. I hope that many, if not most, of these priorities will also be the Government's priorities. If they are, they will get support from these Benches.

3.53 pm

Baroness Boycott (CB): My Lords, it is an honour to follow the noble Lord and his 12 very good and challenging points. I want to make some points about the principles we must abide by if we want to secure this happy and healthy economy that has been laid out in the gracious Speech.

Our three-day debate raises interesting questions about what policy considerations we should cluster together. Today we have the economy, business and public services, yet, if we want a successful economy, we must consider it alongside the things that threaten to weaken it. Climate change is surely the greatest of these, affecting our business interests, the delivery of our public services, and our health, jobs, skills and infrastructure. I could go on; the truth is, it will affect everything.

We cannot think about our economy without also thinking about how we achieve our net-zero emission target. The food sector, which noble Lords will know is the one I work in, is just one sector, but a very good example, because the link between our economic well-being, climate change and food is huge. Food is a massive economic contributor. The food and farming

sector is worth almost £122 billion to the UK economy, and the number of people employed in the UK agri-food sector is now well over 4 million. But if we do not look at our food economy through a climate lens, we will be in big trouble, because food contributes so much to global warming.

Global food loss and waste generate about 8% of humankind's annual greenhouse gas emissions, and deforestation and forest degradation—a significant proportion of which is due to food-related farming—account for 10% to 11% of greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, climate change will seriously threaten the food economy. According to the IPPC, crop yield declines of 10% to 25% will be widespread by 2050, and rising temperatures are predicted to wipe out up to 40% of the world's fish. So much of what we eat is threatened and we cannot rely endlessly on other countries to feed us—whatever Mr Fox used to say.

If these scenarios play out, we will severely damage our health and economy, not enhance them, and food represents just one slice of them. I am in no doubt about the complexity of this challenge. But, as all the great systems thinkers know, tackling complex challenges requires us to think about the guiding principles of the whole system. We have an opportunity to do this through the legislative and policy agenda that the Government have just announced.

First, the planned Green Budget is a critical opportunity for the Government to reconsider the economy and fiscal policy through a climate lens. Perhaps the Minister can say a little more about what we can expect. For instance, will we adopt the laws that New Zealand has that say there must be climate consideration in every piece of legislation, including on things such as housing? Secondly, will there be sector-specific legislation where all these principles can be embedded? In my sector, the planned shift in the agriculture Bill from a system that incentivises poor stewardship to one based on public money for public good is extremely welcome, but Ministers will know that there are many problems with how it will be administered.

Thirdly, we need to make sure that unilateral environmental principles govern all our decision-making. Despite indications from HMG, the last Environment Bill, introduced to Parliament in October 2019, did not enshrine environmental principles in law. It also specifically excluded public spending and taxation from their application, and it did not ensure that critical principles would apply to all public bodies. So, given the urgency, will HMG ensure that this is rectified in the forthcoming Bill?

To wrap it up, we cannot consider the economy any more without considering climate. We cannot consider business and we cannot consider public services, either. We should be operating on 10-year or 20-year plans. We cannot just look to the next electoral cycle—even five years now is too long.

I had the privilege of working with the Prime Minister when he was Mayor of London on many green projects, and he was tremendously enthusiastic about delivering everything from community gardens to trying to lower carbon gas emissions from the food system in the City. I feel very optimistic that the optimism that he showed and the popularity it brought him will go forward in

his reign at No. 10. I would like to see him, when we get to the end of the year, step on to the stage in Glasgow and treat it as the Olympics of his prime ministership, and say that we in Britain will lead the world on this. We may not be the biggest country and we may be small emitters, but my gosh we can show the way as to how you can make climate and the environment completely part of all you think about. Quite frankly, if we do not, the future we leave our children will not be fit for purpose.

3.58 pm

Lord Moynihan (Con): My Lords, the commitment to ensure that children get an active start to life through an investment programme in primary school PE teaching, and ensuring that the subsequent improvements are delivered, is a welcome nod to the Prime Minister's commitment to the benefits of sport, which were also seeded in the excellent work that he undertook as Mayor of London when delivering his part in the London Olympic and Paralympic Games. I am glad that the Government want to go further in helping schools to make good use of their sports facilities and promote physical literacy and competitive sport.

The most important step in that direction would be to take sports policy away from the DCMS, and to fold up that department, which has become a distant planet on the edge of the galaxy of Whitehall. It makes far more political sense to place departmental responsibility for sport firmly in the powerhouse of sport in this country: the Department for Education, which has oversight of physical literacy in all its forms in all our schools. Get sports delivery right in our schools and sport will flourish in this country. Link that to a proactive health policy and you raise health levels throughout the United Kingdom.

In so doing, the Government will be better equipped to deal with participation in sport, the quality of PE teaching at all levels, access to outstanding school facilities—which in the independent sector should be a condition precedent of charitable status—assistance with transport, insurance, the costs of keeping facilities open for school children, and summer camps and links with local clubs, so the significant drop-off in participation of school leavers at present can finally be reduced.

I also welcome the additional £3 billion over this Parliament to support the creation of a national skills fund, also to be overseen by the Department for Education. This is a necessary and excellent initiative to ensure that communities benefit from the skills our country needs and recognises the importance of maximising opportunities to improve our skills and employment system. Declaring an interest as the patron of Create, the UK's leading charity empowering lives through the creative arts, I know of the vital work the charitable sector can and must contribute to the national skills fund. I hope my noble friends in the ministerial team will look closely at the work undertaken by Create and others to enable the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and adults to take part in sustained, inclusive, collaborative creative arts workshops, tackling isolation and loneliness, and building skills and promoting well-being.

[LORD MOYNIHAN]

I also welcome the return of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill to your Lordships' House. There have been a number of welcome improvements to the Bill since we last considered it. However, there is a major issue, which many of your Lordships will have watched with concern since we last discussed the Birmingham 2022 legislation. The concern surrounds the possibility—albeit, I hope, declining in recent weeks—of a boycott by the Indian team in response to the decision not to hold shooting events as part of the programme.

On Boxing Day, it was announced that the National Rifle Association of India had expressed its commitment to hosting a shooting competition before Birmingham 2022, to allow medals there to count towards the overall Commonwealth Games table. In essence, these medals would be treated in nature as an opening balance for each competing nation to build upon during the Games. Commonwealth Games Federation President Louise Martin was reported as saying:

“We look forward to supporting”

the Indian proposal, which she saw as an “innovative proposal”. I would be grateful if, during the proceedings of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill, or earlier if possible, the Minister could enlighten the House as to whether any further progress has been made.

On Brexit and sports policy, there is much work to be done, from football clubs currently recruiting without restriction in the European Union to the potential loss of Kolpak players under the Cotonou agreement—a rule that may have far greater importance for clubs such as Saracens than the sanctions taken against them this season. Then there is the loss of article 19 of the FIFA regulations on early transfers of footballers within the European Union from club to club, the impact of EU state aid legislation and free movement of labour to the future of the Tripartite Agreement for racing, and of course the Bosman ruling.

This will prove a decisive year in forming the future of the sporting landscape in the UK. We in the House have started well, with the presence of the Secretary of State responsible for sport on these Benches. Now the hard work begins. In all, it was a comprehensive and constructive Queen's Speech, both for sport and for the future of the United Kingdom.

4.03 pm

Lord Young of Norwood Green (Lab): My Lords, I too welcome the Government's commitment to education. In a report, *The Queen's Speech 2019*, the Prime Minister says:

“we are going to level up with better education, better infrastructure and better technology. It is my abiding and unshakeable conviction that talent and genius are uniformly distributed in our country, but opportunity is not.”

I think that is a good summary of where we are now.

I will focus on apprenticeships, which will be a surprise to noble Lords. I declare an interest, because I am an apprenticeship ambassador. My starting point is to support the Government's approach to apprenticeships. The Government recognise the importance of vocational education and, somewhat ambitiously, set a target of

3 million apprenticeships. Many noble friends warned the Government that the emphasis should be on quality and the need to convince parents, teachers and pupils that apprenticeships are a valid and quality alternative career path to university. They have a number of benefits, but “earn while you learn” is probably as good as any.

Therefore, I was somewhat concerned to read an article in the *Times* on 3 January headed “Fake apprentices exploit £3bn levy”, based on a report by an education and skills think tank. I do not agree with every bit of the article. It is critical of the fact that a significant number of apprenticeships are in middle management—supervisors and so on—but, given that for many years the Chartered Management Institute has said to us that one of the limitations on improving productivity is that only one in five managers is trained, that does not seem a bad use of apprenticeships. The article also seems to dislike degree apprenticeships but, again, I do not agree with that. However, it makes a worrying point about the quality of some apprenticeships. I think that it is focusing on levels 2 and 3, and I have some worries there. Although the DfE says, “It can't be an apprenticeship unless it meets our standards”, that does not mean that that is what is taking place at ground level.

Another worry concerning the apprenticeship levy is that the number of starts in the 16 to 18 age group has fallen. Levels 2 and 3 apprenticeships are important. Not every child suits the academic approach. Surely we have to guard against increasing the number of NEETs—that is, young people not in education, employment or training—so we should not underestimate the importance of those apprenticeships.

The apprenticeship levy is a bit like the curate's egg—it is good in parts—but we have to be careful that we do not throw the baby out with the bath water. However, it needs reform and it was supposed to have a review. I would welcome it if the Minister could give us the timescale for the reforms and review. It could probably do with involving more employers than is currently the case.

The average take-up of the apprenticeship levy is only 15% and it is seen somewhat negatively by some employers as an employee tax. We need to do something about that. We need more SME non-levy pay involvement. Employers have the ability to transfer 25% of their levy to SMEs, but we need other ideas to ensure that more SMEs employ apprentices. We will not hit anywhere near the target by relying on large employers.

The good news in the Queen's Speech was the announcement of a national skills fund. There will be £3 billion over five years and another £2 billion to be spent on improving the estate, which I presume is on top of the levy. I would be interested to know exactly what will happen with the skills fund. I understand that there will be some consultation.

Many things need to be clarified in relation to vocational education. Another new qualification—the T-level—is being introduced but it is perhaps not getting the best reception at the moment.

There are a couple of points that I would like to end on. One is the question of student loans. Do we really believe that we are getting the best value for money

from them? Billions of pounds a year go into student loans but some of the degrees are, quite frankly, hardly worth the paper they are written on. That is not to denigrate higher education, because there is a lot of good-quality higher education. However, are we really spending the money effectively? Could we have more two-year degrees? I think that we could. However, if I had to focus money on one area of education, it would be on early years learning. We know that, if we do not get it right there, that is where the trouble starts.

4.08 pm

Baroness Benjamin (LD): My Lords, almost 10 years ago in this House my maiden speech highlighted my lifelong mission to ensure that children's well-being is at the heart of society's thinking. So, as we start a new decade under a new Government, it is appropriate to ask: what are we, in government and in Parliament, doing to champion children's well-being in everything we do—in every policy and initiative and every new piece of legislation? If we make children our number one priority, it will save the Treasury billions of pounds in the future because childhood lasts a lifetime. So let us put children first—it is a no-brainer.

Over the last decade we have seen childhood change rapidly, thanks to the rise of the internet, so in protecting children's well-being we must look at the new risks they are exposed to and how we can protect them. Just like the legal requirement to wear a seatbelt in a car and the ban on buying alcohol under the age of 18, the internet should now come with appropriate safeguards.

A recent report from Barnardo's—I declare an interest as a vice-president—found that cyberbullying had impacted on the mental health of 79% of children aged 11 to 15, and 78% had accessed unsuitable or harmful content through social media. This can have a devastating effect on children's physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. I welcome the Government's commitment to making the internet safer for children, but we need to see urgency.

Will the Government set out a clear timetable for the progression of the online harms White Paper, and guarantee that this will achieve effective regulation? There is overwhelming research to show that stumbling across pornography online can have a devastating impact on young children's long-term mental health. The BBFC's research shows that many children, some as young as seven, have stumbled across "aggressive" and "violent" pornography, with graphic content such as gang rape just one click away from every child online. Will the Minister explain why the Government have delayed bringing into force legislation that could have put in place an age gate to prevent children accessing this material? The BBFC says that it is good to go; it could still implement the Digital Economy Act. Section 3 is still on the statute book. Why has this Act not been brought into force to protect our young children's mental health and young, innocent minds?

The Government originally said that they planned to bring in this legislation because they calculated that 1.4 million UK children see pornography every month. Why do the Government need to wait until we have a fully "coherent" approach to addressing all harmful content online, which could take years?

The Government committed in the Queen's Speech to an online harms Bill and the concept of a duty of care, but that is just a concept. We already have practical legislation on the statute books, and the BBFC is ready to implement it immediately. The age-verification industry and the adult industry are also prepared to introduce age verification to prevent access for under-18s if the law is brought into force now. We can start tackling commercial pornographic services straightaway, then address the issue of social media in the longer term. I urge the Government—I plead with them—to take action now, to show common sense and compassion and implement the Digital Economy Act for the sake of the next generation.

Every child deserves to be protected from harm, whether on our streets or online. It is our responsibility to put in place protective factors. The Government have set out their agenda for the future of our children, which should be applauded. But what is missing? What is essential to pull everything together and give a clear indication that this Government prioritise children? The answer is a Cabinet-level Minister, with specific responsibilities for children and for the work carried out across multiple government departments to promote children's well-being. This is very different from a Secretary of State for Education or Health. It is an appointment that could transform the way government oversees children's issues. Let us do it. For the next decade, let us prioritise children, their well-being, and their futures. Let us make the UK the best place in the world for children to grow up.

4.13 pm

Viscount Colville of Culross (CB): My Lords, I declare an interest as a series producer at Raw TV making content for CNN. I echo the call of the noble Baroness, Lady Benjamin, for a rapid introduction of the online harms Bill. We need it as soon as possible.

In a digital age when internet access is now a utility, without which it is almost impossible to be part of life, internet safety has never been more important. We have heard much recently about how platforms and websites have been designed to capture users. This was reinforced for me by comments from the co-founder of Facebook, Sean Parker, who now declares himself a conscientious objector to social media. He said:

"God only knows what it's doing to our children's brains ... The thought process that went into building these applications, Facebook being the first of them ... was all about: 'How do we consume as much of your time and conscious attention as possible?'" The engineers of Facebook and other tech companies, he explained, ensured that the users of platforms receive a small dopamine hit when they give likes or make comments, creating a potentially dangerous "social-validation feedback loop". Much of the concern about the internet, reflected in the White Paper, concentrates on taking down the abusive and harmful content received by users and introducing a new complaints system. That is welcome, but the sheer volume of abuse online and the ability of the perpetrators easily to move their comments across the internet makes such a regime hard to enforce.

The design issue raised by Sean Parker must be at the heart of any new legislation. I emphasise the overriding significance of a duty of care on all tech

[VISCOUNT COLVILLE OF CULROSS]

companies to build safety designs into their digital systems, making them responsible for the safety of their users, and that would need to be enforced by a regulator. The White Paper calls for steps to ensure that products and systems are safe by design, but the Bill must ensure that this is a comprehensive approach. All sites must examine whether they encourage bad behaviour and harmful content. They must examine their navigation and discovery mechanisms to ensure that their algorithms do not prioritise fake news and outrage to generate clickbait. A regulator must ask companies to exercise a risk assessment of their systems and then to enforce implementation very thoroughly.

