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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

OFFICIAL REPORT

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The abbreviation [V] after a Member's name indicates that they contributed by video call.

The following abbreviations are used to show a Member's party affiliation:

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

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House of Lords

Wednesday 9 November 2022

11 am

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Durham.

Oaths and Affirmations

11.05 am

Lord Ashcombe took the oath, following the by-election under Standing Order 9, and signed an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Baroness Morrissey took the oath.

Iran: Women Protesters

Question

11.06 am

Asked by Lord Mann

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Government of Iran about the treatment of women protesters in that country.

The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) (Con): My Lords, the death of Mahsa Amini and all those who have since lost their lives standing up to the authorities in Iran is, simply put, a tragedy. We stand in absolute solidarity with, and in awe of, the extraordinary bravery shown by Iranian women and girls. The Iranian Government must now listen to their people. We have made our views clear to Iran in the strongest terms; most recently, I spoke to Iran's representative here in the UK on 26 October. We have robustly condemned Iran's crackdown on protestors, including at the UN Human Rights Council, the Security Council and the General Assembly, and we have sanctioned the morality police and two of its leaders, as well as five other officials responsible for human rights violations. Our message is clear: Iran must change course—and change course now.

Lord Mann (Non-Afl): Will we take advantage of the opportunity of England and Wales playing Iran in the FIFA World Cup to celebrate the warmth and vibrancy of the Iranian people, who are browbeaten, and worse, into living a monochrome existence by a regime terrified of its own people?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): I agree that the World Cup provides an opportunity to celebrate. The fact that Iran is in the same group as two of the home nations also reflects the fact that football is a real celebration. In Iran itself, we have seen a real strength and courage, and a real vision of what the people of Iran want. As we have said consistently across the years, our fight is not with the Iranian people. Iran has a rich culture with incredible people, and it is about time that the Iranian Government recognised the strength of their own people as well.

Lord Polak (Con): My Lords, I am the only Member of your Lordships' House who has been blacklisted by the Iranian regime, which is a badge of honour that I wear with pride. Two weeks ago, I asked two questions: why have we not proscribed the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and why have we not taken a lead at the United Nations to ensure that Iran is immediately suspended and removed as a member of the Commission on the Status of Women? I now add a third question: why, two weeks later, has the FCDO not taken any action? Why are we quick to speak and condemn, but oh so slow to take meaningful action?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, first, I pay tribute to my noble friend's work in this regard. On his first question, on the IRGC, of course it is a despicable organisation and we have continued to see that that is the case. Of course, I know the strength of feeling in your Lordships' House and, as I cannot speak specifically to any future proscription, I note the strength of feeling, which very much reflects my own personal views in this respect.

On the issue of the CSW, I apologise—that is something that the FCDO has specifically led on. I assure my noble friend that in the past two weeks—how can I put it?—a change has yet again been part of government, and we have seen a new Prime Minister. Nevertheless, I assure my noble friend that on the CSW I directed officials immediately, and we are working very closely, hand in glove, with the United States and other partners to ensure the removal of Iran from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. It cannot be right that Iran continues to be part of that body.

Lord Purvis of Tweed (LD): My Lords, the young women of Iran are an inspiration, but the Iranian regime is profiting from additional oil sales and it was confirmed this week that a major buyer of Iranian oil is India. At the very same time, the UK is offering wider market access to the very financing institutions that are purchasing this oil, circumventing UN sanctions. Does the Minister agree that we are not doing the women of Iran a service if we are turning a blind eye to our friends who are supporting the regime by making it more profitable?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, I assure the noble Lord that we are not turning a blind eye, whether on the issue of Iran or the issue of Ukraine. There are countries, partners and friends of ours that have different perspectives. I cannot speak to their foreign policy, but I can assure the noble Lord that we are robust in putting to them the United Kingdom's position, and our position on Iran is of course very clear.

Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab): My Lords, I recognise what the Government have been doing, particularly at the United Nations, and I recognise what we have been doing Government to Government. However, the real issue here is how we support those very people who are on the street, how we support civil society and how we amplify those voices. Faith leaders need to be heard across the board, as do civil society organisations globally. Can the Minister assure us that we are supporting those organisations so that it is the people's voices that are heard, not simply those of Governments?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): I can give the noble Lord that assurance. I lead on the freedom of religion or belief, and indeed on engagement with civil society, and the noble Lord knows how important and central they are to my thinking and policy-making. On Iran specifically, I am looking to schedule a meeting with some of the key faith leaders here. What is being done on the ground there is not about religion; it is pure abuse of the rights of women and it must stop.

Lord Cormack (Con): My Lords, should we not also note that not only is Iran persecuting its own people, especially women, it is also supplying drones that are destroying the infrastructure of the Ukrainian people? Has my noble friend communicated that to the Iranian envoy in this country?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, I assure my noble friend that we have been very robust. He raises a very important issue and colleagues in both the FCDO and the Ministry of Defence have made that case very powerfully.

Baroness Chakrabarti (Lab): My Lords, the Minister is a strong and sincere advocate for human rights at home and across the world. Just yesterday, a young woman reporter covering a protest for her media outlet was detained by the police for seven hours without interview before being released. That happened not in Iran but on the M25. Is it really time to be increasing police powers and scrapping our Human Rights Act?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, I speak both for the Government and the FCDO. I thank the noble Baroness for her kind remarks about me personally. The issue of media freedom both at home and abroad is an important one. The United Kingdom has led on this; indeed, I was in Vienna on Friday discussing this very issue of protection of journalists. I do not know the full details of that specific case, but I am sure that my colleagues in the Home Office will have noted it and I will ensure that the noble Baroness gets a reply in that respect.

The Lord Bishop of Durham: To follow up on that, it was reported earlier this week that the lives of two British-Iranian journalists were at risk due to lethal threats from Iran following their coverage of the protests for the news channel Iran International. Will the Government take steps to condemn these threats and encourage the freedom of the press in Iran?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, we will and I do so now.

Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb (GP): My Lords, the Minister mentioned that sanctions had been put on some of the morality police and others. What were those sanctions? Could there not be sanctions on much higher-profile people, such as the ruling caste?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, the noble Baroness rightly raises the issue of sanctions. The sanctions are consistent in their application in terms of travel bans, finances and bank accounts held.

She will know that I cannot speculate on future sanctions policy, but I assure her that we are considering very carefully every element and tool at our disposal in our response to Iran.

NHS: Backlogs

Question

11.15 am

Asked by **Baroness Merron**

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the backlog of the maintenance of NHS buildings, and (2) the impact of the backlog on the capacity of the NHS to deliver services.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Lord Markham) (Con): The NHS publishes the annual *Estates Returns Information Collection*, which provides a detailed breakdown of backlog maintenance. Patient and staff safety is our top priority. While individual NHS organisations are responsible for their estates, we recognise that backlog maintenance can have a significant impact on NHS services. That is why £12 billion in operational capital will be provided to the NHS over the next three years for trusts to maintain and improve the estate.

Baroness Merron (Lab): My Lords, last month, NHS Digital reported that the maintenance backlog had increased by 11% from last year to over £10 billion, with more than half of it posing a high or significant risk to safety or the delivery of healthcare. So does the Minister agree that, if more facilities, operating theatres and buildings had been properly maintained, they could have been used to provide care and reduce waiting times? Having allowed the maintenance backlog to double over the past 12 years, will the Government now fix this?

Lord Markham (Con): I agree that it is an area of key priority; that is why the spend in this year as reported by NHS trusts has gone up by 57%—an increase to £1.4 billion. So we recognise that this needs to be worked on, but I put it in the context of an overall £10 billion capital programme, including a new hospital build. We very much recognise that making sure we have excellent facilities is key to success in the NHS.

Lord Lexden (Con): My Lords, what has become of the great hospital building programme that Mr Boris Johnson promised in the 2019 Conservative election manifesto?

Lord Markham (Con): I am very pleased to say that the hospital programme is very much a feature. We are already working on five hospitals, which are in the process of being delivered. The programme for the 40 hospitals is very much in progress, and we see it as a real opportunity for the UK to take a lead, as we are looking at using a whole new series of modern methods of construction, which we believe will be world leading in this space.

Lord Morse (CB): My Lords, the Minister will no doubt be aware that for a long time it has been the practice of the NHS to rob Peter to pay Paul by appropriating capital budget to supplement revenue deficits. That really needs to stop, as it has led to a massive deficit in estate maintenance across the NHS. Care is being delivered in dilapidated surroundings across the system. That means that this building programme really matters—it is not a question of leaping forward but of making good long-term neglect. So I express to the Minister that if, as a result of the financial review, we find the programme being either delayed or cut, that would be deeply unsatisfactory.

Lord Markham (Con): I agree on the importance of that; as the noble Lord says, often these are easy savings to make, but they are not the right ones. I assure the House that it is a key priority of mine that even such things as operational maintenance, which sounds very unsexy, are a key element in all this. As I say, that is why we have seen a 57% increase in the past year. At £10 billion a year, I hope we all agree that this is a good plan, albeit that there is a lot that needs to be done.

Baroness Manzoor (Con): My Lords, the Public Accounts Committee has stated that £8.6 billion was lost by the DWP last year in overpayments to benefit claimants and fraud. That is £8.6 billion that could be used to maintain the NHS estates. Can my noble friend the Minister say what the Government are doing to ensure that not only are the inefficiencies cut in the NHS, but efficiencies are made within the wider government departments?

Lord Markham (Con): Thank you. I am sure the whole House will agree the need for efficiencies to make sure every pound is well spent. I have a little knowledge in the DWP space. Although it falls outside my responsibilities now, I was the lead NED there and I know that the team worked very hard during the pandemic to make sure that universal credit reached people quickly, and as a result they did not proceed with as many checks as they would do normally. It was deliberate policy to make sure money was paid quickly to those who needed it. At the same time, they absolutely understand that they need now to get on top of it and it is key to their action because, as my noble friend says, the more money we can free up in other departments, the more we can focus it on the front line where we really need it.

Lord Blunkett (Lab): My Lords, I recognise that the noble Lord is new in post and the Secretary of State is sort of new, having been in and out and then back again. But the backlog in repairs is mirrored by the exponential increase in waiting lists. Has this something to do with the atrophy that now exists in the health service due to the changes brought in by Matt Hancock, which have led not to the integration of services but the integration of bureaucracy?

Lord Markham (Con): I can assure the noble Lord that bureaucracy is not the aim of the game and that getting money to the front line is the priority. We have record levels of investment in this area. We are currently devoting about 12% of GDP to health spending,

which sits alongside the highest in the world. That is not to say we do not have to make sure every penny of that is spent effectively and, where possible, on the front line rather than on back office and bureaucracy.

Lord Stoneham of Droxford (LD): My Lords, the key test of any organisation with a backlog of maintenance is whether it sustains that expenditure when it is under financial pressure. So will the Government commit that the extra money they have budgeted for maintenance in the health service will be maintained in real terms when inflation is running at 10%?

Lord Markham (Con): We understand the importance of the programme, as I mentioned, and, in terms of the finances of the country, we have people in high positions who know its importance in the health debate. So the noble Lord can rest assured that it is top of our agenda, and we will be fighting hard to make sure that the capital programme is given the priority it needs.

Baroness Masham of Ilton (CB): My Lords, would the Minister like to visit Masham GP surgery, where I live? He will find it is a GP surgery that needs updating. It was turned down, and one of the doctors left and went to Canada. It is now totally unsuitable for a growing population, for both patients and the staff working there.

Lord Markham (Con): I do recognise the importance of primary care. We know that a lot of the people who turn up to A&E would be better served in the primary care system, so making sure we have good facilities in this place is vital, and again it is something that is part of our agenda. There was an excellent report in this space recently, and it is something we are working towards—so, yes, GP surgeries are very much an important part of this £10 billion programme.