Part of safety by design must incorporate Sean Parker's concern about engineering potential addiction into the internet. One of my particular concerns is what is happening in the unregulated areas of online gaming. The gracious Speech has a review of the Gambling Act to include loot boxes and the use of credit cards for gambling. Loot boxes are a relatively new introduction into the gaming world. They allow users to spend money buying random and unknown selections of extra content, which, depending on what is in the box, will either enhance or diminish the player's abilities. There is evidence that huge amounts of money are being spent by young players on loot boxes and myriad other means of paying to enhance their position in the game. At the moment, the video game manufacturers refuse to put a ceiling on this spend or self-regulate their industry responsibly.

It is good that the Government are reviewing whether the loot-box aspect of video gaming should be covered by a gambling regulator, but the problem is much wider and deeper than just loot boxes. Internet and gaming addiction is baked into the design of their systems. It should be part of a new digital regulator's role to gather reliable evidence of the extent of this problem and, if necessary, to have the powers to enforce a safe design on gambling and video game companies limiting time and money spent on online, often by young people to the detriment of the rest of their lives.

On another matter, before Christmas the Chief Secretary to the Treasury confirmed that the Prime Minister had ordered a review into the sanction for non-payment of the BBC licence fee. This issue was looked only four years ago by David Perry QC, who concluded that there should be no change in the sanction regime. The recent report into public service broadcasting in the digital age by the Communications and Digital Committee, of which I have the honour of being a member, learned that the BBC's licence fee revenue is already falling dramatically on an annual basis. Surely to alter the sanction regime now would only create a further reduction in revenue.

The committee pointed out that by 2022 the revenue available to public service broadcasting in the UK would be massively dwarfed by the mainly American streaming giants coming into the market. They have a global income to outspend British channels in all genres except news. The Government stated in their evidence to the committee that

"in this changing media landscape, the purposes of PSB—to inform our understanding of the world; to stimulate knowledge and learning; to reflect UK cultural identity ... remain vitally important."

I suggest that a review of the sanction regime would damage this anchor of our country's cultural identity. Instead, the Government should follow one of the report's recommendations: to set up an independent and transparent licensing body which would decide how one of our greatest national institutions is funded. In the post-Brexit world we must do everything we can to make sure that our great public institutions prosper and act as a calling card for this country across the globe.

4.18 pm

Lord Leigh of Hurley (Con): My Lords, back to the economy.

We have been fortunate to date that the UK economy has outperformed expectations. Employment remains at a record high and unemployment, at 3.8%, is at a record low. Perhaps unsurprisingly, though, economic growth has been steady rather than spectacular, albeit better than many other countries in the EU and beyond. Given the Brexit backdrop, steady was okay but now we must raise our expectations and ambitions. While it is now right to borrow to invest in infrastructure, the debt-to-GDP target has been dropped and we are told that fiscal policy will be reviewed if debt interest exceeds 6% of national income. I would welcome the Minister's comments on whether reducing net debt is still the Government's target.

It is perhaps worth taking a moment to consider what might have been if people had not wisely returned a Conservative Government last month. Labour planned to meet economic uncertainty with policies that would have led to decline, recession, unemployment and capital flight. I am talking of course about the plans to nationalise swathes of private industry and pass the costs straight back to the taxpayer. Its plans to appropriate 10% of the equity of all public companies would have led to a complete and probably irreversible decline in our culture of enterprise. I heard this on the doorstep in the many constituencies in which I canvassed, so we have a responsibility to produce competent economic plans for the country.

I wish to draw your Lordships' attention to my disclosed interests in the register at this point, as I would like to talk about the need to support more equity investment, rather than debt.

The market has once again been tempted by so-called "cov-lite" loans, almost to epidemic levels, and banks continue to support excessive levels of corporate debt which will surely yield higher levels of insolvency, non-performing loans and, once again, bad debts on the banks' balance sheets. I have seen transactions with debt at 10 times profit levels completed by private equity houses. This is dangerous territory. Instead, we should look to do more to support equity investment. At the smaller end of the market, I very much hope that once we are outside the EU we will be able to lift restrictions on the enterprise investment scheme and venture capital trusts to support properly priced equity for growing businesses.

For listed companies, we need to look again at barriers to investing in terms of onerous corporate government requirements, disclosure and regulation. This is particularly true in the area I know, AIM. Among AIM-listed businesses, one finds some of the highest-growth-potential companies in the world. The market is unrivalled anywhere in the world, but it will not stay that way unless we continue to review and reduce regulation to make sure it is attractive for both investors and would-be listed businesses. Sadly, the number of companies on AIM is falling and it is all for the wrong reasons. The cash is out there, and the need exists. The Government must facilitate a market which functions more efficiently.

On a separate matter, I understand the manifesto pledge to “review” entrepreneurs’ relief to make sure it is not abused. However, let us recognise that this has become a foundation of our tax system that sends the clearest message to entrepreneurs who set up their business here that they can keep more of the wealth they create. Entrepreneurs I know have gone through their £10 million limit—good luck to them. Does reducing it send the right encouragement to start another business? I hope this will not be put at risk.

Finally, few issues concern business and citizens alike as much as skills and migration, and Brexit has brought this to the fore. The announcement of the national skills fund is welcome, but let us briefly consider the supply of doctors to the NHS. Can my noble friend the Health Minister confirm that, in 2019, 61% of doctors who took up jobs in the NHS had been trained abroad? These 12,000 people will not be easily replaced by the mere 1,500 extra graduates to qualify in the five new medical schools, which will not come into play until 2025. In this country, there are large numbers of willing, able and suitable domestic A-level candidates who are desperate to study medicine in the UK. What urgent steps are planned to train more doctors here?

The circumstances we find ourselves in call for a legislative agenda that projects confidence and certainty, as well as a vision for the future of our economy and our country. This exciting and promising Queen’s Speech delivers a mixture of both, but it is only the beginning. We must make clear that, yes, we will deal with Brexit, but we will also ensure that this country realises the tremendous potential we have for a future outside the EU.

4.24 pm

Lord Davies of Stamford: My Lords, the health service is obviously in crisis at the present time. The number of doctors and nurses is 10% below establishment. People are waiting more than two or three weeks to see their GP, which negates the very concept of general practice. Waiting times are increasing across the piece, and it now seems that the last Labour Government’s achievement in getting maximum waiting times down to 18 weeks is a long-distant memory.

When an organisation is in a crisis of this kind, I have always believed that the first thing to do is to decide whether what you are dealing with is temporary or perhaps contingent and is susceptible to solution by simple measures of some kind, including possibly throwing a lot of money at it or whether it is a

problem of a longer-term, structural nature, in which case you may have to rethink the way things have been done or even the existence of long-standing and much loved institutions. I fear that the present situation of the NHS falls into the second category.

There are four fundamental contradictions at the heart of the NHS. First, every time any normal organisation that produces goods or services for the public delivers a service or increases its turnover, it gets more money. In the case of the NHS, it is the other way around: every time it delivers a service, it has less money, so we start off with a major conflict of interest—a major, perverse incentive—and what we have is in fact a rationing system rather than a health service. The second and fairly obvious contradiction is this: we all know that the cost of medicine is increasing fast because of medical technology improvements, better pharmaceuticals and so forth, and that morbidity rises with longevity. The population is living longer, so we need to have health expenditure at a rate which keeps up with those two pressures. In fact, we have it constrained within public expenditure, which fiscal policy requires should be kept down as a proportion of GDP, otherwise we will never repay any of our debts. That is a very serious contradiction.

Another contradiction is that as people get richer, they naturally want to spend more money, not less, on healthcare, just as they want to spend more money on financial services or tourism and less of their income on potatoes or bread. That is known in technical terms as income elasticity of demand for healthcare services, and is considerably more than unity. We are artificially frustrating and holding back people’s desire to spend more money on healthcare by channelling all the expenditure through the health service and the public expenditure system, as we do at present. That is not a sensible thing to be doing for the country.

Finally, there seem to be a lot of perverse incentives in the system but very few genuine, positive incentives. I believe that you could get considerable increases in productivity and output in the primary sector—in general practice—by remunerating doctors on a fee-per-service basis. I suggest that anybody who does not like that revolutionary suggestion spends a few hours of their time going into a general practice, declaring symptoms which obviously need medical attention and noting down how long it takes to see the doctor and what sort of reception one gets anyway by going into that surgery. Then they should get hold of a dog, go to the nearest vet and compare the reception they get there and the time they wait for it to be treated. That would be an instructive experiment; I have done it myself.

One could develop many other ideas if one had time. There are various mechanisms through which we could fund healthcare outside the public expenditure system. It is done very effectively on the continent—in France, Germany, the Netherlands and so forth—by health funds. There are something like 1,200 Krankenkassen in Germany; in France there is one large organisation, the Sécurité sociale. Of course, the continentals have 70 years’ experience of a system which is universal and compulsory. It covers everybody, as the health system does in this country, and at the same time, it has

[LORD DAVIES OF STAMFORD]

considerable popular support in those countries. I have to say that the health outcomes in those countries are considerably better in survival rates for cancer, cardiac victims, stroke victims and so forth.

It is time to look around at ideas of that sort, particularly ideas which have been tested and de-risked over time. We need to be brave enough to go in for some original thinking here. We owe it to future generations to make sure we do not have a health service that goes from one crisis to another, and simply repeats history indefinitely. That would not at all be a responsible attitude for our generation to have towards this priceless asset, which looks after the health of the nation.

4.29 pm

Baroness Rock (Con): My Lords, this Queen's Speech is our first and best chance to set out what kind of country we are going to be outside the European Union. It is our chance to remind investors, businesses, workers and trade partners that what is true now of Britain—open, innovative, creative and productive—will continue to be true. It is our chance to capitalise on what opportunities may come from our new-found freedoms.

Austerity was essential to restore investor confidence, but our fiscal position remains vulnerable. That means that if we are going to increase borrowing and add to our debt, it must be in areas that will increase productivity and boost growth. I am encouraged therefore by many of the measures in the gracious Speech.

I am fortunate to have been a member of this House's Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence and I am currently a board member of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation. I say "fortunate" because I feel that I have glimpsed the future of what will drive our economy: AI and data. These opportunities transcend Brexit, this fiscal cycle and even this Government. We need to invest in our future if we are to capitalise and boost productivity, growth and prosperity.

There are many aspects to productivity, but those to which I want to draw attention are R&D, skills and infrastructure. We cannot go too far wrong if we increase our investment in research. I am proud that, in the midst of spending cuts in the past two Parliaments, the Conservative Government protected the science budget. Similarly, we have long had a tax regime that encourages investment in R&D, so I am pleased that the gracious Speech pledges to increase the threshold for R&D tax credits to 13%. This is an important signal. We also need to do more to build on the early work of the industrial strategy, which places AI and data at its heart.

We have all the assets in the UK to realise this opportunity. We have world-class universities, a thriving tech sector and a deep pool of venture capital, so I commend the work of initiatives such as Oxford Sciences Innovation which bring all these actors together to ensure that we convert university research into commercial opportunity. We need to see more like this, and more from the Government's catapult centres which focus on technology transfer.

As important as research are skills. My main takeaway from my work on AI and data is that we need a stronger pipeline of talent domestically, starting in our schools, and through our migration system so that we attract top talent. We have an acute skills shortage in these emerging professions, especially among women, which is so important to address if we are to avoid gender bias in the way codes and algorithms are written, as the noble Lord, Lord Clement-Jones, eloquently mentioned. The gracious Speech refers to the new £3 billion national skills fund, and the manifesto stresses that some of it will be set aside for "strategic investment in skills". Perhaps the Minister will clarify that AI, data and other associated technology will be included in this strategic investment, essential as they are for our future productivity and prosperity. This needs to start in schools, but it should also look at retraining and continuous professional development.

The final piece of the productivity jigsaw is infrastructure. The gracious Speech promises a new national infrastructure strategy at the time of the next Budget, so we will have to wait and see what this entails, but I am pleased that what emphasis we have seen so far has been on digital—namely, broadband and digital infrastructure—as well as on the more prosaic targets for new housebuilding and what I am sure will be a strong pipeline of roads, bridges and new renewable energy capacity.

It is high time we addressed our failing productivity, and if we have to borrow more to do so, then so be it. We have to provide reassurance to the markets of course, but we have also to provide something visionary. A UK that invests in infrastructure, research and human capital is a country that investors will continue to commit to, skilled workers will flock to and entrepreneurs will start companies in. This kind of borrowing might even pay for itself.

4.35 pm

Lord Skidelsky (CB): My Lords, I think I am the only macroeconomist contributing to this debate, which is perhaps rather odd as it is a debate on economic affairs. As instructive and important as the other contributions have been, I want to talk about economic policy, because unless the economy works a lot better than it has in the last 10 years, none of the spending pledges, to be quite honest, will be worth the paper that they are written on, and how well it works will largely depend on economic policy.

The good news is that fiscal policy is back. The gracious Speech said:

"My Government will invest in the country's public services ... My Government will prioritise investment in infrastructure and world-leading science research and skills".

That is good. Governments everywhere have started to inch back to fiscal policy. Retiring ECB chairman, Mario Draghi, admitted that monetary policy

"needs help from fiscal policy."

Evidently the Chancellor agrees. That agreement is indicated by the figures of extra spending that he promises over the next five years. Austerity is over.

Why the turnabout? First is the realisation that monetary policy cannot deliver the required boost to spending. We are told that central banks have run out

of ammunition. The truth is that they never had enough ammunition to bring a sick economy back to health. The reason was the liquidity trap: most of the extra money pumped out by central banks simply was not spent on the real economy, it got locked up in financial assets.

Second is the realisation that fiscal policy was pointing the wrong way. There is a lot of myth-making going on here. It is claimed that, thanks to years of austerity, the Chancellor now has the “fiscal space” to boost investment, but the logic of that is all wrong. Trying to balance the budget when the economy was depleted did enormous damage to millions of people; making the economy smaller made the budget more difficult to balance. The result of that has been missed targets, less investment and rising national debt. To say that the nation had to sacrifice itself for 10 years in order to enable the Government to spend more on the health service or infrastructure now is simply terrible fraud. There has been no *mea culpa* from the perpetrator of that fraud: George Osborne.

The Government promise to increase spending while maintaining the sustainability of the public finances. It is just possible that the Chancellor will meet his much-revised fiscal targets; it really depends what happens to the economy, and most people are expecting a recession. If or when that happens, the Chancellor will have to talk about “headwinds” rather than “headroom”.

Now that fiscal policy is back in fashion, can we do better than the current hit-and-miss strategy? Former Fed chairmen Bernard Bernanke and Janet Yellen have called for more powerful automatic stabilisers. It is a slightly technical phrase but, in this connection, I urge the Government to seriously consider a public sector job guarantee. Its purpose would be to balance fluctuations in private sector employment in a non-discretionary way. The reservoir of public sector jobs would deplete or fill up automatically as the economy waxed or waned. Not only would this be a much more powerful automatic stabiliser than trying to balance the economy by paying out more on unemployment benefits, but it would remove the discretionary element from tax and spending policies that did so much to discredit fiscal policy in the past.

Finally, I am encouraged by the promise in the gracious Speech to give communities more control over how investment is spent, so that they can decide what is best for themselves. John Maynard Keynes long ago emphasised the importance of rightly distributed demand—that is, investment channelled to underheating, not overheating regions. The Government's pledge to prioritise investment in poorer regions will give communities more control over how money is spent. It would also dovetail neatly into a job guarantee programme.

It would be tragic if the second coming of fiscal policy were to be wrecked by the same inattention to the need for a fiscal constitution as the last one. As Paul Johnson, director of the IFS, recently said:

“The trouble is that setting supposedly binding fiscal rules, missing them, abandoning them and replacing them with something new”

is not a fiscal constitution, it is back to the bad old days of the political business cycle: we must do better than that this time.

4.40 pm

Lord Flight (Con): My Lords, I refer to my interests in the register. This is, to my mind, an excellent document and the Government are to be congratulated on getting it out so promptly. I strongly agree with the points on education and productivity made by the noble Lord, Lord Griffiths, and the noble Baroness, Lady Bull. The one problem I see with the document is that I cannot see that it can all be legislated within a single Parliament—I reckon about 50 pieces of legislation will be required—so it is appropriate to consider which are the most important proposals.

A key objective must be to improve our infrastructure, boost productivity and level up opportunities across the country. Here, the political message is overwhelming. The Conservatives have succeeded in attracting major political support in the Midlands and the north of England. This needs to be rewarded, cemented and sustained by boosting the economies in these areas and by increased public spending. Fortunately, some element of economic catch-up is starting to happen. I note that SMEs have been doing better in the north than in the south in recent months. The national infrastructure strategy will be important to help carry all this forward. I am also a supporter of the proposed national security and investment Bill to strengthen the Government's powers to investigate and intervene in business transactions—for example, takeovers and mergers. Reform of business rates to protect high streets is also well overdue.

The national infrastructure strategy, to be published alongside the first Budget, will be fundamental to sustaining improved economic growth. It will set out the Government's long-term ambitions across all areas of economic infrastructure, including transport, digital infrastructure and infrastructure finance and delivery. It has two key aims: to unleash Britain's economic potential by levelling up and connecting every part of the country; and to address the critical challenges posed by climate change. It is crucial to exploit the coming revolution in digital technology. Broadband legislation will also be needed to support the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband across the UK, to achieve national coverage as soon as possible and to make it easier for telecoms to install broadband infrastructure in blocks of flats. All new homes will be required to be built with reliable and fast internet.

Minimum service railway legislation is proposed to reduce the disruption caused to the public by rail strikes and, following the excellent report of the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, it looks to me as though HS2 is dead—and it should be dead. A Midlands hub to improve services around Birmingham and the Midlands, northern powerhouse rail and a programme of significant upgrading of urban commuter and regional services outside London look to me much better value than HS2.

Both politically and economically, I perceive parallels between the Disraeli Administration and the Boris Government. Disraeli was successful in securing the

[LORD FLIGHT]

votes and political support of the newly industrialised Midlands and north; his Government also introduced major political and economic reforms, governing in the national interest. Neither Disraeli nor Boris is a focused economist, but both appreciate the importance of selecting good people to lead reforms.

I am concerned that Boris may have overcommitted on increased NHS, police and education spending, but let us hope that the figures are manageable. The problem with free goods is that demand is limitless and the main problem with the NHS is its management. Nor do I believe that the public would support major increases in taxation.

There are also no apparent proposals to reduce the level of stamp duty hitting the property market in London and the south-east and, in fact, reducing potential stamp duty revenues. I also believe that it would be counterproductive to seek to outlaw pre-packs, as they provide a speedy way of sorting out businesses that have got into trouble.

The key missing commitment is to reduce and rationalise the excessive levels of regulation, particularly in the financial services market, which are now costing a fortune and having a significant drag on productivity. In many respects, they achieve little or nothing. The noble Baroness, Lady Neville-Rolfe, made essentially the same point; it is our biggest industry, and the productivity figures from the last 10 years, as the regulatory industry has taken grasp, tell the story. It needs addressing.

4.45 pm

Lord Hendy (Lab): My Lords, I will make two points on the proposed employment Bill and three on the proposed restrictions on the right to strike on the railways. I declare an interest as having spent 40 years in practice at the Bar, doing many cases for trade unions and their members.

First, the employment Bill is said to “protect and enhance workers’ rights as the UK leaves the EU, making Britain the best place in the world to work”, a phrase repeated by the Minister in opening this debate. Will the employment Bill guarantee full non-regression of existing EU-derived workers’ rights and dynamic alignment with any future improvements to EU workers’ rights? I understood that was the Conservative Party’s position in the recent election; its manifesto states that the UK’s future relationship with the EU will

“Raise standards in areas like workers’ rights”.

If either protection is denied to Britain’s 32.7 million workers then, by definition, they will enjoy fewer rights in the future than their European counterparts. That will refute the promise to make Britain the best place in the world to work and make clear the nature of the Government’s commitment to those working-class voters who lent them their votes in the last election.

Secondly, there is the Oliver Twist clause. The employment Bill proposes to introduce a right “for all workers to request a more predictable contract”.

While a right to make a request might have afforded Oliver Twist some comfort in the workhouse, it will be purely rhetorical in the modern workplace. What is

required here is a correlative duty on the part of the employer to concede the more predictable contract sought, so far as is reasonably practicable. If there is no agreement, the matter must be determined by an employment tribunal. I trust that the proposed Bill will contain such a provision to give some content to an otherwise empty right.

What is more remarkable about this Oliver Twist provision is the glaring omission of any reference to the EU directive on transparent and predictable working conditions which came into effect last summer. The directive is precisely on point, yet mention of it is omitted. Why? Can it be that the Government have decided that, far from raising standards in areas such as workers’ rights, their intention is to deny British workers these modest EU rights even before Brexit is finalised?

I turn to the proposal to further restrict the right to strike. Only four years ago, the Trade Union Act 2016 added further obstacles to strike action in relation to “important public services”, which included passenger railway services. Yet now railway workers, successors in title to those who were penalised in the Taff Vale judgment in 1901, face yet more restrictions on their right to strike, on the footing that they are engaged in an essential public service—uniquely, it seems, since no other workers have been so designated.

I will add three points to those made by my noble friend Lord Griffiths of Burry Port this morning. First, the International Labour Organization has made it clear that railways are not an essential public service in international labour law, so it is illegitimate to restrict the right to industrial action on that ground. This proposition has recently been adopted as binding by the European Court of Human Rights in *Ognevenko v Russia*, which reiterated that the right to strike is protected by Article 11 of the convention in a case which concerned a ban on strikes on the Russian railways. The Government will have to think carefully whether the certificate of conformity with the convention can be given to this legislation, unless, having exited the EU, they propose to repeal the Human Rights Act and de-ratify the European convention. Is that their intention?

Secondly, the proposal is for a minimum service agreement to establish what is required. How do the Government envisage such agreement being reached? In circumstances where the union and the employer have failed to agree the underlying industrial dispute, what chance is there of agreeing a minimum service provision during a strike? Will the Government specify a disputes procedure—perhaps concluding in binding arbitration—if the parties fail to agree the minimum service agreement? If the Government believe that the parties can be induced to reach a minimum service agreement, why not provide such an inducement to resolve the industrial dispute?

4.51 pm

Baroness Walmsley (LD): My Lords, I thank the Minister and the other winders for graciously giving me permission to speak, even though I may have to leave before the end of the debate because of a health issue concerning my husband. I wish to speak on health.

Our NHS is a precious national asset, which comes right at the top of most people's priorities, and rightly so. In the gracious Speech, the Government promised a number of measures on health. I welcome the commitment to look at legislation proposed by NHS England to facilitate delivery of the long-term plan, and I look forward to working with the Government to implement it. However, I do not believe that the Government were addressing the right priorities when they promised to build 40 new hospitals over 10 years. The fact is that our hospitals are full, and one might think that a solution to that problem might be to build some more. But would it not be better to look at why the hospitals are so full and do something about it. The main problem lies at both ends of the throughput. Many people remaining in hospital beds would be better off in social care. This results in dangerously high levels of bed occupancy, with vulnerable patients having to wait for 24 hours in A&E for a bed on a ward. Yet we have been waiting years for the Green Paper on social care, and now all the Government can propose is cross-party talks. Fine—but when will we get a remit, a format and a timetable, and why not start with Dilnot and the report of the committee of the noble Lord, Lord Forsyth? We urgently need a courageous solution which is fair to all patients and all generations. It must address the predicament of those suffering from that distressing condition Alzheimer's disease, who face on average 15% higher care costs than other patients. A way must be found to spread the costs across the whole of society.

At the other end of the throughput is primary care. We are promised 6,000 more GPs but the last Conservative Administration did not hit the previous target. At the same time we disadvantage ourselves when recruiting doctors and nurses from other EU countries by leaving the EU. Speeding up visa applications and reducing fees will not help when people still have to pay thousands of pounds to bring their families and to use the very NHS for which they are being recruited. Primary care is under great pressure and nowhere near enough capital is being allocated to the facilities needed to attract GPs. Perhaps new local health centres do not make such good headlines as 40 new hospitals. What are the Government's plans to invest in modern primary care facilities?

In December, A&E hit its worst-ever waiting times because people cannot get to see a GP. Patients who really need hospital treatment wait in ambulances outside, like the lady in my village who died of sepsis having waited for hours outside the hospital.

That brings me to staffing levels. The Government are relying on retaining 19,000 nurses who might otherwise have left to deliver their promise of 50,000 more, but they need to make staying on much more attractive. That means much better working conditions and less need for, for example, staying on for an extra two hours at the end of a 12-hour shift because no one is there to take over.

Finally, I turn to gambling addiction, a preventable mental health issue that is growing. More than 400,000 people in England are addicted to gambling, and hospital admissions have more than doubled in the past 12 months, while the age of sufferers is getting

younger. I am pleased that 14 new treatment clinics are planned by 2024 but we need to do more now to prevent the problem while we treat those affected. Will the review of the Gambling Act seek to tighten the regulation of companies that promote gambling, which take more than £14 billion a year from the punters, and to restrict the way that they market their services, especially to young people?

We allow far too much gambling advertising. Companies would not spend £1.5 billion a year on this if it did not result in more gambling. We realised long ago that advertising smoking encouraged people to do something that damaged their health and that of others, so we banned it. We should do the same for adverts that endanger the mental health of susceptible people and bring misery to their families. Will the review of the Gambling Act seek to reverse the normalisation of gambling?

4.56 pm

Lord Northbrook (Con): My Lords, in short, the election result will boost the UK economy in the short term as the major uncertainty about an extreme Labour Administration has been removed for the next five years. Anecdotally, I am already hearing about an upturn in financial transactions, especially in the private equity sector, and a revival of London residential property market transactions. Many of these deals had been put on ice ahead of the election.

However, a cloud still hangs over the UK with regard to the trading situation with the EU after Brexit. The idea that we can conclude a comprehensive trade deal by December of this year seems implausible. This means instead one of several scenarios: either we crash out without a deal, which would not be good news for the UK economy, or there is a fudge and we will have a deal in outline only, with the EU granting us an extension to sort out details. The third, and probably least likely, scenario is that we just have to ask for an extension to the transition period.

Overall, I am most concerned about the City of London losing out, as well as motor manufacturing and other just-in-time parts of the manufacturing economy, together with the food industry. According to the City of London Corporation, the City produced £75 billion of tax revenues for the Government in 2018—more than 10% of tax receipts for the year. According to the House of Commons Library, this represented 6.9% of total economic output for the year. So far, I have not heard about any likelihood of a deal with the EU with regard to financial services. This will leave a big hole in government finances. With regard to car manufacturing, hopefully there will be some agreement because, without a deal, the EU as well as the UK would be affected. With regard to the food industry, delays at ports due to extra paperwork would cause serious problems, particularly in the fresh food sector.

The other area that causes concern—I refer to my entry in the register of interests—is the rural economy. Small livestock and hill farmers will struggle to survive without some sort of government assistance. Hopefully, this will be taken into account in the agriculture Bill. I

[LORD NORTHBROOK]

am also concerned about the possibility of penal tariffs for UK farmers' exports if we crash out without a deal.

In the rest of the brief time available, I will touch on a few tax and financial matters. Business rates clearly need to be reduced, as the high street is suffering at the expense of the likes of Amazon. Its warehouses, for instance, should have to pay more. The Government should not lose their nerve in raising the threshold for higher rates of income tax and the top rate should be cut to 40% from 45%, which would only return it to the rate under the Blair Government. On pensions, the pensions Bill should include measures to weed out unscrupulous providers approved by HMRC without due diligence which have caused misery for those who took advantage of pension freedoms to invest their lump sum with these supposedly bona fide firms.

It is clear that the economy in the north needs boosting, but I am not convinced by the mixed performance of LEPs. Anecdotally, some are too weighed down by local politics or do not have enough business experience on board—although I have heard some good reports in other regions. My preference would be for the Government to fund sensible infrastructure projects and encourage private companies through tax breaks in certain geographical areas. For me, though, the jury is still out on the cost/benefit of HS2.

Finally, on a separate note, and again drawing attention to my interests in the register, I would voice concern about the renters reform Bill. While it is a totally laudable concept to crack down on rogue landlords, I am concerned about the abolition of Section 21, because it tilts the balance too much in favour of the vexatious tenant. Getting rid of tenants at fault under Section 8 is costly and time consuming. While I acknowledge that short-term eviction is undesirable, there can be cases when it is necessary, and, without it, landlords could be saddled with difficulty for a long time. So the right balance needs to be struck and the concerns of landlords listened to.

Overall, I welcome the return of a Conservative Government and, hopefully, the economic stability they will bring over the next five years.

5.01 pm

Baroness Massey of Darwen (Lab): My Lords, I shall speak today about the importance of support for the mental health of children: that is, those aged up to 18, and for their parents. I shall focus in particular on teenagers and the significance of brain development. Many of us have had teenage children and, indeed, we ourselves were teenagers once, albeit some time ago. I taught teenagers for many years and I survived them and loved them. We know about the turbulence of the teen years, which are not necessarily turbulent but are often so. However, for some young people and parents, they are more than turbulent because they can be traumatic and dangerous, with mental health crises caused by a variety of factors, some internal and personal such as stress, and some external such as poverty, abuse and cruelty, which can create challenges.

Thankfully, over recent years a great deal of emphasis has been put on mental health and initiatives such as consulting children and other service users, as well as

improving mental health care, but the situation is now urgent. The Royal College of Psychiatrists points out worrying facts. Since 2010, the number of children and young people being admitted to A&E and diagnosed with a psychiatric condition has increased by 330%. That figure is astronomical and calls for measures to prevent and treat such disorders. Prevention is of the utmost importance. It is not just about money; it is also about thoughtful strategies.

I am aware that in the NHS long term plan there is the intention to put mental and physical health on an equal footing by guaranteeing that the proportion of the NHS budget spent on mental health increases each year until parity is reached. This will take time, but I suggest that we have a crisis that needs urgent attention.

I want to talk briefly about the potential support to help prevent or alleviate mental health problems in teenagers. Much is now emerging about the importance of understanding how the teenage brain develops and of the impact of such development on behaviour in teens such as risk-taking, stress and confusion. The distinguished psychologist Dr John Coleman has produced a useful booklet for adults and teens, and I read it again the other day. He emphasises that teenagers are experiencing major upheavals, perhaps more so now due to external influences such as worry about the future of the world, online activity and stress in schools.