Lord Kamall (Con): My Lords, in response to an earlier question about the hospital building programme, my noble friend the Minister mentioned the modern construction techniques of hospitals. I wonder whether he could enlighten the House on some of the leading technology methods we are looking at when it comes to the new hospital programme.

Lord Markham (Con): Absolutely; I look forward to sharing this with the House in a lot more detail shortly. This is a real opportunity to create a world-leadership position. The idea behind it is to have a standardised approach to building hospitals—hospitals 2.0, as I like to call them—where we look as much as possible to have standard processes, procedures and components, so that we can build them quicker, cheaper and more efficiently, and get economies of scale from doing that. I believe that it will not only pioneer the way we build hospitals in this country but give us an opportunity to be a pioneer worldwide and create a major export industry.

Lord Berkeley (Lab): My Lords, I believe that Prime Minister Johnson promised 40 new hospitals, but the Minister has mentioned five—what has happened to the other 35?

Lord Markham (Con): The other 35—I will happily read them out if the noble Lord wishes—are very much part of the programme, and extensive work and business plans are being performed. I visited one myself, Watford General Hospital, just the other day to go through the plans, so the noble Lord can rest assured that the other 35 are very much still part of the programme.

Bereavement Support

Question

11.26 am

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of London*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take in response to the report by the UK Commission on Bereavement, *Bereavement is Everyone's Business*, published on 6 October, which found that over 40% of respondents who wanted formal bereavement support did not get any.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Lord Markham) (Con): Ensuring that bereavement support is available to those who need it when they need it remains a priority for the Government. The Government have set up a cross-government bereavement working group to ensure better join-up across government. We will use this group to address the recommendations raised in this report, and we will continue to work with the voluntary sector and across all four nations to improve access to support for bereaved individuals.

The Lord Bishop of London: I thank the Minister for his response. During a Westminster Hall debate on 5 July this year, the former Minister for Care and Mental Health, now the Secretary of State for Education, made a commitment that the Government will formally respond to the commission's report. Now that the commission has published its findings, highlighting the challenges that bereaved people face today and setting out our detailed recommendations for improving support in the future, will the Minister reaffirm the Government's commitment formally to respond to the commission's report?

Lord Markham (Con): First, I say on the record that I welcome the support in this area—the title of the report encapsulates the whole issue, in that bereavement is everyone's business. That sums up the whole approach, which is one I totally agree with. We have set up a new policy team to work in this area, and it is meeting with the commission next week to talk about how to address those recommendations. The right reverend Prelate and I have a meeting shortly afterwards, to which I am intending to bring some members of that team so that we can discuss it further.

Baroness Whitaker (Lab): My Lords, one group in particular need of bereavement counselling is young men from the Gypsy and Traveller population. Although the absolute numbers are not very large, the proportion of suicides among that group is far higher than in any other group. Nevertheless, they are not on the NHS register of groups particularly at risk. Will the Minister

ensure that they get proper recognition, in spite of the fact that the absolute numbers are not large, because of the huge preponderance of suicides?

Lord Markham (Con): I agree; we have to address every group. Part of the research into this is about ensuring that every group has access to support. I cannot speak in detail on the group mentioned, but I will make sure that the new team we have set up addresses this, because mental health and the causes of suicide are often the tip of the iceberg, and we need to make sure that every single group is addressed.

Lord Lexden (Con): My Lords, for centuries, people at times of bereavement have turned to their priests, pastors and other spiritual leaders. Should not the Churches, and the Church of England in particular, react to this report by renewing and indeed enlarging their spiritual mission to comfort and succour the bereaved? Or could it be that in the diocese of London there is a feeling that some are no longer equal to this task, it having caused a bereavement in 2020 by driving to suicide a priest who was the friend of my heart in Cambridge years ago, accusing him, falsely, of sex abuse, refusing to disclose the allegations to him and then later asking a coroner to cover up for it?

Lord Markham (Con): I am afraid that I do not have any knowledge of the case in point. As I said before, I welcome the role of the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of London in producing this report, which I know all the bishops and all the Church, of whatever faith, will take directly to heart. Again, I can only repeat the title of the report: *Bereavement is Everyone's Business*. The Church has a key role to play in that, as it fully understands.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff (CB): My Lords, will the Government ensure that groups who are undertaking good bereavement support of children, particularly in schools, are actively engaged in cross-departmental working, given that a large number of children who are acutely bereaved do not get any support at all and often do not have the language with which to express their feelings? Will the Government also ensure that, through the Ministry of Justice, the Prison Service is actively involved? It has been estimated that about four out of five remand prisoners have had a seriously traumatic bereavement experience with no support at all, which has culminated in progressive anger resulting in criminal activity.

Lord Markham (Con): I was very struck when I read the report by the breadth: for every death, five to nine people are bereaved, and often they are young people or people in prison. The truth, as we know, is that it is people across the board. That is why I particularly welcome the new policy team, which has members from the DfE and, I think, the Ministry of Justice; however, I will check, because the point the noble Baroness has made is a good one. The whole point of the policy team is that it is cross-functional, to try to ensure that we really can touch every single point where there are institutions which can help the bereaved.

Lord Rennard (LD): My Lords, I lost my father at the age of three and lost my mother just before I was 17. At that point, my schoolfriends did not know what to say, my teachers' concern was confined to my academic progress, and when I was suffering from the consequences of bereavement while at university, I found no sympathy or support from staff. Recently, half of the respondents to a Childhood Bereavement Network survey said that they had little or no support from their educational setting after bereavement. What can be done to improve access to bereavement services, to improve the training of education professionals in helping young people manage their lives after bereavement, and to help children better understand the process of dying and managing their emotional feelings in those difficult circumstances?

Lord Markham (Con): I thank the noble Lord, and I agree. I have to admit that when I was a child, I failed a friend, because I did not know what to say. As I mentioned, the DfE is part of this working group and we are training 10,000 early years practitioners in this space to try to ensure that they can provide the training that is needed in schools. The number of schools supported in this way is increasing, but today it is still only 35%, so clearly there is more work to be done. The noble Lord can rest assured that we take this very seriously.

Baroness Browning (Con): Does my noble friend agree that the pain of bereavement, for all people, under whatever circumstances somebody has died, is a pain like no other? Will he consider the need to act swiftly for people whose loved ones have died—perhaps I might use the word—prematurely? Sudden death brings with it a shock that requires professional support from well-trained people, and which lasts for a very long time, if not a lifetime. Will he also consider whether registrars of death should hold in their offices a lot more localised information, with good contacts and reliable resources that can be made immediately available when a death is registered?

Lord Markham (Con): Yes, and again, that is where I welcome the report, which sets out how we must all ensure that we are training people to respond in the most appropriate way possible. I see our role in this as enablers, so that we can get the right people and put the right support in place at every level and in every circumstance. Clearly, where there is a sudden death, that adds a particular circumstance that needs a different approach. Again, that is why I welcome the report and the policy team, and I look forward to meeting with the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of London later to ensure that we are covering all these different examples.

Ambulance Delays Question

11.36 am

Tabled by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking in response to reports of long ambulance waits for serious conditions, including heart attacks and strokes.

Baroness Merron (Lab): On behalf of my noble friend Lord Hunt of Kings Heath, and with his permission, I beg leave to ask the Question standing in his name on the Order Paper.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Lord Markham) (Con): I hope I will get better at this with practice.

We are increasing NHS capacity to reduce delays and support ambulance services in getting to patients as quickly as possible. This includes action to deliver the equivalent of 7,000 extra NHS beds and £500 million in funding to help speed up patient discharge. NHS England is providing direct support to our most challenged hospitals on ambulance handover delays, as well as £150 million of additional funding for ambulance trusts and a further £20 million to upgrade the ambulance fleet.

Baroness Merron (Lab): My Lords, has the Minister been able to watch the ITV investigation broadcast in which we saw case after case of paramedics graphically describing the desperate situations they are trying to deal with? I note that, in response, his departmental spokesperson said that they recognised the problem. Will the Minister agree to report back to your Lordships' House on what the Government are doing, when and how, to ensure that people are not left waiting for ambulances, particularly with the anticipated winter crisis on the horizon?

Lord Markham (Con): I thank the noble Baroness. I have been made aware of the TV series and it is on my watch list. I am looking forward to going out overnight on an ambulance control shortly to learn at first hand. Tomorrow, I am visiting ambulance response teams and leaders in the field in the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells area. Ambulances are of key importance; they are the "A" in the ABCD plan, and that plan very much features in everything we are doing. We are active on that and will rightly report, as we are here, on a continuing basis, and, as the noble Baroness knows, regularly report the statistics to ensure that we are on top of the problem.

Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen (Con): My Lords, the delayed response to category 1 incidents by ambulances is really due to a systems failure, whereby those who should be treated in the community are unable to be, and those who are in hospital blocking beds are unable to go back into the community, where they should be treated. I ask my noble friend the Minister what plans there are to improve social care. I also congratulate him on answering four Questions today. As a nurse, I prescribe a strong drink at the end of the afternoon.

Lord Markham (Con): I thank my noble friend for probably the best advice and question I have received in my marathon series. I could answer her question at great length, because I agree that this is a whole-system issue and we need a whole-system response. I would happily talk about every aspect of that but I will pick up just a couple of the specific points that she made. Social care is clearly vital to this. That is what the £500 million discharge fund is for. We are all aware—noble Lords have probably heard me say it enough times—that

[LORD MARKHAM]

13% of our beds are occupied in this way. As my noble friend states, an ambulance will visit a home and 50% of the time will not end up conveying someone into hospital. Is having an ambulance there, with three people in it, the best use of our resources when perhaps a paramedic on a bike could solve it just as well? In a similar vein, my understanding is that roughly 50% of all A&E attendances are people who do not really need emergency treatment. Again, that goes to the point about making sure that they have opportunities to receive primary care appointments, which is what the pledge to increase appointments by 50 million is all about. This is a whole-system problem and something that we are working on with a whole-system approach.

Lord Tomlinson (Lab): The Minister referred to the ABCD. I remember from when I read about it—it treats us rather like kindergarten children, does it not?—that “A” is for “ambulances”. But the big idea for ambulances in that document from the former Deputy Prime Minister was to create an auxiliary ambulance service. As the problem with the ambulance service at the moment is getting patients out of ambulances and into hospitals, what good will an auxiliary ambulance service do if it merely gets more people into hospital car parks, where more of them are waiting in more ambulances?

Lord Markham (Con): The noble Lord is referring to the whole-system issue here, which I mentioned before. There is a £450 million investment to increase capacity in A&E facilities; that has already worked to upgrade 120 trusts to enable them to offload quickly. There are also 7,000 extra beds, and the £500 million social care discharge fund is all about freeing up more beds so that ambulances can discharge quicker.

Baroness Watkins of Tavistock (CB): My Lords, I must declare that I am a former deputy chair of an ambulance trust that was an exceptional performer but is no longer, associated with the fact that, in some circumstances, it cannot get patients admitted to two of its largest local hospitals in under four hours. The problem is social care, not increasing the number of ambulances on the roads. Will the Government consider much more innovative approaches to respite care support for people who are ready to leave hospital and whose families cannot afford to leave work to look after them but, with incentives, probably could do so? That would be a practical way of moving the system forward at the moment.

Lord Markham (Con): I agree with the noble Baroness that social care is a key solution to all this. As I said, that is what is behind the 13% of beds that are currently blocked and the £500 million spend in this area. However, we can be more innovative. That is what the virtual ward initiative, which I saw working so well in Watford, is about; it has reduced reattendance rates after 90 days from 46% to around 8% for COPD patients. This is an area where we need focus and innovation, and which is very much top of my agenda.

Lord Rennard (LD): My Lords, as the Minister has already suggested, part of the problem is unnecessary call-outs to ambulance services for people who do not

need admission to hospital. Care homes regularly call on ambulance services to lift their fallen residents, even though more than 45% are uninjured and do not require transportation to hospital. If care homes had the right equipment to lift people safely, an ambulance may not be needed after a fall. Some ambulance services are providing this kind of equipment to care homes, from their own resources, to reduce the number of unnecessary call-outs. Should we not ensure that all such homes and blocks of sheltered accommodation have access to this kind of equipment, which would get people up more quickly, reduce the number of call-outs and save money?

Lord Markham (Con): Many noble Lords have talked today about what is a whole-system problem, which the noble Lord has mentioned in terms of care homes. It is all about treating people in the right place, with the right equipment, so I absolutely agree with this approach. It is the approach that we are taking to make sure that people are treated in the right place, so I will take the noble Lord’s suggestion back to the department.

Baroness McIntosh of Pickering (Con): My Lords, I remind the House of my interest in the Dispensing Doctors’ Association. My noble friend has rightly identified the problem of underfunding in primary care. What is he going to do at this time to address the chronic underfunding in the delivery of primary care in rural areas?

Lord Markham (Con): The government pledge of 50 million additional appointments is across the country. It is the job of the ICBs to make sure that each area is well catered for; the idea is that this is felt in every area, including rural areas. I am glad to say that we are making good progress on our target to increase appointments by 50 million and, rest assured, I am working with the integrated care boards and their systems to ensure that they touch every part of England, including rural areas.

Lord Patel (CB): My Lords, the Minister said that this is a systems failure. Who in the Government is responsible and when will the system be fixed?

Lord Markham (Con): I think I said this is a systems issue. It is something on which we—including me and the Secretary of State—are very focused, because we need to address it across the piece. That is what the ABCD plan is all about. I am very confident that, over the coming weeks and months, we will start to see improvements from the investment we are making in 7,000 more beds and £500 million more into adult social care discharge.

Alaa Abd el-Fattah: Hunger Strike

Private Notice Question

11.47 am

Asked by **Baroness Boycott**

To ask His Majesty’s Government what action they are taking to assist British citizen Alaa Abd el-Fattah, who is currently on hunger strike in Egyptian detention, and since Sunday refusing to drink water.

Baroness Boycott (CB): I beg leave to ask a Question of which I have given private notice. I declare a relevant interest, which is that I am an old friend of Alaa Abd el-Fattah's aunt, the journalist and writer Ahdaf Soueif.

The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) (Con):

My Lords, I recognise and share the deep concern felt by the noble Baroness, as well as by many other noble Lords and colleagues in the other place, about the situation with Mr el-Fattah. We also appreciate what an incredibly difficult time this must be for his whole family. I am also deeply concerned about Mr el-Fattah's welfare following his escalation to a dry hunger strike on 6 November, in protest at his lack of consular access and the conditions of his detention. I assure the noble Baroness that Ministers and officials have continuously raised issues of his detention and the need for consular access with the Government of Egypt, on numerous occasions, including directly with the President.

Baroness Boycott (CB): I thank the noble Lord very much for that. We have talked about this before and I know that he is entirely on the right side on this. Mr el-Fattah campaigned for democracy during the Arab spring; had things gone differently, this Government would have worked closely with him to bring democracy to Egypt. In fact, he has spent the last nine years in some of the most inhuman prisons that Egypt can come up with. As we know, he has been on a hunger strike, on 100 calories a day, for over 200 days now. Using the worldwide attention that COP is bringing, he started a water strike on Sunday. I am in contact with his aunt: the family have no proof of consciousness and no proof of life. His sister has been at the jail this morning: they have not accepted a letter. They have no idea whether he is being force-fed and no idea what conversations took place between our Prime Minister and President Sisi when they met in Sharm el-Sheikh earlier this week. I find it hard to believe, as he is a British citizen who is very likely to die—indeed, as I speak, he may well be dead—that we cannot apply some more pressure to rescue this extremely important man. It actually would not matter who he was: he is a British citizen in serious trouble.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, I agree. We must apply all the levers we have. This was a major part of my right honourable friend the Prime Minister's meeting with President Sisi, including re-emphasising that Alaa is a British citizen; indeed, that was a point I made on Sunday when I spoke to the Egyptian ambassador. The fact that we want consular access is not something that we have dreamed up. It is something that should be granted as a matter of fact.

I also met both sisters last week before one of them travelled out; one is still here. They are concerned that he is not taking water. On the issue of proof of life, I know that their mother is outside the jail asking for that weekly letter. What is required urgently is confirmation of that very issue. We will press, and are pressing, on that point. Again, it is a basic fact of reassurance that the family need.

We are pushing on his detention and consular access. My right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary met Foreign Minister Shoukry and raised this issue. I also know that the United Nations has made representations: Volker Türk, the human rights commissioner, put out a very strong statement coinciding with what is in effect a UN conference. I do not want to beat around the bush in any way: while there has been constructive engagement, we have not yet been granted consular access. That is unacceptable. I assure all noble Lords—and the noble Baroness in particular, with her family connections—that I am fully invested in this. I am trying to do everything within my capacity, but am also ensuring that the Prime Minister and my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary are fully versed with the issue and are engaging most directly.

Baroness Smith of Basildon (Lab): My Lords, I do not think that anyone in your Lordships' House doubts the noble Lord's commitment on this, or that he believes every word that he has said about doing what he can to help. But this is not a new issue. A British citizen may be dying—may indeed have died—in an Egyptian jail. As his condition deteriorates, it is absolutely essential that he has British consular access; it is not just a “nice to have”. I welcome that the Prime Minister apparently raised his case directly but, if even the Prime Minister cannot secure consular access for a British citizen, what happens next? The Government have to escalate this, to step up the pressure, because the pressure on his family and friends is beyond belief. Imagine that we were in that situation, of not knowing if a wrongly imprisoned loved one was dead or alive: it is just inconceivable. Has it been made clear to the noble Lord's Egyptian counterparts and other relevant Ministers that there will be—and could be very soon—serious diplomatic consequences for their actions? Can he really say that he is confident that the Government have done enough?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, no one knows how it feels for the family. I know there was a small intervention when I was not Minister for North Africa for a brief period, but meeting them directly that was one of the first actions I took in the role. Both sisters were outside the FCDO and I invited them in, because for me that was just the basic and human thing to do. We discussed the matter quite specifically. I totally take on board what the noble Baroness said. I will reassure her, to this extent: while the broader relationship with the Egyptians is an important one, this has a massive bearing on the nature of that relationship.

Equally, I know that colleagues in your Lordships' House and the other place, including the shadow Foreign Secretary, are very much invested in this. Indeed, he is the constituency MP. I have spoken to him briefly previously, but I will reach out to specific people to update them in as detailed a manner as I can, and I will of course update the House.

I assure noble Lords that, of all the priorities I look at within my brief, the issue of whatever can be done to save the life of a British citizen ranks right up there in terms of my personal and political priorities, and the priorities for the Government. I will continue to work and to inform noble Lords of our work in this

[LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON]

respect, but I and the Government get it. We should be pulling all the levers at our disposal to ensure that we get the basic right for every British citizen to have consular access. First and foremost, as the noble Baroness, Lady Boycott, reminded us, we need to ensure that his welfare, which includes him being alive, is also verified by the authorities.

Lord Purvis of Tweed (LD): My Lords, why has the Prime Minister been unable to secure information that a British citizen is alive? What actions did President Sisi provide in response to our Prime Minister's meeting with him? The Minister said that UK officials being unable to secure consular access to a British citizen is unacceptable. I agree, but what consequences are there? There is a UK-Egypt association agreement that offers preferential trading with the UK to Egypt. There are mechanisms to pause this agreement on the basis of human rights abuses. Will the Government now indicate to Egypt that we intend to pause those preferential trading arrangements until proper consular access to a British citizen can be provided to the UK?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, I am not going to go into the detail of what our next steps may be, but I will pick up specifically the point on consular access. The noble Lord is fully aware of the fact that Egypt does not regard him as a dual citizen; it regards him as an Egyptian citizen. That has been a real bone of contention. The fact is that he is a British citizen and I can confirm that he has a British passport and should be given consular access. The Prime Minister raised that issue directly and specifically. We are pressing for release or the first step, which is consular access, to be secured, because that is the follow-up step. I cannot say what broader measures might be taken, but I fully take on board the points the noble Lord raised. I am in maybe a quite unique position, in that I am not just the Minister responsible for our relations with Egypt; I am also the Minister responsible for human rights. I take that second responsibility most seriously.

Lord Trefgarne (Con): My Lords, are there any Egyptian citizens currently serving in British prisons? If so, how are they being treated?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, my noble friend asked a quite specific question. I am sure the numbers can be confirmed by our colleagues in the Home Office. I am sure that they are being treated fairly, being given access and have their rights respected, in accordance with the standards of how we expect prisoners should be treated. That is an important attribute that we have for any person in any detention in any British prison.

Baroness Chakrabarti (Lab): My Lords, I am grateful to the Minister for his answers so far, but put very simply, does he agree with the following proposition: friendly nations do not deprive each other of consular access to their citizens? That is what hostile nations do. If His Majesty's Government cannot protect Alaa in Egypt, it will be harder to protect British citizens all over the world.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): I agree with the noble Baroness. It is a primary responsibility. When you take any oath or any position in government from any place in your Lordships' House or the other place, the primary responsibility every Minister swears to is the security and safety of our citizens. It is the primary duty of any Government of whatever political colour. That remains the focus of the current British Government.

I fully accept that we have not gained consular access, but I welcome questions and challenge such as this, because it is not just a Minister saying to the Egyptian authorities that this is a matter of concern or priority for the British Government and that we will be challenged; we are being challenged, and rightly so, because it is a strength of our democracy. The whole essence of Alaa's detention is that he is someone who feels that democracy is an important element in any progressive inclusive society.

We are friends with Egypt and have an important relationship with Egypt. I agree with the noble Baroness that that should lead to them facilitating immediate consular access to a British citizen.

Lord Russell of Liverpool (CB): My Lords, Alaa is not able to be with us, but perhaps I could let him speak for himself from his writings. This is from when he first went on hunger strike in 2014: "The health of my body is of no value as long as it is forced to submit to an unjust power in an open-ended imprisonment that has nothing to do with law or justice ... I ask for your prayers. I ask for your solidarity. I ask you to continue where I have stopped: to fight, to dream, to hope." We have heard many optimistic-sounding words from the Government in a variety of forms. I think they have not left any of us with a great deal of hope. I ask the Minister: can he say something which will give us at least a modicum of hope?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, I have received Alaa's book. I have not read all of it, but I have read part of it and totally associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the noble Lord in uttering Alaa's words. Hope should never be given up. This is a very dire situation; we have a British citizen who is now not just on hunger strike but has stopped taking water. His health is of acute importance to us.

What I can give noble Lords—I hope it provides a degree of assurance as I do not know what will happen in the next 24 hours—is that this remains a key priority for me personally as the Minister responsible. I know the Prime Minister has taken this very seriously. One of Mr Johnson's last acts before leaving government—literally on his day of departure—was to ring and again emphasise directly the importance of this case.

I will update the House and hope I can provide hope in future answers. At this point, I can only stress and repeat that the Government have taken all measures in terms of direct engagement with Mr Sisi, the Foreign Minister and the ambassador here in the Court of St James. We will continue to do so. Ultimately, we hope—indeed, we pray—that Alaa will be given consular access and ultimately be released and reunited with his family.