Meanwhile, dramatic readjustments in the brain are going on in the pre-frontal cortex and the amygdala, the first associated with thinking, planning and problem solving and the second with emotion, sensation and arousal. This enormous readjustment can be distressing. Dr Coleman suggests that adults can help teenagers address uncertainties by providing routines, such as encouraging good sleep patterns by limiting use of digital devices before bedtime, learning to talk constructively with teens and providing a rich environment with a wide variety of activities. Adults can learn how their own negative behaviour might affect their children. I wish this booklet had been available to me, and I wish it were available now to every parent, teacher and adult dealing with teenagers.

There is so little comfort for parents, who are often desperate to help their children. There can be such delays in getting help. I have met parents so desperate that they have resorted to private consultations they can ill afford because of the waiting lists in child and adolescent health services.

Can the Minister take away with him and share with other government departments the notion of being creative in empowering parents, carers and others to help and support teenagers to understand and deal with the confusion of adolescence? Can he also suggest that strategies to improve the resilience of young people, such as programmes in schools, are given high importance and high priority, with training for teachers and parents?

I return to the horrendous statistic I quoted at the beginning, the increase of 330% in the last 10 years of children and young people being admitted to A&E with a psychiatric condition. Will the Government act with imagination and firmness?

5.06 pm

Lord Addington (LD): My Lords, I return to a subject raised by only one speaker in front of me: sport. I am afraid I have drawn the short straw. The noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, is not in his place at the moment, but he spoke about the importance of sport and various aspects of it.

If we are moving sport from DCMS back to Education, it will not make that much difference because, as displayed by my noble friend Lord Clement-Jones and his wonderful 12-point plan, it is a department that is now increasingly dominated by the online world. What do you do with it and where do you move it? It does not really matter that much, as long as you give it some priority. We have always called for it to have its own department, but everybody calls for their subject to have its own department in Westminster, and we do not usually get it.

The important driving factor behind it has been the National Lottery, which has given it some real oomph and spending power. This meant that we were capable of achieving the Olympics. It means that we have grass-roots backing and that our infrastructure for grass-roots sports is a little better than it was, and not so dependent on the grass-roots fundraising that traditionally has been there.

What are we going to do to back this up and guarantee that it maintains this funding? At the moment, the entire infrastructure of the National Lottery is, to a degree, under threat from the rise of the other two lotteries, the Health Lottery and the Postcode Lottery. They may be doing good work and other wonderful things, but they are not that guarantee of funding. The Postcode Lottery is a very slick organisation. I commend to you its correct use of advertising in the *House* magazine—the recent copy, with all the new MPs in it. Put your advertising in there. Well done, somebody knows their job.

Are we going to guarantee this body of funding going through? It helps just about everything in the sporting world. We must make sure it is always there as something to fall back on. You know how to apply, and it is quicker, easier and more efficient than hunting down sponsorship. Can we make sure that it is there? If we are going to allow a properly free market and competition in lotteries, I absolutely recommend that we make sure that if they achieve a certain degree of success, they inherit with that success a degree of responsibility. It should not be that difficult: “Great, you have become the major lottery player in the country. You have to make sure the Olympic programme has support.” That would be a reasonable thing to call for.

This goes down a long way, because one of the other things I will talk about is at the other end of the sporting spectrum: mixed-ability sport. Something I came across totally by accident through the parliamentary rugby team was mixed-ability rugby. That is, you adapt the rules to allow people with a learning disability or cerebral palsy to take part alongside you. You adapt your game. You have a social activity, which is good for the club. You have build-up. You get everybody joining in—an extra string to your bow. This has been done at international competition level, supported by

the lottery and the Erasmus programme. The Government must come in if things are being changed here, to guarantee these organisations a backbone of support. The same could be said of the Commonwealth Games project, which we are apparently going to get through eventually. We must ensure that a success of decade's standing continues. If we are going to change it, we must guarantee that support.

Sport is only one aspect that has been changed for this; the arts and other projects also come in. But can we ensure that this great success, probably the greatest success of John Major's premiership, is continued? If we allow it to wither on the vine, we will end up making ourselves that little bit poorer at every level.

5.10 pm

The Earl of Arran (Con): My Lords, my Christmas was increasingly dominated by the disruption, noise and trails of destruction caused by an army of grandchildren. My reaction to this was, of course, an attempt at tolerance and compassion. It was but an attempt, but it did make me reflect on what I could do for them to ensure that they are not just occasional visitors but have every reason to enjoy a bright and happy future in my home county of Devon. Successive Governments have failed to provide any meaningful policies to create abundant opportunities in our rural communities in order to ensure that those we are raising have good reason to want to remain and spend their lives building successful careers there.

The election result provides a platform for tackling policies we have sidestepped for the last 10 years. I passionately believe that we have a duty to lead on this challenge. The virtual depopulation from rural communities of young people continues at an alarming rate. By 2050, over two-thirds of the world's population will be living in towns and cities. There are, of course, various genuine and perceived advantages and disadvantages which may attract people—including youth—to live in rural areas. These include, on the one hand, more space, less pollution and closer proximity to nature. On the other hand, the reality is that there are fewer local education or job opportunities or choices, difficulties in accessing public services, including transportation, healthcare and broadband, a lack of cultural and social venues for leisure, significantly higher costs of living and, critically, chronic shortages of low-cost, affordable and first-time-buyer accommodation.

Is it surprising, therefore, that one of the most pressing issues for the sustainability of rural communities is the exodus of young people? Their migration from rural to urban areas is often an inevitable choice, as they search for better education and employment opportunities, and an enhanced quality of life. The depopulation of rural areas further erodes the social and economic fabric of these communities, while at the same time increasing the strain on overcrowded urban spaces.

Devon is a classic illustration of the problem. It has a diverse community, based on rural roots, with a social and economic environment which is both distinctive and challenging. Income levels tend to be lower and there is a greater incidence of poverty. Living costs are

[THE EARL OF ARRAN]

higher. Income is dependent on the ability to commute. There is a higher incidence of social exclusion, and there is restricted access to services such as rural health, and to affordable housing. Too often, self-employment is the only option.

In short, there exists a vicious cycle, where rural residents are drawn to urban centres for employment and rural businesses are forced to turn to the nearest town or city for a larger, more qualified labour pool. How therefore can we ensure that a central aim of the Government's youth policy is to ensure that young people enjoy the same opportunities, benefits, access to services and rights, regardless of where they live? Are there any early wins for these problems?

Many believe that digital will save and indeed enhance rural businesses and communities, offsetting the difficulties of transport and access. There is no doubt that rural businesses should see digital as critical to their futures, yet more than half of rural businesses report that they cannot find staff with appropriate digital skills. However, the Prime Minister has promised that this will change, so help is on the way. We shall see.

My own agenda for Devon to resolve these issues would therefore include the following initiatives: enabling access to mobile and online services; raising the level of digital skills in SMEs; improved transport across rural areas; and tackling the shameful lack of affordable housing. My point is this: as concrete steals across the western world, currently at the alarming rate of 11% every 10 years, we must preserve and maintain our rural communities and, essentially, make employment available to those who live and work there. All this becomes increasingly pressing and so important in the interests of a kingdom united in equal opportunity for both town and country.

5.15 pm

Lord Kakkar (CB): My Lords, I thank the Minister for the very thoughtful way in which she introduced this broadly based debate. She was able to reaffirm Her Majesty's Government's commitment to public services—none more than our National Health Service. She also demonstrated the very important government commitment to the area of science and innovation. In so doing, I remind noble Lords of my own registered interests, and in particular a new registration as chairman of the King's Fund.

The issue of the provision of healthcare is critical to every citizen in our country. Not only is the provision of healthcare vital in terms of protecting our fellow citizens; it is critically important in ensuring that we have a healthy population who are able to contribute to the economy, and of course in ensuring that the vital investment that is made in the National Health Service and in the broader ecosystem that surrounds our National Health Service can be used to drive an important element of our economy: life sciences.

In the gracious Speech, Her Majesty's Government outlined a number of important commitments to strengthen the provision of healthcare in our country in this coming Parliament, including: the area of the workforce, in terms of enhanced training, and the capacity to attract trained professionals from overseas

to work and support our NHS through the provision of a new visa scheme; ensuring and enhancing patient safety through the introduction of a new investigatory mechanism, which needs to be thoughtfully introduced so as not to cut across the important regulators and the multiple mechanisms for investigation that already exist when there has been a mishap in the delivery of healthcare and where lessons need to be learned; and the commitment to enshrine in law the additional funding that is critically required to deliver the sustainability of our NHS.

I turn to two other important issues highlighted in the gracious Speech. The first is the capacity for integrated care, which will be critical if the additional funding provided is to be used in an appropriate way that will have a meaningful impact. Integrated care is of course the integration of primary with specialist care, the integration of care for physical and mental health, and the integration across the health and social care boundaries.

Her Majesty's Government have received from NHS bodies some suggestions on legislative change that may be required to ensure that they can mobilise themselves effectively to deliver this important integrated care agenda. When do the Government propose to respond to suggestions that NHS England and NHS Improvement be merged, and that providers and commissioners of healthcare at a local level may form joint decision committees able to ensure a better integration of care, rather than having to have major legislative change to create new statutory bodies? It is critically important that, ahead of determining how this additional investment in the health service is to be spent, the structures in which the money will be applied are properly defined and the Government are absolutely content that they are fit for purpose to deliver the important objectives necessary for the long-term sustainability of the NHS.

It is also critically important to be clear that the voluntary joint decision-making committees, between commissioners and providers at local level, will be of sufficient authority to drive the changes in the delivery of care and working practices, and the construction of care environments, that will be necessary to ensure the successful application of this additional funding.

I turn finally to the question of innovation. Once again, Her Majesty's Government, through the high-risk science fund—of which life sciences might represent an important component—seeks to demonstrate a broader commitment to the life sciences sector in our economy. The publication of the industrial strategy recognises the important contribution life sciences make to our economy—£74 billion per annum—and the 250,000 of our fellow citizens who are employed in the life sciences industry, to such great effect.

An important question remains about how that industry will interact in undertaking clinical research. The Government are committed to ensuring that our life sciences and healthcare economy become the most advanced and innovative in clinical research and the evaluation of innovation. How do the Government propose to do that in the context of still being able to participate effectively in the new clinical trials regulations that will exist for the rest of the health economy in Europe?

5.21 pm

Baroness Redfern (Con): My Lords, it is a privilege to respond to the humble Address. It is ambitious to put the NHS at the heart of this legislative programme. As expressed within the gracious Speech, it is predicated on a strong, dynamic economy, so that the UK can develop more opportunities that will derive from having a new global trade policy. In a united country with renewed vigour, businesses will meet these challenges while experiencing new opportunities, and the Government will support many of our fledgling companies that will, in the future, forge inward investment.

Particularly welcome is universal coverage of broadband and digital infrastructure in all areas of the country. That is much needed, so that all will have equal access and we can make a strong pitch for the UK being the best place to invest and do business. I welcome the £100 billion to transform UK infrastructure, particularly in the north, where there has been underfunding for far too long. Businesses, wherever they are, need premises and good connectivity.

One specific business I would like to mention is British Steel in Scunthorpe. Making steel is part of our industrial heritage but, to meet our ability to produce the very best steel and be competitive, we ask for a level playing field with government support to reduce energy tariffs and rates. Steel-making is a vital part of Scunthorpe's working life, with a skilled work force of 4,000, assisted by another 20,000 in the supply chain. All face an uncertain future. This week, Chinese business leaders are to present a business plan to revive the steel plant, so I hope for a successful outcome in 2020.

At last, we are to see more support for our ailing high streets and town centres, not forgetting our villages, where support is to be welcomed for our rural post offices, which serve the public so well. There was an announcement of the first 14 high streets that are to receive £1 billion in funding to improve the UK retail sector, improve our shopping experience and complement the online sector. However, rates must be attributed and fair. It is also crucial to ensure that employees' rights are protected and enhanced post Brexit, and to train and upskill our workforce.

The NHS is being promised more doctors, nurses and primary care professionals, and I particularly welcome that. We have debated the future of our NHS many times and this multiyear funding is, for the first time, being enshrined into law, with cross-party consensus to focus on a long-term solution for social care to provide dignity, security and, most importantly, the quality people deserve, and to make our NHS even safer for patients.

There is a requirement, too, for faster access to diagnosis. The NHS must incorporate a seamless service and remove inherent bureaucracy. Better communication and dynamic, driven management will be key in helping to drive those changes through, making life easier for staff. They need a 21st-century IT system which is fully integrated, with all areas of health talking to each other.

There is a need to reduce bureaucracy and make it easier for hospitals to manufacture and trial innovative medicines, thus helping to drive our global life sciences

industries, where we lead the world. New laws will be designed to help those industries to be internationally competitive. A process for the approval of drugs and devices will minimise the risks for national pharmaceutical companies if they choose to test and roll out new inventions elsewhere.

My noble friend Lady Blackwood alluded to relatives visiting patients. I am sure that the Government's programme to remove hospital parking charges comes as a relief to those in greatest need. The commitment to enshrine in law an NHS multiyear funding settlement, with £33 billion in cash terms by 2023-24, is a first.

Finally, a strong, dynamic and invigorating economy is the foundation. It will be the platform, in particular, for a strong, 21st-century NHS. So we begin a new chapter in driving real changes, wherever we live and work.

5.25 pm

Lord Hussain (LD): My Lords, I understand that my contribution to the gracious Speech debate would have been more relevant to last Tuesday's session, but unfortunately I was not able to get my name on to the speakers' list in time, due to technical reasons—hence I take the opportunity to address your Lordships now.

As a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, I congratulate the UK Government on their global leadership position and support for family planning and sexual and reproductive health and rights. A comprehensive approach to SRHR is necessary if women and girls are to be truly able to choose for themselves. The neglected areas of safe abortion, adolescents' SRHR, GBV and infertility must be at the forefront.

If no one is to be left behind, it is imperative that DfID promotes and protects the human rights of all persons who choose to access comprehensive SRHR, placing an emphasis on

“reaching those furthest behind first”,

as stated in the 2030 SDG agenda. That includes, for example, older people and persons with disabilities, whose SRHR are often neglected.

I had the opportunity to attend the Nairobi summit in November 2019, marking the ICPD25. The forward-looking Nairobi statement was formulated after six months of global consultations, led by the ICPD25 steering committee, with hundreds of organisations and thousands of people involved.

Despite remarkable progress over the past 25 years, the promise of the ICPD Programme of Action remains a distant reality for millions of people across the world. Universal access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health information, education and services, as defined in the ICPD Programme of Action and the *Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development*, has not been achieved. The unfinished business of the ICPD Programme of Action must be realised for girls' and women's empowerment, to achieve gender equality and to reach the ambitious SDGs by 2030.

[LORD HUSSAIN]

Our world has, in many ways, profoundly changed over the last 25 years. Many new issues are influencing the field of population and development, including climate change, growing inequalities and exclusion within and between countries, migration, the youth bulge and the prospects of demographic dividends, and increasing demographic diversity.