Lord Cormack (Con): My Lords, I am sure we all appreciate the manner in which my noble friend has answered these very difficult questions about a very

tragic case, and let us hope that the ultimate tragedy does not occur. Does this not raise a wider issue as to where international conferences, and even sporting events, should be held? Should we not be a little discerning? Would it not in fact have been better for this United Nations conference to be held at the United Nations? It gives a degree of encouragement to allow countries that have fairly repressive regimes to strut the world stage and act as hosts to incredibly important international gatherings.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Lords, obviously decisions are made about locations for particular events. In defence of the United Nations, while the conference has been going on, we have seen—and I spoke earlier of—the response of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, who is the most senior official and very close to the Secretary-General António Guterres. They have put out a very blunt and specific statement on this case. While we appreciate the Egyptians hosting this conference on the important priority of tackling climate change, which is for many an existential threat around the world, international conferences provide an opportunity—either directly, as in this case, or more generally through UN human rights organs—to throw a spotlight on specific issues such as human rights within a given country.

Asylum Seekers: Accommodation and Safeguarding

Commons Urgent Question

The following Answer to an Urgent Question was given in the House of Commons on Monday 7 November.

“We have set out on multiple occasions that the global migration crisis is placing unprecedented strain on our asylum system. Despite what they may have been told by many, migrants who travel through safe countries should not put their lives at risk by making the dangerous and illegal journey to the United Kingdom. We are steadfast in our determination to tackle those gaming the system and will use every tool at our disposal to deter illegal migration and disrupt the business model of people smugglers.

So far this year, our French colleagues have prevented over 29,000 crossings and destroyed over 1,000 boats. Furthermore, my right honourable friend the Prime Minister will be speaking with President Macron this week about how, together, we can achieve our shared ambition to prevent further crossings.

Some 40,000 people have crossed the channel on small boats so far this year, and the Government continue to have a statutory responsibility to provide safe and secure accommodation for asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute. To meet that responsibility, we have had to keep people for longer than we would have liked at our processing facility at Manston, but we have been sourcing more bed spaces with local authorities and in contingency accommodation such as hotels.

I can tell the House that, as of 8 am today, the population at the Manston facility was back below 1,600. That is a significant reduction from this point last week, with over 2,300 people having been placed in onward accommodation. I thank my Border Force

officers, members of the Armed Forces, our contractors and Home Office staff, who have worked tirelessly to help achieve that reduction.

Before the high number of arrivals in September, Manston had proven to be a streamlined and efficient asylum processing centre, where biographic and biometric details are taken and assessed against our databases, asylum claims registered and the vulnerable assessed. We are determined to ensure that Manston is back to that position as soon as possible, and I am encouraged by the progress now being made. We must not be complacent. We remain absolutely focused on addressing these complex issues so that we can deliver a fair and effective asylum system that works in the interests of the British people.”

12.04 pm

Lord Coaker (Lab): My Lords, Manston is a catastrophic failure of government policy. Was the local Conservative MP not right when he said it was “wholly avoidable”? Can the Minister explain how it was possible that the Government allowed the numbers to rise to more than 4,000? Was legal advice ignored? The numbers at Manston are now reduced, but what consultation is taking place with local authorities about the use of hotels? How are families and children to be kept safe? For example, will DBS checks be made on all staff so that we can ensure that families and children are safe and housed appropriately?

The Government need to get a grip. They need a proper plan and they need to sort out the administration, which is in chaos, as we saw again today, with asylum applications having risen by more than 305% in the last five years and excessive lengths of time before any decision is made. If the Government cannot sort out the administration, they will not sort out any problem. Instead of firefighting, the Government need to get a grip.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Murray of Blidworth) (Con): I thank the noble Lord for his question. The Government have got a grip; the Labour Party has no plan. I am glad to report to the House that the numbers at Manston have fallen since this Answer was given in the House of Commons. There are now some 1,147 people held at Manston, as at 8 am today, and the numbers are continuing to decline. Every effort is being made by Home Office staff to rectify the position that has occurred. I am incredibly grateful for all the hard work they have done in very difficult circumstances.

Lord Paddick (LD): My Lords, the Minister in the other place said the crisis at Manston was due to an “unprecedented strain” on the immigration system and that the Government inherited a broken immigration system. My understanding is that in 2002 the UK received more than 80,000 asylum claims and in 2021 it was fewer than 50,000, so the situation is not unprecedented. In 2011, the backlog of asylum claims was 11,000, and it is now 118,000. In 2014, 85% of initial decisions were made within six months, but the figure is now 5%. The system was not broken then but it is now. Will the noble Lord ask the Minister in the other place to correct the record?

Lord Murray of Blidworth (Con): I thank the noble Lord for his question. No error was made by Mr Jenrick when he addressed the other place. He was correct to say that the conditions facing the border staff at Manston are unprecedented. We have never had this number of unlawful crossings of the channel. The situation has not been faced before. As the noble Lord rightly observes, there is a problem with the processing of asylum claims. Every effort is being made to accelerate the pace at which asylum claims are resolved. It is clear that there is a backlog, and work is being carried out at pace to develop a method by which that backlog can be reduced.

Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb (GP): My Lords, I am not a member of Labour but I resent that snipe from the Dispatch Box. It is not appropriate here. We are not a student debating society; we are not even the Commons. We respect each other so, please, no more snipes like that.

Secondly, back in July a report said that detention was already often for much longer than 24 hours and that there was overcrowding. Why did the Government not act then? They clearly did not.

Lord Murray of Blidworth (Con): The height of the numbers at Manston was on 30 October. The Government acted as rapidly as they could from that date to reduce the numbers held. They reflected the conditions and the numbers crossing, which therefore led to an increase in the numbers held for processing at Manston. Clearly, the Government's intention is to return Manston wholly to a processing facility not performing any accommodation function.

Lord Deben (Con): My Lords, does my noble friend accept that however difficult this all is, these are people? Many are people in considerable difficulties. Therefore, for them to have to wait the length of time they are now waiting is, frankly, unacceptable. Also, does he agree that the language used should be the language of compassion, not of attack? Will he undertake to say to the Home Secretary that we want to hear voices showing that she understands that these are people and we ought to care about them?

Lord Murray of Blidworth (Con): I entirely agree with my noble friend. The principal mission for the Home Office in respect of these people is to treat all who come to our country with care and compassion, to seek to understand why they have come and then to treat their asylum claims accordingly. I could not agree more with my noble friend.

Baroness Chakrabarti (Lab): My Lords, in the light of the sage counsel from the Minister's noble friend, if the Minister were an asylum seeker in a detention facility, perhaps from a war-torn part of the world, how would he feel to hear the Home Secretary arriving not by a discreet route but via a military helicopter?

Lord Murray of Blidworth (Con): I think the noble Baroness refers to the use of the Chinook by my right honourable friend the Home Secretary. The use of

that helicopter was so that she could see the operations in the channel; it was not for any purpose of sending some sort of message to those residing at Manston. Clearly, it was reasonable given the time available and the items that had to be viewed by the Home Secretary. It is very important that my right honourable friend has every opportunity to see the whole system, so that she understands and can bring forward solutions.

The Lord Bishop of Durham: How will His Majesty's Government ensure that Manston will now remain a 24-hour facility only, in a way that can be scaled up if necessary, and that no children are detained there at all—or, at least, are not detained with adults who they do not know?

Lord Murray of Blidworth (Con): I assure the right reverend Prelate that the Home Office takes very seriously its responsibility towards unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. It seeks to place them into separate accommodation as early as can be achieved. As I say, the welfare of children is among its first priorities.

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Lab): My Lords, despite what the Minister has just said, there is growing concern among civil society groups about what is happening to children caught up in this asylum mess. Can the Minister say exactly what safeguarding mechanisms are in place to protect these children, and to ensure that no child is wrongly classified and treated as an adult?

Lord Murray of Blidworth (Con): I thank the noble Baroness for her question. Clearly, every person who arrives at Manston and says that their age is below 18 is the subject of an age assessment—that is, a neutral evaluation of that status. If they are believed to be children then they are treated, as I say, as a key priority for the Home Office and housed in special hotels, which are secure and provide the necessary support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Baroness Warsi (Con): My Lords, we now know that the far-right attack committed by firebombing a migration centre in Dover was done by a man inspired by far-right extremism. Can my noble friend assure this House that conversations are taking place within the Home Office, and government generally, advising colleagues that sensationalist language from political leaders leads to real consequences and that they should refrain from using it?

Lord Murray of Blidworth (Con): Clearly, I agree with the noble Baroness that sensationalist language should be avoided. I am afraid that, at this stage, I cannot comment further on the firebomb attack, which is obviously still the subject of investigation by the police.

Baroness Wheatcroft (CB): My Lords, the Minister referred to the hotels and the special situation that unaccompanied minors are being kept in. But the fact is that they are being kept in these hotels with security guards outside for many months, with very little support.

A report last month made it clear that they get no education, informal or formal, while they are in those hotels. Is the Minister satisfied with that?

Lord Murray of Blidworth (Con): The noble Baroness's question was predicated on the fact that nobody in the hotels was allowed to leave but that is not the case. Forgive me if I misunderstood her question. As I say, significant steps are clearly taken to afford facilities for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. I undertake to write to the noble Baroness to inform her about the education opportunities. I am afraid I do not have that information immediately to hand.

Abuse and Deaths in Secure Mental Health Units Statement

The following Answer to an Urgent Question was given in the House of Commons on Thursday 3 November.

"I am grateful to the honourable Lady for raising this important question. Everyone in any mental health facility is entitled to high-quality care and treatment and should be kept safe from harm. The findings from the investigation into the deaths of Christie, Nadia and Emily make for painful reading. The death of any young person is a tragedy, and all the more so when that young person should have been receiving care and support. My thoughts and, I am sure, the thoughts of the whole House are with their families and friends, and I want to apologise for the failings of the care that they received.

As I told the House on Tuesday, these incidents are completely unacceptable. The Secretary of State and I are working closely with NHS England and the Care Quality Commission, and they have updated us on the specific situation and the steps that the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust is taking to improve the care at its services. Those include investing £5 million in reducing ligature risks across the estate; improving how it develops and implements care plans for young people; strengthening its policy on observation; and improving staff training and the culture that can exist within the trust.

I recognise that these worrying findings come in the context of broader concerns highlighted by other recent scandals. The Minister for Health and Secondary Care, my honourable friend the Member for Colchester (Will Quince), was at the Dispatch Box last month responding to an urgent question on the unacceptable abuses at the Edenfield Centre. These challenges are, rightly, the subject of sharp focus in my department, and we understand that every part of our system has a responsibility to keep patients safe. That is the driving motivation behind our new mental health safety improvement programme and the patient safety incident response framework.

I am not just the Minister for Mental Health; I am also responsible for patient safety, and I am not satisfied that the failings we have heard about today are necessarily isolated incidents at a handful of trusts. The Secretary of State and I are urgently meeting the national director of mental health to look at the system as a whole, the role of CQC inspections and the system for flagging concerns. I will also be meeting the new patient safety

commissioner to seek her guidance, and based on that, we will make a decision on how we proceed in the coming days."

12.15 pm

Baroness Merron (Lab): My Lords, week after week we return to this Chamber to hear of patients dying when their deaths could have been prevented and patients being bullied, dehumanised and abused, and their medical records falsified, in a scandalous breach of patient safety. This cannot continue. In reflecting that it feels as though it is being left to undercover reporters to expose such terrible failings in patient care, will the Minister action a rapid review of mental health in-patient services? What are the Government doing to ensure that patients' complaints about their care are being taken seriously?

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Lord Markham) (Con): I thank the noble Baroness. I first want to apologise for the failings in the care that Christie Harnett, Nadia Sharif and Emily Moore received. My thoughts, and I am sure the thoughts of this whole House, are with their families and friends. The death of any young person is a tragedy, all the more so when they should have been receiving care and support in a safe place.

The Minister in the Commons is looking much more towards a rapid review rather than a public inquiry, as the feeling is that rapid action is needed. We have seen some good examples of that recently, with Dr Bill Kirkup. It is very much at the top of the agenda and I agree with the noble Baroness; this is the third time I have spoken on similar incidents in the short time I have been here. We clearly need to make sure the proper action is in place to identify these issues.

Baroness Tyler of Enfield (LD): My Lords, when this Question was answered in the other place on 3 November, the Minister said that

"staff shortages often contribute to some of the failings we have seen."—[*Official Report*, Commons, 3/11/22; col. 1021]

These are some of the most horrific cases of abuse and death in so-called secure mental health units I have ever seen. Can the Minister say what emergency intervention funding will be made available, as happens with maternity services put into special measures, to ensure that every mental health patient in a secure unit is in a safe place?

Lord Markham (Con): I agree, and I have been asking similar questions around whether we should be looking for a special measures-type regime in this space. To be fair to the new CEO, who has come in from 2020, he has set out a plan and progress is being made on many steps. It is the focus of the Minister to see whether that progress is quick enough. We understand that staffing is a key issue. We have increased the number of staff by 24,000 since 2016, and almost 7,000 in the last year alone. Clearly, part of this rapid review needs to be around staffing.

Baroness Buscombe (Con): My Lords, I currently chair the Joint Committee scrutinising the draft mental health Bill. This is an important Bill and is the subject

[BARONESS BUSCOMBE]

of both Houses on a cross-party basis. We hope to publish our recommendations in the middle of January. Will my noble friend reassure me and the whole House that great care will be taken to consider the recommendations we put to the Government and that an early response will be brought forward in the light of the fact that it is incredibly important that we see this legislation through as soon as possible?

Lord Markham (Con): I thank my noble friend for the work that she and others are doing in this space. I agree that we need to respond rapidly. As I said, this is very high on Minister Caulfield's agenda, and I assure my noble friend that we will be looking to respond quickly.

Baroness Berridge (Con): My Lords, I am also serving on the Joint Committee mentioned by my noble friend. We received evidence that the highest rate of mortality for those held in custody between 2016 and 2019 was among those held under the Mental Health Act. If you die in a prison or an immigration centre, there will be an independent investigation under the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, and if you die in police custody, the IOPC will investigate. There is no independent investigation should you die while detained under the Mental Health Act. Is that not a lacuna that the Government could look into in relation to deaths while being detained under the Mental Health Act?

Lord Markham (Con): My noble friend raises a good point. My understanding is that the rapid review that we seek to put in place would involve an independent chair, because independence is key in this area. On the detail of whether that should be the case for every death, I will take back that point and respond to my noble friend.

Lord Harris of Haringey (Lab): My Lords, following on from the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, until 2015 I chaired the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody. As she said, the largest number of deaths in custody were those in secure mental health units. There is no independent arrangement. It is all very well to talk about an independent chair, but, essentially, the assessment is being made by those in the same field—sometimes, indeed, in the same institution. The Government are failing their Article 2 obligations on the right to life. How frequently do the Minister and his colleagues in the department meet the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody, and when did they last take note of, and act on, the recommendations it has made?

Lord Markham (Con): I do not have the information to hand on when the last visit was, so I will write to the noble Lord on this. The substance of the question is good: clearly, we cannot have people marking their own homework—for want of a better phrase—in this situation, so I will take back this point. Again, I understand the importance of this; it is vital that these young people, and others in mental health institutes, are supported in the right way. We are spending about £400 million to eradicate dorms, which are often part of the problem, but that is not to say that more does not need to be done.

Baroness Uddin (Non-Affl): My Lords, I declare my interest as a registered social worker. Last year, I had the opportunity to look at mental health services in east London, where the overrepresentation of black and Muslim men is absolutely horrific. Their experiences are vastly different, and there is no recognition of the fact that they are suffering not just bullying but racism and Islamophobia. As the Minister will be aware, the problem is that, as well as cases of bullying, these services are understaffed. More importantly, the staff who are supposed to be supporting these individuals who are very unwell are underqualified and severely underpaid. There is a great deal for us to be concerned about, including underresourcing and staff training. What is the Minister's department doing about this? Having just announced one set of funds after another, which had no effect at all on the ground in those wards, can the Minister say what the reality is on the ground?

Lord Markham (Con): We are investing, and I understand and agree with the point that training is key to this. We have committed to spend £2.3 billion more in 2023-24 in the mental health arena, exactly around this space. It is something that we are working on, and we understand that we need to ensure that the mental health of all our citizens, whatever their race or colour, is well served and looked after.

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Lab): My Lords, as a member of the committee that the noble Baroness, Lady Buscombe, chairs, may I ask the Minister to especially note what she said about the importance of acting quickly on whatever recommendations come forward? Will he also acknowledge that mental health services, not just in secure institutions but across the country, are under very severe strain and that it is when people get into crisis that they are then put into secure units, often because they have not had the help they need before that crisis arrives? Will he please accept that there is a very serious shortage of mental health provision across the country? It would be interesting to know what real impact the numbers he has been able to tell us about today will have on that.

Lord Markham (Con): As previously mentioned, we are investing to increase the provision—I believe it is £2.3 billion in 2023-24, which is a significant sum. We have increased the workforce by 7,000 in this last year alone, and there are plans to increase it further. Clearly, we need to keep that under review. I agree with the premise that prevention is always better than cure in these instances, and we need to make sure that mental health services, training and support are given at the point of need.

Domestic Premises (Electrical Safety Certificate) Bill [HL] *Order of Commitment*

12.25 pm

Lord Foster of Bath (LD): My Lords, I understand that no amendments have been set down to this Bill and that no noble Lord has indicated a wish to move a

manuscript amendment or to speak in Committee. Unless, therefore, any noble Lord objects, I beg to move that the order of commitment be discharged.

Motion agreed.

Music Education

Motion to Take Note

12.26 pm

Moved by Baroness Fleet

That this House takes note of the National Plan for Music Education.

Baroness Fleet (Con): My Lords, I thank all noble Lords for coming today. It is an honour to lead a debate on the national plan for music education, and I am grateful to noble Lords who have put down their names to speak on this important subject. Many will have considerable expertise in this area. I remind your Lordships of my music and education interests as listed in the register.

I take this opportunity to welcome back to his place my noble friend the Minister. He is a great champion of music and the arts, and I look forward to continuing to work with him. I eagerly anticipate all contributions, including from my noble friend Lord Black of Brentwood who, as chairman of the Royal College of Music, has led the way in this House on the benefits of music education and has been a much-valued friend and mentor to me.

I was honoured to be asked to chair the advisory panel for the refreshed national plan. The panel, made up of music teachers, head teachers, music hub leaders and leaders of the music industry, gave its expertise, wisdom and considerable time. I take this opportunity to thank them all. Every single one of them played a huge role and kept me and the department's officials on our toes, informing and challenging us every step of the way.

The 2022 plan is called *The power of music to change lives* for a very good reason. Music gives young people an opportunity to express themselves, explore their creativity, work hard at something, persevere and shine. It is character forming. Music is vital, I believe, for their well-being—it makes them happy. A recent survey by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra showed that 85% of children wanted to learn a musical instrument. Music should be at the heart of every school. Music is not just about learning notes and techniques; it brings young people together, enriches lives and helps emotional and social development. All this filters through to help with grades and exams. Music changes lives.

The plan is very clear about its ambitions. Every child should have access to music, whatever their background—to learn to sing, play an instrument, create music together and have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents. We had the challenge of building on the first national plan for music, commissioned in 2011 by the then Education Secretary, Michael Gove, and the then DCMS Minister, now my noble friend Lord Vaizey. It was a rare, indeed remarkable collaboration between two departments.

The 2011 plan laid the groundwork and set up over 100 music education hubs across the country to deliver music to all schools in their areas. Some progress was made, but not enough. Although many schools do have wonderful music, we recognise there is not yet a level playing field. Many children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are missing out. Music is, arguably, even more important for them.

There is now a better understanding of how music can support early years learning. Music helps reading, listening, concentration and memory. Just think of those nursery rhymes you, my Lords, learnt all those years ago. I still remember my mother, who was born in pre-partition India, now Pakistan, teaching me to sing “Nini Raja”, a Hindustani nursery rhyme. I could, but will not, give you a rendition. Each of us will have a different story about how we first came to music.

I have seen at first hand the profound effect that music can have on young lives. As chair and co-founder of the London Music Fund, set up with the support of the then Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, we gave four-year scholarships to children from disadvantaged backgrounds who had a passion for and a commitment to music. Six years ago, one of our scholars, just 11 years old, played his violin at a fundraising lunch in Mayfair. It was a pretty terrifying experience, but he was enchanting. His mother told us how they, a family of immigrants, lived in a bedsit after a broken marriage. She told the generous donors that music had transformed her son's life and those of the whole family. The mother, by the way, drove a bus at the Peckham bus depot. Earlier this year I watched him, now a strapping teenager and an accomplished grade 8 violinist, take part in a graduation concert with over 100 Music Fund scholars. He plans to study music at university next year. To give another example, Monique was brought up on a challenging high-rise estate but started to learn the clarinet at school and won a scholarship from the London Music Fund. She developed an astonishing work ethic, and so her self-confidence grew. Ten years on, she has taken up a place at Imperial College to read mathematics—music changes lives.

We would all like to see many more young people like Monique be given that opportunity. The talent is there; the opportunities often are not. That is why I am determined that the national plan will be not just a plan but a template for action—an action plan. Throughout the document, we give inspiring examples and detailed case studies of schools that have made it happen and show how they have done it. For example, Feversham Primary Academy in Bradford is in one of the most disadvantaged areas of the country; 27% of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium; 78% have English as a second language. In 2013, it was in special measures. In 2022, it is rated an outstanding school, achieved thanks to the vision of the headmaster, who recognised the value of music. Every one of the 500 pupils has three hours of timetabled music every week and learns to play an instrument—all achieved within the school's budget. Music has the power to transform a school too.

When we published the plan, many people said, “Oh, but Feversham is different”. It is, but it should not be an exception. Every primary school could follow Feversham's model if it wanted to; it depends

[BARONESS FLEET]

on the will of the headteacher and the governors. At Shoreditch Park Academy, where I am a governor, the headteacher is passionate about music education. This last summer, 24% of year 11 pupils took music GCSE; 39% of them were on the pupil premium. The Government's multi-academy trust ambitions will perhaps help; Ark Schools, the David Ross Education Trust and United Learning are among those leading the way. In future, primary schools may well find it hard to be awarded "excellent" if they do not provide high quality music education.

The most exceptional young musicians can benefit from the Government's brilliant Music and Dance Scheme, which I am pleased to say is still strongly supported. One of the music fund's first scholars went on to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School with an MDS bursary. Some will be inspired to study music to higher levels at one of our great conservatoires, perhaps to become a musician or music teacher.

But what of the rest? The wider benefits are so obvious to those of us who are passionate about music. As well as developing an understanding and love of music, it will give them the motivation and communication skills to succeed and an appreciation of collaboration, which is so important in society. Some will join the pipeline of talent that contributes so much to our brilliant and economically powerful creative industries. All, I hope, will become audiences of the future.