The Nairobi statement gives hope and provides a global framework for the formulation of government and partner commitments. It makes reference to the importance of the implementation of a number of goals. These include achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights as part of universal health coverage by committing to zero unmet need for family planning information and services, and universal availability of quality, accessible, affordable and safe modern contraceptives; and to zero preventable maternal deaths and maternal morbidities, with attention to avoiding unsafe abortions and obstetric fistula. The statement also refers to the importance of addressing sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices—in particular, child, early and forced marriages and female genital mutilation—and of mobilising the required financing to finish the ICPD Programme of Action.

With all this in mind, I hope to be reassured that DfID will remain a stand-alone department with a dedicated Cabinet Minister. A dedicated department staffed with experienced development workers is crucial to deliver aid effectively and to ensure the best return on investment for the UK taxpayer. Recent achievements in poverty alleviation and aid effectiveness, and the UK's leadership in developing and implementing the sustainable development goals, have been made possible, or have been far easier to achieve, with a dedicated and resourced department.

5.30 pm

Baroness Wyld (Con): My Lords, we have a new Parliament, and the most exciting part of election night 2019 for me was Blyth Valley becoming famous. I have fond memories of Blyth Valley and the neighbouring constituency, Wansbeck, where my grandma and grandad lived in Ashington—and where Labour held on, by the way. There is so much in the gracious Speech that should allow those who may have loaned the Government their votes some cause for optimism.

This time, when I sat listening to the Speech, I genuinely felt as though I heard an echo from the doorsteps, from those we met when we travelled with the seaside towns Select Committee, or those I spend time with when I take my family up north. From business rates to railways, to secure funding for education, I am optimistic that this Government “gets it”.

I want to focus a bit more on the north-east. As this will include education, I refer to my registered interest as a non-exec member of the Ofsted board. First, I return just for a moment to my grandparents. They are no longer with us, but they were loyal Labour voters all their lives. I confess to having felt a tinge of sadness when I texted my mum on election night. This was obviously not at the numerous Conservative victories in the north-east, which I found exciting—we were allowed dissent in my family and I hope we still are

—but you cannot grow up in a Labour family without developing respect and even a degree of affection for the Labour Party that they supported.

I have no idea whether my grandparents would have voted Labour this time—some of my family felt they could not—but I know that those decent, hardworking, aspirational people of a former mining community would have been heartbroken by Jeremy Corbyn and the behaviour of Momentum and that they would have called out anti-Semitism just as many brave people within Labour did. So, although it may not be my place, I say this to Opposition Members in this House, who have always treated me with great kindness and in many cases have been generous with their time, their advice and their excellent expertise: I hope they get their party back, for the sake of a healthy democracy, and I genuinely wish them well in the coming leadership elections.

There is much in the gracious Speech where the cross-party expertise within your Lordships' House will be invaluable, not least the Government's commitment to finding consensus on social care. As the noble Lord, Lord Dubs, rightly said, let us just get on with it. I very much look forward to a more productive Parliament than the previous one.

Turning to education, I am relieved that the Government have committed to increasing education funding and to a whole raft of measures to support communities that are sometimes described as “left-behind”. Can we now start to change our language about them? I am glad that this Government are looking to the future. For example, Blyth and its surrounding areas are already a hub of innovation for clean energy and are creating jobs of the future. The Government's industrial strategy already rightly recognises this, with investment flowing into the renewable energy catapult in Blyth and a whole host of other north-east led initiatives.

We must ensure that we equip people with the skills to flourish in green jobs or on any other route they choose. The general point I want to make is that if we want to rebalance the UK economy, we have to create a sort of virtuous cycle of training and employment for all kinds of skilled, technical and graduate jobs. While we talk endlessly about raising aspiration and achievement, this is any good only if people know that it is actually going to get them somewhere.

Going back to schools, I am sure that the Government appreciate how urgently we need to close the gap between educational outcomes in parts of the north and south. In the north-east there are many outstanding schools from which others around the country could and should learn, but the big picture cannot be avoided on many indicators, in particular the fact that the performance of primary schools is often better on the whole than that of secondaries. One of the things that I worry about almost more than anything in Britain today is that we have proof in our hands that these kids are super-bright—we can see this in all the stats from key stage 1 and 2 results—but then that potential gets lost, and all too often we hear about everything going wrong at secondary level. However, there are a lot of examples to show that this does not have to be the case. It is a solvable problem, and this has to be one of the Government's top priorities.

I would like to see the Government going beyond legislation and using their convening power. I would like to see Ministers doing more to encourage businesses and start-ups to think more creatively about how to bring work experience to more areas and how to engage with young people through educational institutions and then share best practice. The change of pace in the workplace is so fast now that we cannot think in terms of old-fashioned careers services. I will return to this in future debates because I am running out of time.

In short, I think we have a brilliant chance to bring our country together and, in the Prime Minister's words, unleash its potential. It has been a really frustrating and difficult time for everyone, but every single one of us now has the opportunity to change that.

5.35 pm

Lord Inglewood (Non-Aff): My Lords, like most Members of your Lordships' House, I have a life away from here—in my case, as intimated in the register, 300 miles north in Cumbria. Being unable either to campaign or to vote, I spent quite a lot of time thinking about farming, land use and management and their financial and other prospects. All these things are integral to wider rural society and to the economy as a whole. Rather like stout Cortez standing silent on a peak in Darien, I and everyone else engaged in the sector see a vast and empty panorama in front of us. When I speak in the first person, I am speaking as Everyman.

We all know how unpopular the CAP has become and that we are going to leave it. Of course it had its follies, but it was not quite as stupid as those who did not understand it supposed. Doing nothing about all this is not an option. That farmers should not be paid just to farm must be right—that is of course unless farming is itself a public good, in which case the subsidy or support becomes a payment for a public good. The real criticism is that it was either insufficiently targeted or not targeted at all and farming is no longer perceived as a public good. Rather, outputs of farming, land management and other rural activities are identified as such, and should be targeted and supported as appropriate, which modern technology makes increasingly possible and straightforward.

The reality of today's world is that in a number of ways the state is the purchaser of ecosystem services and the products of natural capital, if not directly then indirectly or as a broker or some other form of intermediary for other parts of society. These outputs are intimately and comprehensively linked to the rest of wider society and contribute huge benefit to it in general and to the economy in particular. They are as much a part of this country's core infrastructure as rail, the grid or digital connectivity.

For that to be done sensibly, all land use must be done deliberately, as Dieter Helm has pointed out in the context of wilding. Simple abandonment and dereliction, which has been so expensive and disastrous in an urban context, will be the same in a rural one unless, paradoxically, it is managed. As I have said, the moment has now come for the Government to lay out their approach to public ecosystem services and public goods and how it is all going to be paid for. What is

certain is that, as across the rest of the economy, if the money is not applied in the right way then the desired outcome will not be achieved. Ebullience or sugary words are no good because they do not pay the bills.

Whatever happens will involve the application of resources, which have to be paid for. The provision of public goods has to be properly rewarded and taxed along with the sector outputs of conventional goods, the market for many of which now seems to be somewhat less than bullish, to ensure that those engaged in such activities generate an acceptable standard of living and can finance reinvestment and generate prosperity in future. No one suggests that government Ministers or workers in the NHS should not get paid. Many in rural Britain earn less than the equivalent of the living wage. Urban Britain often seems too happy to overlook those who work outside towns and that they have families and are real people too. I have a suspicion that for this to be done effectively the amount of money involved may have to increase, not decline, simply because of the extent of what will be required, not least to make up for past failure.

Rural Britain, as opposed to the suburban countryside, shows the self-same characteristics as much of the urban north and Midlands, which are now being prioritised by the Government as it is recognised that they have missed out on much of the national wealth enjoyed by the prosperous parts of the south. I speak as chairman of the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and part of the Northern Powerhouse 11: just as steps are being taken to invigorate the north, so similar measures must be taken for rural England—l'Angleterre profonde—and the rest of the UK, not for the sake of the countryside alone but in the best interests of the nation at large.

5.39 pm

Lord Horam (Con): My Lords, I am slightly surprised but delighted to be the third northerner in a row to speak from these Benches, following on from the very affectionate remarks made by my noble friend Lady Wyld and the remarkable experiences in farming and so forth of my noble friend Lord Inglewood. I was born in Preston in Lancashire and I therefore complete the trio. The fact that all three of us are Conservatives shows that the House of Lords is not as behind the times as we sometimes think. We are right there, bang on trend, because of course the main feature of the general election was the extraordinary success of the Conservative Party in winning seats in the north and the Midlands. This does mean that the Prime Minister—I will point this out very firmly to him whenever I see him, although that is not very often—has to deliver to the towns and cities of the north of England and the Midlands. It can be done.

Many of our northern towns, as northerners will attest, have wonderful civic buildings from the time in the 19th and 20th centuries when they produced most of the wealth which we lived on at that time. It now comes from London, but back then it came from the north of England. Anyone who has not seen the Harris Library in Preston or Bolton Town Hall has not really lived—I thank my noble friend from Bolton for nodding. These are wonderful buildings, but the problem is that much of that area has become run-down

[LORD HORAM]

as a result of the manufacturing rundown and so forth, and now needs help. However, I hope it is not just the civic areas that will be helped by the northern powerhouse but the smaller towns. I therefore particularly welcome the £3.6 billion put behind the towns fund, which will help the smaller communities and towns that need that sort of help.

As we have said throughout this debate, this is also about skills. The fact is that the apprenticeship levy is not working as well as it should. We need more technical education. All these areas are highly relevant to the north and the Midlands. We also need to reconnect. The fact is that we have not connected the regions with London as well as we could have in the past.

I also think that poverty in this country is a particularly urgent question. What has happened to universal credit is not good. It needs urgent attention. As my noble friend Lord Forsyth and the noble Lord, Lord Lipsey, said, there is considerable agreement on social care but what is needed, above all, is a big cheque. Therefore, we need to ensure we can afford all this activity. I think we can because, first of all, we can take a more relaxed approach to debt now that the 2008 financial crisis is well behind us. Ten-year yields on UK Treasury bills are down from 3.5% in 2010 to 1.25% today. Therefore, enhanced borrowing, properly presented, is also a possibility.

Like my good noble friend Lord Tugendhat, I think that if we cannot deal with this through a more relaxed approach to debt, we have to consider increasing taxation. I point out to the House that we are a lightly taxed country, relatively speaking, by comparison with our European neighbours. In the UK, tax as a percentage of GDP is 37%; in the Netherlands, it is 40%, in Germany, 41%, in Denmark, 46%, and in France, no less than 48%. I am not suggesting we go the full French—far from it. None the less, a tweak or two on that percentage would not go amiss and can indeed be done. For example, why is the income tax on earned income higher than the tax on capital gains or dividends? It did not happen that way under Mrs Thatcher and, according to Jeremy Corbyn's analysis, this would raise no less than £14 billion. His analysis may not be arithmetically correct, but there is a lot of dibs there for someone seriously looking to be fairer on taxation.

The Prime Minister said that he was fed up with his slogan of "Get Brexit done", which dominated the campaign, and has banned it from now on. I suggest two further slogans to him, equally simple and equally powerful: "splash the cash" and "level up".

5.44 pm

Lord Warner (CB): Follow that, my Lords. I will confine my remarks to a sentence in the Queen's Speech that really jogged my memory. The sentence was that they—the Government—

"will ensure that the social care system provides everyone with the dignity and security they deserve and that no one who needs care has to sell their home to pay for it."

These very fine words were remarkably similar to the remit given to the three-person Dilnot commission that I served on, and which was set up in 2010 by the coalition Government. Just to remind the House, we reported in 2011 and the coalition Government, after

wide public consultation, passed the Care Act 2014, which enabled the very flexible structure—I emphasise "flexible"—of our proposals to be implemented. At that time the Labour shadow Cabinet had sufficient realists in it, particularly the shadow Chancellor, Ed Balls, to be sympathetic to our proposals. So there is on the statute book a solution that had a large measure of cross-party support and which is structured to enable different Governments to be as generous or thrifty to the individual citizen as they please.

Dare I say it to the Prime Minister, but he has an oven-ready solution available to him, if he has the courage and wit to take it off the shelf. But—and there is always a but—the funding situation in adult social care has deteriorated a great deal since the Dilnot commission reported. Work done by the Health Foundation and the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows that restoring service levels for users to 2010-11 levels would require about £8 billion in extra annual investment by 2023-24. I commend that study to the House, for those who want to read it. On top of this, about another £4.5 billion is required before then to deal with increasing service demand pressures from a growing population needing services, and to enable staff pay to be kept in line with NHS pay increases. Whatever long-term solution we come up with, there is a big bill to be paid to stabilise this very creaky system.

This extra money has to start flowing no later than the start of the next financial year, and at a rate much higher than the Government promised in their manifesto. In that document, they promised £1 billion extra for social care in 2020-21, but this is to be shared with the equally hard-pressed children's social care system. This means that, on present plans, in the next financial year adult social care service levels are likely to be worse than current levels. They certainly will not meet the aspirations of the fine words in the Queen's Speech. Some of the worst affected areas with inadequate adult social care will be the Conservative Party's new friends in the north, where the council tax base simply cannot meet the cost of the extra services required, whatever precept the Government choose to permit.

While the Conservative pledge to seek cross-party consensus on a long-term solution is itself praiseworthy, it is worth reminding the Government that they are now the Government for the next five years, with a very large majority in the House of Commons. If they do not come up with a plan quickly, they will deservedly be punished politically. Without such a plan, the staff and providers of publicly funded adult social care will continue their exodus from the sector at an increasingly rapid rate. Just as seriously, the extra money the Government are committing to the NHS will go not on new services but on looking after elderly patients in expensive acute hospitals in those very areas where there are large shortfalls in publicly funded adult social care.

The noble Lord, Lord Forsyth of Drumlean, has done a magnificent demolition job on the shambles of the current adult social care system. It is now time for the Prime Minister to take the oven-ready solution off the shelf.

5.49 pm

Baroness Scott of Bybrook (Con): My Lords, I welcome Her Majesty's most gracious Speech. At last we can start to deliver on our promises to this country to honour the referendum, exit the European Union and move on. There is much to do and many issues that have not had the attention they deserve during the past three years, about which we have heard so much from noble Lords in the past three days. I wish to concentrate on issues relating to local government and at this point draw your Lordships' attention to my interests as a vice-president of the LGA and a member of Wiltshire Council, as declared in the register.

Local government welcomes further devolution and the White Paper due later this year. It will be important however that shire counties, which serve 47% of the population and cover more than 86% of England, have equal access to levers and funding currently afforded to urban metro mayors, this being crucial to the success of the Government's "levelling-up" agenda. Councils can and should be the building blocks of future devolution deals and any supporting structural and institutional reform. They should have the same opportunities as those enjoyed by the combined mayoral authorities, including the powers for statutory spatial plans, delivery of education and skills funding agencies, responsibility for the shared prosperity fund and powers over bus franchising.

We all welcome the uplift in NHS funding as well as the additional £1 billion a year for social care. More than 65% of county expenditure is now dedicated to that care. Health and social care are two sides of the same coin. I support the Government's aim to find consensus on reforms and funding for care services. I urge that these discussions begin as soon as possible and that, as the largest social care providers in the country, counties are an integral part of such cross-party discussions.

To assist the levelling-up, I urge the Government to consider reintroducing strategic planning in county areas, allowing authorities to better plan and link housing and jobs with infrastructure, responding to local needs and markets. The reduction in business rates is most welcome in our market towns and on our high streets in particular, but as business rates are an integral part of local government financing, consideration needs to be given to how councils will be compensated for this loss of income.