Under the plan, we would like to see every school—primary and secondary—have timetabled curriculum music of an absolute minimum of one hour a week, a music development plan, access to lessons for all across a range of instruments, a school choir or voice ensemble and an instrumental ensemble or band. Every school should have space for rehearsals and individual practice, a school music performance every term and the opportunity for children to go to a live performance at least once a year. These are clear ingredients of great music in school.

The expert panel recognised that many schools need further support and guidance to deliver all this. We have therefore provided practical and financial solutions. Partnerships are key; local orchestras and choirs, professional music organisations and local amateur music groups will all have a role to play. Just look at what has already been achieved in Manchester, where the multi-authority music hub is in direct contact with all local primary and secondary schools—over 1,000 of them—helping them deliver excellent music lessons, ensembles and orchestras. Forward-thinking organisations are already rallying around the plan. The Royal Northern College of Music is working with the ABRSM to provide career development, CPD, for non-specialist teachers working in primary schools.

Parents will play an important role too. A recent poll from UK Music showed that the majority of parents recognise the value of high-quality music education and want it for their children. I accept that there have been significant barriers to learning music for many young people. This is particularly true for those from black and other minority-ethnic groups and those with a disability. This must now change. I want to see every child given that chance. One new

initiative in the plan is a progression fund, to be launched next autumn. This pilot will give pupils with significant potential, like Monique, the opportunity to make progress and fulfil that potential.

I would love all parents right across the country to understand what the plan offers, to see what the expectations are for their children. When choosing a school, they should look at what music is available. If their child is not receiving high-quality music lessons, at least one hour a week in the curriculum, and a range of musical opportunities in and out of school, they should ask why. Parents need to be heard, making it clear to teachers and head teachers that music is mission-critical. Research just published shows that singing in a choir or playing in an orchestra builds resilience, which is so important in these challenging times.

The government funding of £79 million a year promised for music hubs up to 2025, plus additional money for new initiatives in the plan, is guaranteed. On top of that, a new pot of money of £25 million, which the Department for Education has earmarked for the purchase of musical instruments, will be essential. I thank the Minister for the critical role that he and my noble friend Lady Barran have played in securing these funds.

There will always be calls for more money, and more money is always welcome, but money is not the only answer. As chair of the expert panel, I believe that the aims of the plan can be achieved within the budgets boosted by the additional funding announced in the plan. Critics may also point out that the plan is not mandatory, but it is a strong, clear steer from government. I hope that we will hear from the Minister what measures will ensure that all schools follow the recommendations in the plan. One important strand that was not part of the remit of the expert panel was teacher training. What plans are there to scale up and train more specialist music teachers, and what support will be given to non-specialist music teachers? During their one-year initial training, they currently receive little more than a couple of hours focused on music. This is totally unacceptable.

The plan is a catalyst for change and a turning point. Many brilliant head teachers and many brilliant music teachers across this country, supported by governors and trusts, are already backing and delivering music. They are finding the money within their budgets, the time in their timetables and the space for lessons and rehearsals. With an emphasis on inclusion, progression and excellence, the plan will help give all children that opportunity, whatever their background and wherever they live. The plan is ambitious, and not everything will happen instantly, but I hope it will encourage everyone to work together to achieve what I know can be achieved.

I shall finish here, because I am very keen to hear all noble Lords' contributions. I thank noble Lords for taking part in this important debate.

12.42 pm

Viscount Stansgate (Lab): My Lords, what a pleasure to take part in such a debate today. I begin by paying tribute to the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, for having

secured—I might almost say orchestrated—the debate, and for the way in which she introduced the subject. I pay tribute to her for having chaired the expert advisory group that helped draw up the plan. Of course, she also chairs the London Music Fund as well as being a council member of the Royal College of Music. The noble Baroness welcomed the Minister back to the Front Bench, as will, I dare say, other noble Lords who follow me. I have already had that pleasure—I did it a week ago—but it is good to see him there.

It is quite right that this House should discuss and debate the subject and the government document published in July; we ought to debate music more often. Music enriches our lives—the noble Baroness said it, and I would hope that the whole House would agree. It does more than that: it actively and positively shapes our brains and minds, and there is growing evidence that it adds to cognitive skills and benefits us enormously, particularly at a young age. The noble Baroness said that it makes young people happy; I hope it makes us all happy. There is not a single child alive who cannot or should not benefit from music. I want us to be a country where every child has the opportunities to learn and experience music, whatever their position in what you might call the education framework.

Before I go any further, I declare an interest that is not in your Lordships' official register of interests. Whatever else my own children do in life, they are and will remain musicians. They both grew up with music absolutely central to their lives and I hope this will remain so for ever. My daughter Emily is the first violinist with the Parliamentary String Quartet, which by the way is known as the "Statutory Instruments". They may play at some stage, by agreement with the Lord Speaker, at this end of the building; they have certainly played at the other. My son is a cellist who has been a soloist with many orchestras and is now a teacher.

They both did music at primary and secondary school, they began learning their instruments from the age of four and they were members of their local authority music orchestras and choirs. With the Croydon Youth Orchestra and the independent Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra, they toured Europe each summer. I do not want to be provocative, but it is a tragedy of Brexit that the ability of young orchestras to tour has gone. This is not a subject for today, but I feel very strongly about it; heaven knows I have driven miles all over Europe in the last 15 years supporting my children. The enrichment they experienced should be available for every child.

There is much to support in the national plan for music education. It is positive that national funding is being committed until March 2025, and that there is a national plan through to 2030. The plan's vision speaks of all children and young people having

"the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents, including professionally."

However, I think it is fair to say that, while many welcome such a document in principle, the experience of many professionals leads them to be pessimistic about the reality. In the course of preparing for this debate, I got in touch with and have drawn on the views of some highly experienced instrumental teachers

who have worked extensively in local authorities; two former heads of music for Birmingham and Croydon local authorities; and Adrian Brown, who has been at the forefront of youth music for many decades through his distinguished role as a conductor, not just of the Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra, which I mentioned, but of many others. I am very grateful for their contribution. So some of the views I am about to convey to the House come, if you like, from the front line that they represent.

First, it is undeniable that music education in schools is under threat from the narrowing of the curriculum in secondary schools, substantial cuts in funding for instrumental tuition by cash-strapped local authorities, and a decline in the number of school-based and peripatetic music teachers. The national plan states:

"Schools should deliver high-quality curriculum music for at least one hour a week in key stages 1 to 3, supported by co-curricular learning, and musical experiences."

So why do the Government not support making music a mandatory part of the national curriculum?

Another question has been raised with me: is it the case that the adoption of the English baccalaureate has led to a dramatic fall in GCSE and A-level entries in music? Perhaps the Minister can answer that in his reply. Creating new structures for local education music-making will not solve these fundamental issues of what we might call the status of music in schools.

Then, of course, there is the key issue of funding, which the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, touched on. Energy costs and teacher pay rises are putting pressure on school budgets. Only yesterday it was reported:

"Many schools in England are considering cutting teachers or teaching hours to save money",

according to the National Association of Head Teachers. In its survey, no less than two-thirds of respondents said that they will have to make teaching assistants redundant or cut their hours, and half said that they may have to do the same for teachers. There is a real risk that in those schools where music is seen as an optional, nice thing to have, music education and optional spending on individual tuition, the purchase of instruments and their provision to school orchestras will suffer if such cuts are made, hubs or no hubs. Some schools have already told the BBC that they might have to axe school trips and music lessons to avoid cutting staff as they struggle to pay teachers.

The underlying reality is that there is a gap between music provision in state schools and the private sector. In my view, this is a real problem which needs a lot more attention than we are able to give it even today. There is a danger that a huge amount of latent musical talent in the state sector will simply be lost through lack of opportunity, and this will have catastrophic consequences for our country's well-being, our economy and—if you want to put it this way—our cultural soft power.

Secondly, many senior music professionals believe that local authority music services are being virtually ignored and viewed as history, not the future, despite having been the drivers of almost all the best initiatives in music education for decades. When music hubs were first set up after open bidding, all of them were led by music services—which is not surprising as that

[VISCOUNT STANSGATE]

is where music education expertise is centred. Now, all music hubs will be opened up to competition by inviting applications for the role of lead organisation in each hub, which will receive and administer the government funding for that hub. The Government themselves say that, as a result, they expect to see

“a reduced number of Hub lead organisations establishing partnerships across wider geographical areas.”

I worry that that is a recipe for dismantling local authority expertise and might move music services further away from the local education authority routes. I hope that it is not because of any ideological aversion to local authority provision. The mechanics of the new processes are untried, untested and could see years of experience in music-making dismantled.

Then there is the method of disbursing the £15 million allocated for musical instruments in the announcement of the plan, which has not yet been determined. There is a feeling that it might go to schools directly—I wonder whether the Minister could comment on that—but, generally, schools do not know how to maintain, log, track and quality-assure instruments. Surely this responsibility should go to hubs.

I turn briefly to the views of the distinguished orchestra conductor to whom I referred, Mr Adrian Brown, who has decades of experience with young musicians. First, on the question of instrumental teaching in schools, he says:

“It is all well and good funding the early stages. However, as pupils progress to the Sixth Form, any thought of free lessons evaporates. So, if advanced players need help to be of National Youth Standard, funds are needed for their ongoing teaching. Only the wealthier families can afford this.”

This is a major issue and again illustrates the gap between the public and private sectors, which worries me a great deal. To keep our rich pipeline of professional talent, funding advanced lessons for all pupils who would benefit must be addressed. One idea is to get voluntary help from retired players, and it could be pooled. Perhaps a register of properly checked musicians willing to help youngsters could be established.

Secondly, music hubs could be like music schools and provide ensemble and orchestral opportunities. However, they would need to be staffed with specialist teachers for a specific instrument; no pupil can progress without lessons. We need to find a way of handling an instrument on a personal basis and seeing that the child’s talent progresses. Instrumental lessons at all stages, if done in small groups or individually, need to be properly timetabled as part of a curriculum day. It is not satisfactory for pupils to come out of academic lessons, even on a rota basis. It is sometimes resented by staff and causes anxiety for the pupil.

Thirdly, school music horizons have thankfully broadened to include pop, jazz and world music. That is a good thing. Then there is the increasing role of computer technology in both composition and performance. However, even with computer technology, we shall always need good teaching of theory and music reading. Those great, moving, life-changing works—we all have our ideas about what they are; they might be something by Shostakovich, Elgar or Stravinsky—will never in future engage and stimulate youngsters, as they can, if

the instrumentalists concerned are unable to read the history of the works they are performing, however proficient they are on the instrument.

In view of the time, I will leave it there. As I say, I welcome the debate. I look forward to all the other contributions that will follow, and to the Minister’s response. Again, I pay tribute to the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, for having introduced this debate and for all the work that she has done so far.

12.53 pm

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (LD): My Lords, I welcome the aspirations of the national plan. The difficulty will be in how we deliver against the background of a continuing squeeze in school funding, low pay for teachers leading to well-qualified staff leaving the profession, and the likelihood that state schools will continue to be underfunded for years to come.

We all recognise that substantial additional funding will be required to implement this plan. Since that is not going to be available, we need to look as widely as we can for partners in delivering music opportunities for all children. So I want to talk about partnerships in delivering musical education to state school pupils in less prosperous areas—the sorts of places where schools cannot ask parents to raise additional funds for instruments, for visits to concerts or for peripatetic teachers to come in. I want to talk about partnerships not just with music hubs but with the music industry, independent schools and the charitable sector—forms of partnership that are touched on in the report but, I feel, are not being given sufficient attention.

I approach this from the experience of chairing the trustees of a musical performance and education charity for the first 12 years of its growth: the VOCES8 Foundation. During the pandemic, I learned more about the depth of the music industry’s involvement with education and young musicians from the partnerships among singing ensembles that VOCES8 formed through its successful series of online concerts.

I have also seen a little of musical education on the ground from my children’s experience in state schools, and in the Centre for Young Musicians in London, and now from my grandchildren’s primary school and my grandson’s activities in the Wandsworth music hub—like other hubs, an invaluable Saturday school, with enthusiastic teachers, that offers different kinds of musical experience, from classical to jazz and Afro-Caribbean. My grandson’s violin teacher there last year was a young student called Braimah Kanneh-Mason, something of a perfectionist who nevertheless conveyed his enormous enthusiasm through his teaching.

The VOCES8 Foundation was founded by former Westminster Abbey choristers to provide top-quality musical performance and to bring that performance into schools, to expose children to the wonders of singing and to teach them to sing. As we have grown, we have discovered that many primary schools have no teachers with any musical skills, and we have run a number of courses in basic music skills for teachers as a result. The London Institute of Education published some research 10 years ago on the strong positive effect on schools of regular collective singing;

“transforming children through singing”.

as the Voices Foundation, another invaluable charity in this sector, has put it.

We have concentrated much of our educational work on introducing children from schools in disadvantaged areas to singing, first in unison and then in harmony, developing and publishing easy pieces, as the Voices Foundation and others have also done. We have then offered progression in singing, from encouraging a capella choirs in secondary schools to coaching talented teenagers and including them in our summer school—in partnership with another musical charity, Future Talent. I recall a concert provided by pupils from the five Grey Coat Foundation schools in which their a capella choirs performed, in some cases singing pieces that their own members had composed. We have trained what we call young leaders to lead choral singing in their own schools, and we form a group of VOCES8 scholars every year from graduates of the music colleges, who start their careers singing together and work in schools together.

The most dispiriting experience I have had in Whitehall was not long before the pandemic, when I took our educational directors into the Department for Education to meet the Minister for Schools. We planned to discuss our hard-won experience in working in schools where music was almost absent, the techniques we had learned to bring music back and the case for closer partnerships between government and charitable providers. Instead, we were given a lengthy lecture on Nick Gibb's scepticism about innovation in musical education, with a strong undercurrent that outside providers were more trouble than they were worth. He did offer me a half-apology the following day, but it left our educational team deeply disappointed.

I hope the Minister will assure us that the DfE is now committed to the widest possible partnerships with other providers in musical education, as the national plan at points suggests. I would have placed a stronger emphasis than the plan does on partnership with independent schools. Their facilities are far better than those available to most state schools and their teachers, in my experience, are glad to help talented youngsters from the state sector—although some head teachers are reluctant to share their space with non-paying pupils. Saturday music classes provided by independent schools in partnership with state secondary schools work well in several places. The DfE should press independent schools to regard such provision as part of the public benefit that justifies their charitable status.

I learned from VOCES8's co-operation with other ensembles during the pandemic that a significant proportion of professional music groups regard education as a natural part of their work. An effective national music strategy should make more of what such groups can offer too, encouraging them to affiliate youth choirs or instrumental ensembles, even to promote joint concerts in which talented youngsters have the chance to contribute to great music with more experienced performers.

I have a lovely memory of sitting in a crowded Albert Hall for a concert in which Apollo5, our second professional ensemble, and hundreds of children from Surrey schools performed, and one of the songs which they sang had been composed by one of the young

people in the choir. It was a tremendous opportunity for children to feel that they were performing well for a large audience.

The charitable sector can also raise and provide additional funding at a time when state funding will be limited at best. The VOCES8 Foundation raises almost all its funding for education from private contributions, charitable trusts, our supporting group of "friends" and the surplus from performances. Next Tuesday, I will be watching singing classes in three Bradford schools, followed by a VOCES8 concert in Bradford Cathedral, all funded by contributions raised jointly by the cathedral and our foundation. The latest significant donation to our educational work has come from an American singer who likes our work and who recently recorded with our professional ensemble: Paul Simon.

As our latest Prime Minister has said, we cannot rely on the state to solve all our problems, in musical education or in other areas. The way forward has to be the widest possible partnership with the significant number of charitable providers, well-resourced independent schools and the music industry as a whole. I hope that the DfE is now much more open to that than it was a few years ago when I took our educational team to see a Minister who has now just returned to the department.

1.02 pm

Lord Berkeley of Knighton (CB): My Lords, I should mention my interests as listed in the register as a composer, broadcaster and trustee of various musical organisations, including festivals.

I commend both the previous speakers and agree with most of the sentiments we have heard. I very much congratulate the Government and the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, on the attention that we are now focusing on music and music education. This is surely one of the most important aspects of childhood, the future of our country, and its musical and musical economic stability. What is at stake here is to do with our heritage and our future musical and musical economic prosperity, and the extraordinary social dividend, as we have already heard, that music can bring to the young: the ability to articulate emotions, often violent ones, through the outlet of music. This therefore leads to social cohesion.

As I am sure the Minister knows, and as many noble Lords have already mentioned, many regret that music is not part of the curriculum of the mainstream assessment process—the baccalaureate—and that therefore the serious, continued and ongoing study of music has been somewhat sidetracked in favour of other subjects. I still hope and pray that this might change.

Exposure to music at a young age has meant that many artists, be they classical, jazz or pop, have taken their first steps towards careers that have hugely enhanced the reputation of this country and its economy. They took those steps at a very young age thanks to the music that was provided, as the Kanneh-Mason family have said. They have also said that they are worried that the opportunities that they had which allowed them to develop their careers no longer exist. I completely agree with the noble Baroness that we have to do more, and that is a prime example.

[LORD BERKELEY OF KNIGHTON]

Music, as one of the arts that brings in a great deal of money to the Treasury, has suffered a great deal over the last few years. I apologise for being more contentious than the previous speakers, but we must think of not only the education but the aspirations of children. What are they going to do if they become musicians? With the Arts Council dissemination of funds as it currently stands, we are beginning to lose the opportunity for these companies to go into underprivileged areas, introducing children to music and works that they had not previously encountered. I have looked at this carefully in the last 48 hours and have noticed remarks such as those from Sir Nicholas Kenyon in the *Telegraph*—not the *Guardian*—pointing to the companies that are really suffering, such as the WNO, Glyndebourne Touring and the ENO. This is interesting; is there a hidden message in them all being opera companies? These companies, strangely, are those which have delivered the Government's desires. They have increased accessibility and taken music and composition into schools. It is extraordinary that they have been semi-castrated at this stage. Is there really a possibility of having another opera company in Manchester? In which case, what about Opera North?

I would be the first to admit that the ENO has been badly managed in previous years. I say that as somebody who was an adviser to one of its appointments. But things are looking up because it has embraced outreach and the kind of work that the Royal Opera House cannot do. It is good to have these two arms—one doing top-flight performances of top-flight works, and the other exploring the byways that are left untrodden. With these cuts, we are in great danger of throwing the baby out with the bath-water.

Take an organisation such as the Britten Sinfonia, which is based not in London but in Cambridge. It concentrates on commissioning new work. If one were looking at theatre, one could say that about Donmar, and one could find other organisations that encourage new work. New work is the lifeblood of music and of any art form. It is dead without it. The vibrancy of music and of theatre depends on new writing.

That brings me on to another subject, composition, which is slightly underplayed in this plan. It quite rightly talks about mentors and visiting musicians, but composition tends to be slightly lower down the scale than the performing side of music. This is a bit like saying that you are going to teach children art but not encourage them to paint or draw. It is as simple as that: we need composition to be taught, as much as we need people to paint and draw. When I talked to David Hockney on my programme "Private Passions", he said, "Before you get on to oils, before you break the rules, you have to know them". The way to do that in art is to draw before you paint. The way to do that in music is to write, to create pieces. We have heard examples of that and how it enlivens people's lives. I have now departed so far from what I was going to say by extemporising—which is a form of creation in a way—that I have slightly lost the plot of this and where I was going.

My basic premise is that we need to do more. I want to mention some of those things which I think affect prospects. Touring in Europe is one of them. I wrote

to Rishi Sunak before he became leader and said that since the noble Lord, Lord Frost, has admitted—that is really important—that the Government got these negotiations wrong when it comes to touring in Europe, would they do something to put it right? I got a very sympathetic response from Rishi Sunak. He was not then Prime Minister, but I say to the Minister, given his enthusiasm and infinite wisdom, that he might care to pass this back to No. 10 Downing Street as something which should be looked at. It is one of the aspects of the all-around musical world we live in that at the moment has had a severe blow dealt to it by musicians not being able to tour. When I talk to committed Brexiteers about this problem and the admission by the noble Lord, Lord Frost, and ask them whether there is a remedy they can think of, I am greeted with a prolonged and rather embarrassed silence.

I am not going to stand here and say we must row back and join the EU tomorrow—I know that is not going to happen—but it is perfectly reasonable to say to a new Administration, "How about looking at the real problems and sorting some of them?" That is what we must do. I enormously welcome the noble Baroness. Everything she said is right. Music is something that I think all of us in this Chamber today really love. It informs our lives. We should give this great privilege of music to the next generation and try to encourage people to be able to share it.

I just want to say one last thing about instruments, because peripatetic teachers and instruments are very important. I recently gave a saxophone to a young player whom I found, and I was astonished to hear the progress they made on it. It was somebody who could not afford the instrument, so I rootled around in my cupboard to see whether I could find another creature lurking there. Lo and behold, I found a violin that I had given to my daughter many years ago. I took it out, gave it to a friend who is a very good violinist and asked whether it would be any good for students or children. He said it was actually quite a good instrument, but it needed about £1,000 spending on it. I cannot bear the thought of this poor creature lurking there for the rest of eternity unplayed or the thought of children who might benefit from it, so I talked to the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, about it, and I am going to do it up so that I can lend it or give it to one of those organisations. We had an amnesty on giving knives in. Let us have an amnesty on instruments that are lurking in corridors and cupboards and encourage people to reuse them and perhaps to provide the funds to refurbish them, because there is another thing that the experts have pointed out: that what matters is not just the instruments but maintenance and peripatetic teachers to teach the children, as has already been referred to.

This is a great step forward. I endorse much of it. There are things that I worry about enormously, and I have just touched on them. I welcome the noble Lord, Lord Parkinson, back as a Minister and I feel very confident that he will support us as much as he can.

1.13 pm

Lord Black of Brentwood (Con): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Lord. I have an old trumpet and an old clarinet somewhere which I would

be very happy to put into his fund if he gets it going. I declare an interest as chairman of the Royal College of Music and a governor of Brentwood School. It is a privilege to have as colleagues on the council of the Royal College of Music two distinguished individuals who have been integral in putting together the national plan for music education, my noble friend Lady Fleet, who has chaired and led the expert panel with such vision, determination and energy, and Jamie Njoku-Goodwin, who is a remarkable campaigner for music and musicians. I am particularly grateful to my noble friend for securing this debate today and for her superb speech. This debate allows us to spend some time looking at an issue which is crucial not just to the future of the creative economy but to our quality of life. I also take this opportunity to join the chorus welcoming the Minister back to his place. As my noble friend Lady Fleet said, he is a great champion of music and the wider arts and I am delighted he has returned to his rightful place.

I agree with the conclusion of the Independent Society of Musicians, of which I am an honorary member, that this is an “ambitious” and “detailed” document that, if it succeeds, will ensure that

“all children will be the beneficiaries of a high-quality music education.”

A huge amount in this plan, which is incredibly impressive in its breadth and vision, is to be commended, not least its unequivocal commitment that music

“must not be the preserve of the privileged few”

but be available to all children. Music enhances all young lives, not just those whose parents can afford it.