Local government is appreciative of the settlement for this coming year. The Government have listened to us and have delivered, but we need to see real progress in the fair funding review and consideration of longer-term settlements.

Strategic county authorities are crucial to the delivery of many of this Government's plans and priorities: on health and social care reform, knife crime, county lines and social mobility—to name a few. It is these authorities which can bring together the public, private and third sectors in a "place" to make a difference.

Finally, I hope that the local government reorganisation agenda is not lost. Both central and local government need seriously to consider whether it is sustainable financially in light of the extra responsibilities for

devolved issues to continue with a two-tier system in the majority of our counties. Surely it is now time to move to a new system of local government in these areas. County unitary authorities can be both strategic and local—just look at Cornwall and Wiltshire. They can be efficient and effective, simple to navigate and easily understood by local residents, businesses and partners—just one council. I look forward to future discussions on the opportunities for a new era for local government.

5.54 pm

Lord Shinkwin (Con): My Lords, I was really pleased to see in the gracious Speech a focus on enabling individuals to develop their skills and realise their potential. This reminded me of a powerful point made by the Prime Minister during the election campaign that talent is distributed equally but opportunity is not. As he said, and as many other noble Lords have said, we need to level up. To do that, I believe that this one-nation Conservative Government must prioritise promoting equality of opportunity.

The year 2020 is one of momentous legislative anniversaries for equality. I think of parliamentary giants like the late noble Lords, Lord Ashley of Stoke and Lord Morris of Manchester. Incredibly, the latter's Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act is 50 this year. My noble friend Lord Hague of Richmond's ground-breaking Disability Discrimination Act—the DDA—is 25 years old and, of course, the Equality Act turns 10 this year.

How different the world would be for me, for the UK's 14 million disabled people and, indeed, for those with other protected characteristics—including women and members of the BAME and LGBT communities—had noble Lords not worked together to pass those and related pieces of legislation. What a cause for celebration it is that your Lordships' House did so.

Yet I am also acutely aware of two things that are not a cause for celebration. First, so much remains to be done to realise the empowering vision of the DDA and the Equality Act so that equality of opportunity becomes a reality for everyone, regardless of their protected characteristic. Secondly, there is a real danger that essential change will not happen unless there is political will on all sides to make it happen.

The need is now. As my noble friend Lord Forsyth of Drumlean indicated in his powerful speech, the demographic pressure on social care is growing exponentially. We need to release resources to fund it. We can do this if we help more people to enter and flourish in employment, reducing reliance on benefits and increasing tax revenues. In short, there is no alternative if we are to make any investment sustainable.

Sadly, the current reality is that, as we enter the third decade of the 21st century, some are still denied the equality of opportunity to make the most of their potential. Take, for example, ethnic minorities, with an employment gap of almost 13%, or disabled people, with a gap of almost 30%. Stonewall has found that 18% of LGBT people were discriminated against while looking for work.

As we have already heard said today, it is time for some radical, fresh thinking to build on the success of big business giants like Paul Polman, the former chief

[LORD SHINKWIN]

executive of Unilever, who has voiced support for pay gap reporting and led the way in promoting diversity that enriches and rewards employers and employees alike. My workforce information Bill would help to do this. It already has the support of big businesses like EY and Enterprise Holdings, and of people such as my noble friend Lady McGregor-Smith, Andy Street, and Matthew Cameron from LGBT Great. My Bill would harness the energy of enterprise to drive equality of opportunity as a competitive advantage for big businesses looking to attract, retain and develop the best from the most diverse talent pool and, most importantly, to grow their turnover.

Big businesses deserve a level playing field to maximise the incentive to make best practice common practice. That means extending mandatory pay gap reporting for big business to other protected characteristics as well. So I close with a plea to the Minister and to your Lordships' House as a whole: a quarter of a century after the DDA became law, let us make 2020 the year that is remembered for how, together, we struck another powerful blow for equality of opportunity. Supporting the measures contained in my Bill would be a step in the right direction.

6 pm

The Earl of Lytton (CB): My Lords, in her very expansive opening remarks the Minister referred to the Government's agenda including such issues as housing demand, tenancy reform and the Hackitt report. I wish to address the residential development and construction issues that lie behind housing supply, matters affecting conduct and standards in property and construction normally to be expected in a mature democratic society and with which I am professionally involved.

There are some excellent developers, but debate after report after Parliamentary Question have highlighted aspects of housing delivery where monopolistic and bad practices have eroded trust and good governance and are failing basic standards of delivery to society. Long highlighted have been the poor standard of some modern housing construction and dysfunctional and fragmented construction practices. While the tragedy of Grenfell Tower highlighted retrofits and ACM cladding systems, there have been other construction failures. As with ACM systems, while the freeholders, who may themselves be blameless, ponder how they came to be holding such a toxic parcel when the music finally stopped, the occupiers of these same buildings are locked into their leasehold purchases by the uncertainty of indirect liabilities through service charges. The previous Government are to be commended on their creation of a fund to address this, but the problem at the sharp end, in this and analogous situations, has not yet gone away.

Last September, a modern four-storey block of flats in south London burnt down. It should not have done, but modern homes are still being built with such poor workmanship that their overall performance is little better than that of decades earlier. I have visited new housing where the insulation simply got forgotten, where the details of as-built construction were not

recorded or where so many changes of management had taken place during construction that there was no continuity of supervision and definitely no one taking responsibility.

Help to Buy has hugely bolstered the profits of many housebuilders, with one reputedly making over £70,000 gross profit on every home it builds. Part of my work is to act for owners of potential housing land. I have several instances of corrupt and sometimes illegal activities aimed at concocting price reductions. Doubtless, the same approach is used against local authorities. Some immensely powerful organisations run rings around strapped planning departments on viability tests, and on site allocations they can secure improbably large developments in remote locations with no natural advantages or synergy with any existing settlement. As a councillor of my acquaintance might have put it, they are committing the new residents to burning massive amounts of fossil fuels just to get to a place of employment. At the same time, they crowd out SME constructors, which cannot compete with the demands of complex planning and infrastructure.

There are some real scams going on. There are escalator ground rents, where year-on-year ground rent increases are an investor's dream but a homeowner's nightmare when it comes to selling and no mortgage lender will touch it. I am glad that the Government are acting on this, but what about rent charges? Here, freehold purchasers find themselves committed to funding a management company that has been crafted to take on all sorts of common or uncommon liabilities which the housebuilder could not be bothered to sort out or the local authority would not risk adopting. The implications hide in obscure legal drafting masked by "free" conveyancing and early years funding, but ultimately are hobbled by long-term contracts with management companies interested only in maximum profit. Parallel developer support to local charities and community projects do not cancel out these evils.

Housebuilding is not the only sector at fault. Some seem to think that the rule of law does not apply to them, or that regulatory standards are optional. They believe that legal agreements do not matter, or that compromising on design or performance in use is victimless. Such failings ultimately cheat the community and purchasers for whom a house is their largest ever commitment. They hide behind special purpose vehicles, disinformation, the principle of caveat emptor, obscure process and so-called construction warranties, when in every other walk of life there are end-to-end product and service delivery liabilities. Moreover, the risk of challenge or enforcement is extremely low.

This looks like sharp practice, and it is time the Government went much further in addressing it. Strict product liability across the board with an enforceable code of ethical conduct and insistence on high standards of design, construction and performance are a minimum. This must lead to better corporate social responsibility and result in—one would hope—transactional confidence, transparency and trust, which is the lifeblood of commerce. Government support to the sector is huge, so they can demand better and they need to organise a spring clean.

6.05 pm

Baroness Stroud (Con): My Lords, I rise to support Her Majesty's gracious Speech. It is a huge pleasure to be able to add my congratulations to Her Majesty's Government on their remarkable election victory. With this victory the voice of the British people has unequivocally been heard and their will made crystal clear, not just to get Brexit done or to build one nation but to tackle the key social challenges of our generation.

One of the main findings of the Legatum Institute's 48:52—*Healing a Divided Britain* report, and here I declare an interest, was that voters were concerned that public services and the social fabric of the nation were no longer working for them. In particular, people wanted more from their health and education services and had concerns over housing and employment stability.

These were their top four issues. The test for me of Her Majesty's gracious Speech was to look at how these issues would be addressed: the four tests. To take health first, the UK prosperity index has charted a marked decrease in our satisfaction with the quality of our healthcare, down 21 places in recent years to 34th globally. The commitment, therefore, to level up our NHS is an important first step in addressing this felt public service gap. Forty new hospitals, 50 million more GP appointments, 50,000 more new and retained nurses and an extra £650 million in NHS funding weekly will help ensure that our healthcare is far more equitable across our most vulnerable communities. This commitment represents a renewed focus and a commitment to drive change.

The second test is education. Educational ability, as we have heard, is spread across our great nation, but opportunity is not. We should be proud of the gains that we have made over the last three years in education, but we need to ensure that we are focused on giving all students equal opportunity to reach their full potential. So the pledge in the Queen's Speech

"To ensure every child has access to a high-quality education"

by increasing levels of funding per pupil in every school is welcome, as is the announcement of the national skills fund of £3 billion over the course of the Parliament.

Yet although the outcomes and investments are results that our teachers and students should be proud of, some worrying signs arose from the PISA report. On student well-being, only 53% of 15 year-olds across the UK reported that they were satisfied with their lives. Nearly 50% of our young people feel a severe lack of identity and purpose. For a Government who are committed to building one nation, I would welcome hearing from my noble friend the Minister what action they will expect from parents and teachers to ensure that our young people are confident in their identity and future, as the current approach is obviously not working and more of the same will not do.

The third test concerns housing. We are currently facing a housing crisis nationwide, but, as we all know, there is no silver bullet for this issue. However, I welcome the Government's energy, vision and focus expressed through the commitment to shared ownership, supporting local families on to the housing ladder, improving the rental market, and housebuilding. I welcome the building

of a million new homes, but can my noble friend comment on what change of pace, policy and impetus will be deployed? The "million new homes" figure seems familiar now and we really need delivery.

The last test is for job security. Out of the 48:52 report, a clear link emerged between stagnant, low wages and a vote to leave the EU. However, we have an extraordinary record as a nation: on average, 1,000 new jobs have been created each day since 2010, with levels of employment at a remarkable 76%. The election saw a resounding roar from those in tough circumstances and a clear message that they do not want handouts but want to be able to work hard and support their families. The Queen's Speech lays the foundations for the development of an economy where prosperity can grow through the creation of jobs that are stable, full time and in every corner of our nation.

I welcome Her Majesty's gracious Speech, the energy and vision with which this Government are setting about the task of building prosperity and levelling up, and their commitment to the creation of opportunity and quality of life. If this becomes reality, we will indeed take great strides towards meeting the four tests of a stronger health and education system, access to housing, and stable, full-time employment, while building the longed-for one nation.

6.10 pm

Baroness Falkner of Margravine (Non-Aff): My Lords, I will limit my remarks to just one aspect of the gracious Speech that has not been covered—as the 70th speaker in this debate I say that with some reticence. I will keep my remarks brief, as I am sure noble Lords would like to move on. I speak from the perspective of having chaired the EU Financial Affairs Sub-Committee for four years, until last summer. I also declare in the context of my remarks that I am a member of the Bank of England's Enforcement Decision Making Committee, which I should say has no policy function.

The most frequently asked question that I faced in EU capitals during that period was about the UK aspiring to become a sort of "Singapore-on-sea", sometimes more boldly put as "Singapore-on-steroids". The fear in the EU was amplified by the fact that the then UK Government seemed to be concerned only about trade in goods—quite perversely—so the thinking was that there must be some design afoot to give the UK's financial services sector an advantage greater than single market access and loss of passporting. According to my EU interlocutors, this indicated a plan for a sort of bonfire of regulations to steal competitive advantage rather than sticking with the level playing field, which the EU regulators wanted us to do. Singapore-on-sea is a myth, as anyone who knows Singapore will tell you: it is actually a heavily state-controlled and regulated market. The most potent conversation I had about this was in France. It is interesting that France has benefited most from Brexit-related financial business, particularly banking, yet it has been the most reluctant adopter of EU regulations, so that was a paradox.

Where does London stand in comparison, and where will it go? The note on financial services legislation in the Queen's Speech speaks of two complementary aims: retaining high regulatory standards and making

[BARONESS FALKNER OF MARGRAVINE]
 financial services more competitive. The challenge will be to do these, while at the same time seeing lucrative EU-facing business move away. The briefing documents speak in broad terms but make no mention of how the competitiveness objectives will be met. One way to do this would be for Her Majesty's Treasury and the UK regulators to develop a more coherent strategy, working with the Cabinet Office and the FCO on the UK's economic diplomacy priorities more effectively. Two other noble Lords from these Benches and I are working on a London School of Economics commission to see how the UK can undertake economic diplomacy to add real value in a post-Brexit world.

In financial services, most regulation as agreed globally through the G20, the Financial Stability Board, Basel and related bodies, where the UK has effectively led. It was chair of the FSB until 2018, and steered through most of the post-crisis global regulation, which is tribute to the outgoing Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, and his team.

Another area where we have innovated is green finance. I am delighted that the PRA is now moving to stress testing all financial assets held by large banks and insurance companies, to build resilience across a range of these classes. That is another first, I believe. The new governor of the Bank, Andrew Bailey, has also innovated in the fintech sector, which is now being replicated in several other jurisdictions.

On the other hand, the enormous area of digital competition continues to be a low priority in terms of the forthcoming Bill. The previous Chancellor commissioned the Furman review into competitiveness in digital markets, which was published in March 2019, yet we have no indication of when the Government intend to act on its significant recommendations. Its main proposal for a digital markets unit languishes with the Competition and Markets Authority. I wonder whether the Minister, in winding up, can tell us what is holding back progress on the Furman recommendations.

To conclude, the UK's financial services sector will have its work cut out if it is to deliver for the economy in a post-Brexit environment. I urge the Government to use the financial services Bill to give the sector the tools it needs to continue being successful in serving the whole of the United Kingdom's economy.

6.16 pm

Baroness Hollins (CB): My Lords, I will speak about mental health.

I am thrilled by the Government's commitment to put mental health on an equal footing with physical health. However, this has to be about more than just mental health services. First, greater mental health awareness needs to underpin the Government's approach to all public services. In her eloquent speech, the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Gloucester reminded us of the early years manifesto and of the importance of both early intervention and understanding the impact of adverse childhood experiences on future relationships, later mental illness or an increased risk of offending.

The Government would do well to take a longer-term public mental health approach to prevention. In their new investment in schools, are they investing enough

in the mental health of pupils and teachers, giving them the skills and resources they need both to implement fully the new curriculum in social, emotional and mental health, and to respond to mental health crises?

Other public mental health approaches are ripe for development and we have heard about some today; for example, measures to reduce the risk of harm caused by online abuse or the harm caused by the sensational and negative behavioural norms so often portrayed in our media, both in print and on television. Public interest journalism requires a responsible attitude; I submit that this includes some responsibility for the public's mental health.

Of course, investment is needed in mental health services too. The gap between mental health and physical health services remains huge. The Government's estimate is that mental illness represents 23% of the total so-called disease burden but receives only 11% of NHS England's budget. Some proposals that could make a real difference in the medium term are: doubling medical school intake, particularly attracting candidates who might make good psychiatrists; making it mandatory for all GPs have psychiatry and paediatric training, as recommended by the Royal College of General Practitioners commission on generalism, chaired by my noble friend Lady Finlay; and consulting on the effectiveness of a fourth emergency service to attend mental health crises in the community and provide health-based places of safety.

I welcome the Government's inclusion of learning disability and autism as clinical priorities in the NHS long-term plan, and their commitment to introduce learning disability and autism training for all healthcare professionals. As a precaution, I have tabled a Bill that would make such training mandatory; it may prove a useful vehicle to progress the Government's aim of improving the safety of this group and reducing the health inequalities it experiences.

I am also concerned for the safety and well-being of staff in the public services. At the Second Reading of the Health Service Safety Investigations Bill in the last Parliament, I asked:

"If the HSSIB undertakes investigations of the systems failures that result in risks to the safety of patients, could we not include the safety of staff too? After all, the same systems underlie risks to both groups."—[*Official Report*, 29/10/19; col. 915.]

Will the Government respond positively to the growing requests for staff safety to be included in this Bill?

I welcome the commitment to produce a national disability strategy, which should make it easier to think about the needs of disabled people early in the preparation of relevant policies rather than considering impact and relevance only later. As always, I will be looking at whether the lives of people with mental illness or learning disabilities, and the lives of autistic people, will be centre stage. I always say that if we can get it right for people with learning disabilities, we can get it right for everyone.

This brings me to social care. The social care crisis has considerable mental health consequences—for the people who need care and support as well as for those providing both formal and informal support. Fixing it requires the effective integration of health and social care. More than half of social care spending in England

is on working-age disabled adults; that is, people who need various forms of support and not just personal care, which is more often needed by older adults. They may need help to access healthcare, manage finances, access community events, sustain contact with friends and family, and to gain and stay in employment. These are the cornerstones of good mental health. For example, having a job means more than just a pay packet; it encourages a sense of pride, independence and social contact. One positive action would be for the Government to recommit to making more apprenticeships available for people with learning disabilities and to provide them with more support to gain paid employment as part of the effort to reduce the disability employment gap.

A mental health Bill will be welcome if it truly addresses some of the needs I have sketched out. Could the Minister provide the House with any details of the proposed timescale for such a Bill and for the White Paper on the reform of the Mental Health Act? Currently, people at many life stages can be detained under mental health legislation because the right support is not available in the community to meet their education, communication, care, housing and health needs.

Media coverage and a recent report by the Joint Committee on Human Rights have brought the specific issue of how the Mental Health Act is being used to detain people with learning disabilities and autistic people right into the spotlight. I should remind the House that last November, the Department for Health and Social Care asked me to chair an independent oversight panel on this critical issue. I have agreed to do so. We will be looking at the care and future prospects of people with learning disabilities and autism who are currently being detained in segregation and seclusion in in-patient units, and considering how to avoid such admissions as well as the best way to ensure the best therapeutic care for them, their timely discharge and the right skilled support in the community. I look forward to working with Ministers and other noble Lords on these issues.

6.22 pm

Baroness Kramer (LD): My Lords, as the first of the winders, I hope that the House will not mind if I narrow my remarks, because it has been a long day and I know that people have trains to catch. As I listened to the debate, there was one overwhelming theme that was repeated in speech after speech. It was a focus on public services. I think that the House will agree that the public have the same focus on those services. It is one of the most significant ways in which they will be judging the Government, and they have very high expectations.

The Minister led off those expectations by talking about significant additional spending on public services, but as I listened to comments made all around the House, one had to come to the conclusion that looking only at funding is not enough. The largest commitment of money is obviously to the NHS. It will be on a multiyear basis and it was welcomed over and over again, but, as the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of London pointed out, that amount of money does

nothing more than stabilise the NHS. I think that expectations are higher, and I suggest that the Government should think that through.

Additional money will also be made available for schools, but, as the noble Lord, Lord Griffiths, pointed out, as did the noble Baroness, Lady Blower, in her excellent maiden speech, that money merely restores cuts—and does not even restore them completely. As my noble friend Lord Storey pointed out, at this moment in time we have a bulge of children going through the school system, and we have a dearth of teachers. Surely another look has to be taken at the adequacy of funding for the schools budget.

Most speakers addressing this issue spoke of the need for more money for social care. We listened to the noble Lord, Lord Dubs, pointing out that £1 billion in new money was pretty inadequate when the need was for £8 billion. Frankly, the noble Lord, Lord Forsyth, whom I do not normally turn to when it comes to demanding additional money for a public service, absolutely hit the nail on the head—the noble Lord, Lord Horam, pointed out exactly that he did—when he said that the Government would have to write a big cheque to solve this problem.

As I look back on my own Benches, and not only my own Benches. I note that the whole range of public services outside the big three that were the focus of so much discussion, such as local government, policing, prisons, local transport and planning capacity—which, as the noble Earl, Lord Lytton, pointed out, leaves a lot of the housing industry with serious problems—has been cut to the bone. In both the Conservative manifesto and the Queen's Speech, the austerity in those areas has become embedded. It is not turning around but becoming fixed on a permanent basis.

When we look at issues of welfare and benefits, it once again looks as though austerity is becoming embedded. It is not the beginning of a process of change or the end of austerity for those areas. The noble Baroness, Lady Greengross, my good and noble friend Lady Janke, the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Portsmouth and others pointed out that the working poor are now a very large percentage of our population. They will not be relieved by a £2 per week reduction in national insurance contributions. I also point out that, while I very much welcome increases to the minimum wage, for the working poor, much of that will be clawed back by an offsetting cut in benefits.

As the noble Baroness, Lady Drake, said, the weakness we have in household resilience really reflects some of the fragile circumstances of so many of our fellow citizens. This Government will have to think again to understand whether they have identified the appropriate resources to tackle those fundamental problems.

Part of the Queen's Speech sets a fiscal rule of having the budget in balance in three years. That is not an unreasonable goal where—here is my caveat—the Government are open to tax increases to make sure that the necessary public spending can happen, but borrowing is kept appropriately contained. But this Government have committed to no increase in income tax, national insurance contributions or VAT, and have made a very tepid decision to keep corporation tax at 19% when they could very comfortably have

[BARONESS KRAMER]

raised it to 21%, for example, without undermining UK competitiveness at all. I do not join the noble Lord, Lord Flight, in hoping for further tax cuts. I am with the noble Lords, Lord Tugendhat and Lord Horam, in saying that the Government need to be open to the possibility of raising taxes to achieve the fundamental programme that this country needs.

I will make just a couple of comments on business aspects, because this is an economic affairs debate. It was not heavily pursued, I suspect because we have a Budget in a few weeks where those issues will be fundamentally addressed. But, as the noble Lord, Lord Skidelsky, said, if the economy is not performing, you can basically tear up any of the public spending promises. It is crucial that we have an effectively performing economy.

I totally believe in creating the skills and investing in building the institutional capabilities to realise all the benefits of the fourth industrial revolution and the digital economy—but, frankly, that is incredibly non-controversial. Nobody is going to argue against that strategy; I hope it has oomph and a great deal of success. But if we want to keep people in jobs, we have to hold on to high-volume manufacturing—and that really brings us back to the negotiation with the European Union. The car manufacturers are here as part of an integrated European supply network. The supply chains that spin off them are also dependent on that network, and we have heard nothing to give that reassurance. We may well end up with a zero-tariff regime, but if there is any friction in the form of non-tariff barriers, those costs will make it very difficult to retain that supply chain.

The noble Baroness, Lady Falkner, addressed the issue of financial services—an area with which I keep in very close touch. This House will know that the industry has acknowledged spending £4 billion so far to relocate operations to continental Europe; she is quite right. The biggest beneficiary has been France, where the AMF has taken over many of the roles of the SCA, particularly in regulating trading. That £4 billion is the acknowledged amount. The industry is using this coming year to complete major relocations. I have said before in this House that when you look at financial services, the clients are in continental Europe and the capabilities to provide financial services are here. You cannot move the clients, but you can move the capabilities. So the Government must have some strategy to retain that industry.

All we have heard about so far is equivalence, which everyone in this House knows is an inadequate regime; it is highly fragmented, it does not apply to deposit taking or insurance, it frequently requires a major presence in the EU regardless of the other aspects of its agreement, it often does not guarantee market access, and if you take a look at the experience of the Swiss—who have had to become rule takers in order to maintain market access on financial services—there are key issues there. Others have talked about the creative industries and services more generally.

I have one last comment to make. The noble Baroness, Lady Bull, brought up the issue of productivity, and other noble Lords echoed it. It is absolutely fundamental. Frankly, it is appalling that, at this moment in the UK,

growth in productivity is at 0.3%. That is terrible. I want to point to this because the country breaks into two sectors. Our medium-sized and small companies are very poor in terms of productivity growth. Our leading and advanced companies are brilliant; they are world beaters. Unfortunately, those are the industries for which it is most attractive to move to continental Europe or to shift their investment bias to continental Europe. So, if we are to tackle the productivity problem, we have to make sure that those companies stay and grow their operations here. That has to be central to all future trade negotiations.

6.32 pm

Baroness Thornton (Lab): My Lords, it is an honour and privilege to speak at the end of this day's debate—indeed, this three-day debate—on the gracious Speech. The large list of topics and the large number of speakers proves that we could have done with one more day. I am grateful to my noble friend for his opening address, which covered some of the long list of Bills covered by this debate. I will do my best to be coherent on some of the others. It was a pleasure to be present at the maiden speech of my noble friend Lady Blower, who brings a lifetime of public service, education and trade unionism. I for one am very excited that she has joined our Benches and look forward to working with her.

This was a veritable pot-pourri of speeches, some more fragrant than others. Possibly the noble Lord, Lord Bates, wins the prize for the most fragrant. On this side of the House, I felt that I needed to start by joining the noble Baronesses, Lady Howe and Lady Benjamin, the noble Lord, Lord Clement-Jones, the noble Viscount, Lord Colville, and my noble friend Lord Griffiths in talking about child safety on the internet, because we were delighted to hear the Government renew their pledge to make the UK the safest place in the world to go online. However, I am pretty sure it is in respect of the Government's pledges about making the internet safer and a better place for children that a number of noble Lords are most keen to see early progress; they have said so. I am not alone in feeling intensely disappointed about what happened with the implementation—or non-implementation—of Part 3 of the Digital Economy Act 2017. Those are the provisions which would have allowed this country to become the first in the democratic world to restrict access to online commercial pornographic sites by introducing an age-verification regime, as we have with great success for online gambling. I was particularly pleased to see in one of the background briefing notes that in a review of gambling legislation the Government were going to address loot boxes, for example, which are a modern scandal, deceitfully costing children and their families a great deal of money. Here I pay tribute to the excellent work done by the Gambling Commission and Parent Zone, which have done so much to draw attention to the matter. What is the timescale now for online child safety?

The Queen's Speech and the Conservative Party manifesto contained a number of announcements on specific areas of public spending, particularly those to do with economic affairs. I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Fox, that we look in vain for an energy strategy or an industrial strategy, but 14 million people in this

country are locked in poverty. That is the context in which we must address the economic affairs of this country, as was extremely well described in terms of regulation and everything else by various noble Lords, not least the noble Baroness, Lady Kramer, with her usual expertise in these areas.

I want to talk about the inaction of dealing with the fact that three in four children in poverty have a working parent. Despite the record employment that the Government trumpet at every available opportunity, the proportion of children in poverty with working parents has now reached an all-time high of 72%. Two decades ago, it was barely half that. These changes have very little to do with universal credit, for good or ill, because it is not yet being received by enough people to show up strongly in the figures. But given that the national living wage has increased each year and that employment has risen across the UK, why are so many families getting swept into poverty?

Nothing that I have heard so far in the debate from the Government or in the Queen's Speech acknowledges that one of the richest nations in the world is so unequal and so failing its children and their future. My noble friend Lord Hain was completely correct in his economic analysis and I will not repeat it, except to say that I would like to know what the Minister thinks is in the Speech that will address those inequalities and that problem, which faces so many millions of our children.

It is true that Brexit has been a huge distraction from domestic problems such as poverty and, to become the compassionate country that we all want the UK to be, we have to address the underlying drivers of poverty in a sustained and strategic way. The Minister needs to explain how these policies will address those issues.

The record so far is not encouraging. There is a crisis of low pay and stagnating wages. The 2019 spending round was a one-off election gimmick, which did little to reverse a decade of austerity. The recent figures by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, for example, show that car sales fell to a six-year low in 2019, with the chief executive stating that Brexit uncertainty remains the biggest threat to the industry—and I could go on. In fact, all these things were so much better explained by the noble Baroness, Lady Bull. I am not sure that the revolutionary proposal about responsible capitalism of the noble Lord, Lord Hodgson, will bring us the answer that we need.

I turn to the proposals on housing and building safety. The fire at Grenfell Tower exposed a broken system for fire safety checks and controls, and the Government have been off the pace on almost every front in their response. We need a £1 billion fire safety fund to address these problems. When will that be available?

People who rent from private landlords are at the sharp end of the housing crisis, and the number has risen rapidly since 2010 to more than 11 million people. We need legislation with new rights across the board for private renters—rent controls, open-ended tenancies and binding legal minimum standards. What plans do the Government have to allow tenants to hold rogue landlords to account?

My noble friend Lady Drake wisely made the link between financial resilience and household well-being. Any intention by the Government to support home ownership should be welcomed across the House, but what steps will the Government take to increase housebuilding, particularly in those towns and cities where it is most in demand?

The Government mention English devolution. As they aim for full devolution across England, there will be occasions when communities oppose the powers that they are offered. I would like to know from the Minister quite how they intend to deal with that in their devolution settlement. I would also like some assurance that, when the Government proceed with this, extensive consultation will exist.

I was not going to mention transport because it has been covered, but I will mention buses because most of us catch buses. But they are under threat almost everywhere in the country except London, and there is a good reason for that. I would like to know what the transport policies of the Government will be to address the remedial action our bus services need, particularly in rural areas.

On health and social care, we welcome the emphasis the Government have put on the NHS. We have an NHS funding Bill. We have the health service safety investigative Bill, which we have already had the Second Reading of but will probably have it again in the future. We have the medicines and medical devices Bill. We have the long-term plan and proposals about mental health and social care. But, today, the NHS recorded its worst accident and emergency waiting times in England since the current targets began in 2004, so we have a mountain to climb.

I do not remember the last Labour Government feeling the need to pass a law to force themselves to invest in the NHS. I find that a slightly bizarre proposition. I do not understand, if the Government are forcing themselves to invest in the NHS, why they are not doing the same for, for example, education, social care or mental health. I know that some people in the country have problems with the credibility of the Prime Minister and the Government, but I did not think that the Government had the same problems themselves.

The Minister made an extravagant claim about the amount of expenditure being put into the NHS. She claimed that it was the largest since the world began, but the truth is that that much was spent between 2004-05 and 2009-10. I will allow that it is the biggest investment under a Tory Administration in this century.

The point has been made by many noble Lords that the Government are under scrutiny. They are under scrutiny over social care and the National Health Service, and they will have to deliver. The noble Lord, Lord Warner, and my noble friends Lord Hunt, Lord Dubs, Lady Pitkeathley and Lord Bradley mentioned social care and the investment that needs to be made there. I will not repeat all that, but it is interesting that the noble Lord, Lord Forsyth, the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, Carers UK, the LGA and Peers across the House all agree about the need to get social care sorted. I hope the Government have heard that from this debate.

[BARONESS THORNTON]

I close by mentioning the work of your Lordships' House in the coming months and years. We know from the reaction of Conservative-led Governments in the past few years that carrying out our role of scrutiny, revision, examination and testing of legislation has sometimes brought an overreaction—that is the best way I can put this—from Governments who have threatened to do things to us as a consequence of our proposals. I place on record that the Government should expect us to do our job here diligently. They are likely to find this place a fertile ground for seeking amendments and concessions. I urge the Benches opposite not to be cowed or distracted from proper parliamentary scrutiny by the political, administrative and constitutional reforms being floated by this Government already. This starts on Monday, when I hope that the Government and the Benches here honour, for example, my noble friend Lord Dubs's amendment concerning child refugees, and that this House sticks to its commitment on this. I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Bichard. I look forward to the Minister's response.

6.45 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Viscount Younger of Leckie) (Con): My Lords, at the beginning of this very long debate—rather like a long flight to the Far East—the noble Lord, Lord Griffiths, referred to seat belts being fastened. Well, I hope that I have been a good passenger and kept mine firmly fastened, perhaps in case of a bumpy ride. As an airline attendant would expect me to do, I am also keeping it firmly fastened until the plane lands in 20 minutes and reaches the gate.

Secondly, a long letter will be coming to your Lordships answering all the questions that I cannot possibly address today. However, I feel that a separate long letter, perhaps with gold edges, is required for the noble Lord, Lord Clement-Jones. Were there 12 questions in his five-minute speech or were there a lot more? I am not sure. On a more serious note, I will be writing on the many questions raised by the noble Lord, Lord Hendy, and the noble Lord, Lord Fox, on the workers' rights Bill.

It is my great privilege to respond on behalf of the Government today, covering the vital work of no fewer than seven departments. It reminds me of those rounds of a Christmas quiz with a variety of themes, but where the questions are set by some of the sharpest minds in our country and where one-word answers from the Minister responding are not generally the norm.

What unites the work of all of those departments are the central aspirations of this Government: to put fairness at the heart of our work, to level up the whole of our United Kingdom and to secure the long-term future of this country for generations to come.

Although I may have been given the parliamentary graveyard shift to conclude these Queen's Speech debates, it is also an excellent opportunity to set out our ambitious plans for a new decade of prosperity for the UK. My noble friend Lady Blackwood eloquently opened this debate by showing us the way. My noble friend Lord Bates—our new fragrant Peer—reminded us of the need for optimism and belief in ourselves

and in our country. As he pointed out, the UK has some impressive statistics to shout about. Let us not talk ourselves down.

Before I continue, I want to congratulate the noble Baroness, Lady Blower, on her excellent maiden speech. She has given us notice that she will have much to contribute to this House on the important subjects of teaching, children's welfare and teachers' prospects, including—as I think she mentioned—salaries and recruitment.

The Prime Minister has made it clear that he will work for the whole of the country, and fairness in society is a central theme. As the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Portsmouth said, we are all bound together—one nation.

I turn, first, to housing, and I hope to meet at least one of the tests set by my noble friend Lady Stroud. We are committed to increasing the supply of social housing and we will renew our affordable homes programme. To reassure the noble Baroness, Lady Warwick, we have already made £9 billion available through this to deliver 250,000 new affordable homes.

Secondly, we will continue to boost supply and will further transform planning with our planning White Paper, which I hope will address some of the points raised by the noble Baroness, Lady Thornton. Thirdly, we will help more people to own their own home by introducing discounted first homes for local people. However, that sense of fairness must continue once you own your home. We are committed to banning new leasehold houses and reducing ground rent on new leases to zero. We are also committed to ensuring a fair deal for existing leaseholders by working with the Law Commission to make buying your freehold, or extending your lease, easier, quicker and cheaper.

We will ensure a better deal for renters, too, by removing the threat of no-fault evictions while also ensuring that landlords can regain possession of properties for truly valid reasons. We are driving up standards and professionalism in the sector, and expanding the scope of our database of rogue landlords and property agents. Finally, our new lifetime deposit will ease the burden on tenants when they choose to move.

The noble Baroness, Lady Maddock, raised the point about energy standards in homes, and this plays nicely into the comments made by the noble Baroness, Lady Boycott, about one of the greatest challenges that we face: climate change. These improved standards on energy and homes include energy performance. Since 1 April 2018, landlords in the private rented sector must ensure that their property meets a minimum standard of energy performance, which should help to reduce fuel costs for tenants. Improving home energy efficiency is the most sustainable way to tackle fuel poverty, and an important step towards achieving net zero. Our energy company obligation scheme is currently set at £640 million per year and requires energy companies to upgrade the homes of low-income and vulnerable families.

This leads me neatly on to say that this Government are committed to ensuring that people are also safe in their homes. First, we will reintroduce the Domestic Abuse Bill. The Bill will, for the first time, give local authorities a legal obligation to support victims, survivors and their children, by providing life-saving support in

safe accommodation, and helping victims to leave their abusive situation by protecting their security of tenure.

There was a theme of vulnerable children and, indeed, poverty and the protection of children, led by the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Gloucester and the noble Baronesses, Lady Blower and Lady Benjamin. The Government have invested more than £15 billion since 2011 through the pupil premium, which was mentioned earlier, to support the most disadvantaged pupils. In addition, it was recently announced that up to £165 million has already been made available for the troubled families programme to be extended in 2020-21. This will ensure that more families get access to the vital early support that they need to overcome complex problems such as anti-social behaviour, mental health issues and domestic abuse. Compared with 2010, there are 730,000 fewer children in workless households, which is a record low.

Another theme of the debate was online harms. I want to talk about the White Paper and the importance of protecting people online. This was raised, not least by the noble Lord, Lord Griffiths, the noble Baronesses, Lady Howe and Lady Benjamin, and the noble Viscount, Lord Colville. We plan to respond to the consultation in the coming months, which answers a question raised by the noble Baroness, Lady Thornton. The response will reflect our extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. We will outline next steps ahead of legislation. In the coming months, as we have announced, the Government will publish interim codes on online content and activity relating to terrorism and child sexual exploitation.

The second major area is around building safety. Two and a half years since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, it remains our priority to have a building safety system that people can trust will keep them and their loved ones safe. We accept, in full, the principle of the findings of phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower inquiry. I reassure the noble Baroness, Lady Warwick, that we will take these matters forward urgently, together with recommendations from the Hackitt review, shortly responding to our *Building a Safer Future* consultation and progressing the building safety Bill. Taken together, they will form a central part of our new and enhanced regulatory regime for building safety and construction products—a regime that will also ensure that residents have a stronger voice.

We will also soon introduce the fire safety Bill, which puts the scope of the fire safety order beyond doubt by including external walls—including cladding—and the front doors to individual flats in multi-occupied residential blocks. Where primary legislation is not needed in this area, we have lost no time in taking action. This includes: making £600 million available to replace unsafe ACM cladding, with 90% of remediation in the social sector already started or completed; banning combustible materials on the external walls of new high-rise buildings containing flats; and consulting on changes to building regulations to lower the height threshold for sprinklers.

As phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower inquiry begins this month, we will continue to support the bereaved and survivors of that tragedy for the long term. As we

help those affected to rebuild their lives, the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission, made up of representatives of the bereaved survivors and local residents, will determine a fitting way to remember those lives so tragically lost.

I wish to reflect on the second theme of the gracious Speech: levelling up every part of our United Kingdom. It is an ambitious agenda: to level up power, level up investment and level up opportunity. As we leave the EU, we have a unique chance to give communities power over the decisions that affect their lives. Our devolution White Paper will set out our plan for English devolution, including creating more mayoral combined authorities with genuine power and accountability. We will also level up investment in transport as part of a wider infrastructure revolution, boosting links here in the UK and with trading partners around the world. We have set out details of our £100 billion infrastructure programme, including creating a Midlands rail hub, boosting Northern Powerhouse Rail and restoring vital domestic links. I have taken note of the points raised by the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, on HS2, although I cannot enlighten him on any of the timescales that he has asked for at this time.

We will also boost our £22 billion-a-year aviation industry with our Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill, which also tackles issues with drones. We are also mitigating events that cause real passenger misery, from reforming how we deal with airline insolvency, such as the issues raised over Thomas Cook, to keeping minimum numbers of services running during transport strike action, ensuring that unions can no longer hold the travelling public to ransom.

We are also levelling up on opportunity, as the noble Lord, Lord Young of Norwood Green, highlighted. He is right that we are going to improve the apprenticeship levy. I just wanted to get that in. Technical and further education will be at the heart of this opportunity push, which is why we have given a £400 million boost to education for 16 to 19 year-olds next year. We have set out plans to deliver 20 new institutes of technology, connecting science and tech students to business and industry.

However, levelling up must also start earlier, as the noble Lord, Lord Young, mentioned. He spoke about the importance of early years, as did my noble friend Lady Wylde. We are boosting funding for primary and secondary schools, with a total of £14 billion spread over the next three years, as well as offering an arts premium worth over £100 million to secondary schools, which will fund enriching activities for all pupils. I hope this gives some reassurance to the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, and the noble Baroness, Lady Bull, who are acknowledged champions of the arts in this House.

This Government are determined to level up opportunity so that everyone can fully participate in the life of this country. As raised by the noble Baroness, Lady Thomas, our national strategy for disabled people will be critical to this effort, as will modernising the Mental Health Act. Yes, creating parity between those with mental health problems and physical health problems, as raised by the noble Lord, Lord Bradley, and the noble Baroness, Lady Hollins, is important and on the agenda.

[VISCOUNT YOUNGER OF LECKIE]

Moreover, we will bring forward legislation to ensure that our NHS and patients gain faster access to innovative medicines and world-leading treatments, while maintaining the UK as a destination of choice for manufacturers to bring medicines to market.

I want to reflect on a further aspiration of this Government: to secure the long-term future of this country for generations to come. As my noble friends Lord Hunt of Wirral and Lord Leigh of Hurley said, we are in a strong fiscal position. Our day-to-day spending is under control, with near-record low borrowing costs, so we can afford to invest more in growing our economy while keeping control of borrowing and debt, which answers directly a question asked by my noble friend Lord Leigh.

That work to put us on a secure financial footing began a decade ago. Today, just to remind the House, we have 3.7 million more people in work, we have cut borrowing by over four-fifths as a share of GDP, the proportion of low-paid jobs is at a 20-year low and wage growth is outstripping inflation. The gracious Speech sets out how we will build on this strong record to support working families with the cost of living, including increasing the national living wage and the national insurance threshold. Our new Pension Schemes Bill will further support pension saving, setting out plans to give the Pensions Regulator greater powers and a framework for online pensions dashboards.

Another key theme raised during the debate was productivity, raised by the noble Lords, Lord Fox and Lord Griffiths, the noble Baronesses, Lady Bull, Lady Kramer and Lady Rock, and my noble friends Lord Tugendhat and Lord Flight. Increasing productivity is the best way to boost wages, improve living standards and enhance prosperity. We will continue to invest responsibly, including by creating a new national skills fund and committing to our target of 2.4% of GDP being spent on R&D. The national infrastructure strategy will focus on levelling up and connecting every part of the country, and addressing the critical challenges posed by climate change, building on the UK's world-leading commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

On the issues raised by the noble Baroness, Lady Bull, the creative industries not only make a valuable cultural contribution to the UK, as she would know, but are an important part of our dynamic and diversified economy. As she said, I also understand that my noble friend Lord Duncan has committed to meeting with her to discuss these matters.

Securing our long-term future is the idea behind our record levels of funding for the NHS of £33.9 billion by 2023-24, which will be enshrined in law. It is a figure that has received input from clinicians. That responds to the comments from the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of London and the noble Lord, Lord Hunt of Kings Heath, and their challenges on that number. We will publish draft legislation with proposals to help deliver the goals, and ambitions of the NHS long-term plan.

I will say a little more about our manifesto commitments. This plays into questions raised by the noble Baronesses, Lady Greengross and Lady Jolly, and the noble Lords, Lord Freyberg, Lord Dubs and

Lord Kakkar. We are embarking on a long-term programme of investment in our NHS buildings, estates and equipment. This will be the biggest, boldest hospital-building programme in a generation.

We recognise how incredibly hard our NHS staff work, day in, day out. We have committed to delivering 50,000 more nurses in our NHS by 2025. We will do this through a combination of investing in and diversifying our training pipeline, and recruiting and retaining more nurses in the NHS. Critically, our upcoming work towards urgent social care reform in England by establishing cross-party consensus and bringing forward the necessary proposals and legislation will help us fix the crisis in social care for the long term. This theme was definitely a major part of this debate, and we are aware that successive Governments have not managed to tackle this, as my noble friend Lord Forsyth pointed out.

I will say a little more about this, as many Peers raised the issue of funding—I will not mention the names. Many Peers asked about the steps taken to ensure that the social care system has the funding it needs. The Government have recognised the pressures that local authorities face on social care. That is why, in 2020-21, we have given local authorities access to over £5.5 billion of dedicated funding across adults' and children's social care. This includes providing councils with £1 billion of new grant funding for adult's and children's social care, and we are proposing a 2% council tax precept for adult social care that will enable councils to access a further £500 million.

We remain determined to find a long-term solution to the challenges of social care to ensure that every person is treated with dignity. However, as a good few Peers have mentioned, the number of reports published in recent years suggesting different approaches to reform demonstrate the lack of consensus across the political parties to ensure that the reforms we progress are viable into the future.

I have listened carefully to so many of the comments raised by noble Lords and have also had words on the Front Bench with my noble friend Lady Blackwood. She has pledged to take all the comments raised today back to my right honourable friend Matt Hancock in the other place. I hope there is a head of steam on making sure that strong views are presented.

Securing our long-term future is also behind our ambitions to support our high streets by reducing the burden of business rates; publishing a draft national security and investment Bill, to strengthen the Government's powers to investigate and intervene in business transactions, such as takeovers and mergers, to protect our national security; and ensuring that, after we leave the EU, we both maintain our world-leading financial services regulatory standards and remain open to international markets, and keep the highest standards for workers' rights, through our employment rights Bill, which I alluded to earlier.

My noble friend Lord Hodgson spoke about responsible capitalism and mooted changes to our audit regime and limited liability. He raised a variety of other matters. These are major issues, also raised by my noble friend Lord Wakeham in regard to changes to strengthen regulation.

Edmund Burke urged us to

“obey ... the great law of change ... the most powerful law of nature”.

I hope I have convinced your Lordships today that change is surely coming. At the dawn of our new decade, we have a chance to think anew about the great challenges of our time. The gracious Speech does exactly that, laying out a bold and positive vision for the future, one that will improve opportunities for countless people in the years and decades ahead.

Motion agreed nemine dissentiente, and the Lord Chamberlain was ordered to present the Address to Her Majesty.

European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill

First Reading

7.06 pm

A Bill to implement, and make other provision in connection with, the agreement between the United Kingdom and the EU under Article 50(2) of the Treaty on European Union which sets out the arrangements for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU.

The Bill was introduced by the Earl of Courtown, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

House adjourned at 7.06 pm.

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