I welcome the emphasis the plan places on the “pipeline of talent” and the vital importance of progression. As my noble friend the Minister so rightly says in his elegant introduction to the document:

“It is vital that each part of the music pipeline – schools, community music, further and higher education, and employers in the music and wider creative sector – collaborates to create joined-up talent pathways.”

That has been missing in recent years, and the plan establishes a fresh opportunity to put that right. Crucially, the plan recognises that, for progression to work:

“Early years providers and schools should build a musical culture, identify potential ... and enrich children’s experience with music beyond the classroom.”

My own interest in music as a seven year-old certainly came from such a culture, powered by music specialists—something sadly lacking in too many primary schools.

I have a number of observations about the plan. They are not criticisms or intended to detract in any way from its importance or value but seek to strengthen it even further. One is that this plan, like its predecessor, is non-statutory. As noble Lords will know, I am not generally one to argue for the imposition of statute in the creative world, but it seems to me that this is one of those areas in which some modest form of statutory intervention may be required. To produce the step change in music education we all want to see, not least because of its importance to the creative economy of the UK at a time of great uncertainty in the wider economy, there will have to be strong political leadership. I recognise that my noble friend the Minister is hugely committed to this area, but this is too vital to leave to

individual personalities. Departments and Ministers need to be under a continuing statutory obligation to see this through, whatever the changes that take place in Whitehall and Westminster.

The plan makes provision for the monitoring of progress over the next eight years, with the first report due in 2025 to set out improvements and look at how the music sector is developing. The establishment of a monitoring board is very welcome, but it is Ministers at the DfE and DCMS who, over the lifetime of the plan, need to be accountable, not least to Parliament, for its implementation.

We are all aware of the need to do everything we can to drive sustainable economic growth in the UK, and the music industry is one of the most reliable ways to do that, providing £5.8 billion in GVA before the pandemic and employing 200,000 people—more than the steel and fisheries industries combined, according to UK Music. Its future simply cannot be left to chance, and I ask my noble friend whether the Government will consider some form of statutory underpinning for the plan to ensure its delivery, not least in ensuring that there is no tension—which there often has been—between music hubs, which are tasked with implementation, and schools, which are not.

It is not just political leadership that is important but leadership within schools. As the plan says:

“Enabling pupils to progress in music requires flexibility from leadership and wider school staff”.

But school leadership is patchy where it comes to music education. I have seen some schools where the head and their senior team fully understand how music can enhance a school’s identity and culture and contribute to the development and well-being of children. Not coincidentally, those schools tend to be the better-performing ones. But there are other schools where the leadership, and that includes governors, are uninterested in the effective delivery of music, to the detriment of their pupils.

That leads me on to another crucial point, which is the quality and calibre of the music staff who will be on the front line of delivering this plan. Music teaching has been under real strain in recent years, not least because of the vicious cycle that has arisen of the decline in music education leading to fewer professional teachers—who are in turn needed to reverse that decay—entering it. Many music specialist undergraduate primary courses and postgraduate secondary programmes have closed, seriously limiting the opportunities for talented musicians to pursue a career in teaching. A forecast by the National Foundation for Educational Research shows that the DfE is likely to recruit only 57% of its target for music trainee teachers this academic year, compared to 166% for PE. We have got our priorities absolutely wrong.

Music teaching needs to be valued in all schools, including ensuring that it is represented in every school’s leadership structure, with a designated music lead and head of department who are given time for training and to organise the curriculum and study. As the Birmingham Music Education Research Group at Birmingham City University has pointed out, the next generation of music educators must have access to high-quality training and development opportunities. Governors have an important role in this area too and

[LORD BLACK OF BRENTWOOD]
should be under a legal responsibility to interrogate the quality of music provision, including details of accessibility and inclusion.

I have two other points. The first concerns funding which, as my noble friend said, is obviously a very tricky issue in the current economic circumstances. The plan has, in a very welcome way, confirmed funding for music hubs of £79 million per annum until 2025, but it is not clear whether these figures—and also the £25 million of funding for instruments—will be adjusted for inflation which, at over 10%, could rapidly eat through these impressive and welcome figures. Could my noble friend tell us whether these figures will be index-linked? If not, there is little chance of delivering the broad ambitions of the plan.

My final point concerns the wider issue surrounding the music industry and the professionals who power it, arising from our fractured relationship with the EU. It is very relevant to this debate because, as the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley of Knighton, said, it touches on the issues of aspiration. If we want the creative economy to flourish, for talented individuals to enter the profession as teachers and to present exciting opportunities for young musicians who leave school, then we have to fix the problems arising from the failure of the trade and co-operation agreement. I do not want to go over old ground, but Ministers promised that free movement for musicians—which is vital to their livelihood and well-being—would be protected. Their failure to deliver has been devastating, with musicians and those who support them on tour having to navigate a complex, confusing and costly system which limits how long they can stay in their main touring market, which is the EU. It is now time—as a compelling report from the APPG on Music said—to put old divisions aside and “focus on what’s right for UK musicians and the UK music industry.”

Otherwise, why on earth would the next generation of young people, at whom this plan is targeted, want to pursue their learning and careers?

For many years, many of us have felt that music education in the UK has been undervalued, under-resourced and under threat. This excellent report gives us a chance to change all that. Let us take its lead and give it teeth, generous funding, political leadership and a proper position within schools. Then we can secure the future of music.

1.23 pm

Baroness Bull (CB): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Lord, Lord Black, who brings so much expertise to this area. I join other noble Lords in congratulating the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, on her adept stewardship of the advisory panel that oversaw this plan, as well as an excellent introduction to this debate. I also congratulate the two departments—Education and DCMS—on coming together to produce and own this plan. It is always heartening to see interdepartmental join-up, and particularly so when collaboration is fundamental to success, as it is in the delivery of music education and indeed arts education more generally. The opening line of the plan’s introduction sets out a clear commitment to music as part of a young person’s education, describing music as

“a cornerstone of the broad and balanced education that every child should receive.”

I think that we can all say amen to that.

Section 78 of the Education Act 2002 requires that a

“balanced and broadly based curriculum”

must promote

“the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society”,

and prepare pupils

“for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.”

This plan goes some way to articulating just how music education can contribute to those laudable aims. It could say more on this, but I will save those comments to the end.

First, though, I warmly welcome the overarching vision that all children and young people

“should have access to a high-quality music education”.

This is a clear commitment to universality and inclusivity, with inclusivity underlined by a dedicated section on delivering for those with special educational needs, as well as the promise of a pilot music progression fund, which will support disadvantaged pupils who have significant “potential, enthusiasm and commitment” in music. Perhaps in responding the Minister, who I warmly welcome back to his role, might say a little more about how this pilot scheme will be developed and when we might see it launched.

Like others, I welcome the reference to early years. There is a mass of evidence across multiple disciplines—neuroscience, cognitive science and developmental psychology—that demonstrates how arts engagement at the earliest years of a child’s development can support education readiness and, as a result, enhance life chances. Early years providers are already required to deliver an educational programme in expressive arts and design as part of the early years foundation stage statutory framework, and the plan encourages greater connectivity between music hubs and providers to deliver this. But, given that most early years providers are commercial entities and that most of the people teaching music in early years settings will not be specialists, I would welcome the Minister’s view on what more the Government might do to encourage and facilitate those connections.

Partnership, which is the second of three goals, is also a welcome theme for the reasons the noble Lord, Lord Wallace of Saltaire, set out. The plan provides clarity on the role of music hubs in enabling and driving partnerships, and it recognises that education takes place not only in schools. Different localities will have different requirements and different areas will have different assets on which to draw in forming these partnerships across education, cultural organisations large and small, the private sector, industry, community, charity and voluntary organisations. I was particularly pleased to see the contribution of the voluntary sector recognised, knowing what a vital role it plays in supporting state-funded provision in so many areas of our lives.

The third goal is that all children and young people with music interests and talents should have the opportunity to progress, including into professional

careers. This is vital—even more so when it is linked to the vision of universal provision and inclusivity. We know that pathways into the creative industries, including music, remain uneven, with the workforce drawn disproportionately from the middle and privileged classes and a marked absence of people of colour and people from working-class backgrounds. Many interconnected factors contribute to this lack of diversity, but the status of music and arts within the state-funded education system has been key. This is in stark contrast to private schools, which so often sell themselves to parents on the basis of their outstanding music and arts provision.

This plan will help to address that inequality, but perhaps the Minister could pick up with his education colleagues the ongoing absence within statutory careers guidance for schools of any reference at all to creative careers, and its explicit steer to ensure that children have the opportunity to learn about how STEM subjects can lead to a wide range of career paths. Now that we have a clear plan for music education, with a stated aim to help young people into careers within the music industry, it would be very odd if the Government's own careers guidance did not align with this core aim.

Without wishing to dilute my welcome for this plan, I will finish by touching briefly on three areas of concern. The first, as we have heard, is the non-statutory status of the plan. As things stand, music hubs can be held to account for failing to deliver but schools cannot, so can the Minister say how the Government intend to hold schools accountable and what role the music education board will have in this?

My second area of concern, which has already been raised, relates to the workforce, both the training of non-specialists to deliver music education and the overall requirement for an increased skilled workforce to achieve the plan's aims. We have heard about the forecast that DfE will be able to recruit only 57% of its target for music teacher trainees in 2022, so how will the Government ensure that appropriately trained staff are available to make this plan a reality, as the noble Baroness has promised it will be?

Finally, I would like to have seen a more explicit acknowledgement of the role that music education plays in supporting young people to develop a broader and transferable set of personal, social, cognitive and problem-solving skills that will, as the Education Act requires, prepare young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. The Ministers' joint letter at the front of the document concludes:

“Now is the time to unleash the creativity of our children and young people, to support them to achieve their musical ambitions.”

The comma between the two clauses leaves open to question the relationship between the two. My belief is that music education can do both. The development of creativity is key to musical success, but creativity is also a core life and employability skill. Its value extends beyond the creative industries and across the workplace, the economy and society.

1.31 pm

Baroness Fraser of Craigmaddie (Con): My Lords, it is a great pleasure to follow the noble Baroness, Lady Bull. I too welcome the refreshed national plan

for music education and warmly congratulate my noble friend Lady Fleet on chairing the advisory panel and securing this important debate. I declare my various interests up front: I am a former pupil of a vocational school on the music and dance scheme; I am also a board member of Creative Scotland and my connections with health and disability organisations are laid out in the register.

There is a growing interest in the connection between arts and culture and health and well-being, which the national plan touches on, and today's debate gives me the opportunity to speak to both of these strands. I am heartened that the plan includes a focus on young people with special educational needs and disabilities. As chief executive of Cerebral Palsy Scotland, I recognised Kira's story, where the consistent, long-term provision of a combination of school and community-based music making, delivered by the charity the Music Man Project, enabled her to build understanding and confidence despite the challenges of living with quadriplegic cerebral palsy, as well as epilepsy, severe learning difficulties and blindness. Being ambitious for people living with such challenges and recognising the transformational capabilities of music and cultural engagement will enable more SEN children to shine. Music education can thus be an important means of tackling social inclusion.

However, I want to sound a note of caution because many of these programmes employ a mixed-income, multifunding model in partnership with third sector organisations. The noble Lord, Lord Wallace of Saltaire, argued strongly on the importance of these partnerships with music charities but, with ferocious competition for funding from grant-giving trusts and foundations, the Government should consider how such projects can continue to be delivered. Third sector organisations cannot fill all the gaps in provision and cannot continue to provide partnership support without sustainable funding.

In Scotland, music plays a very important part in our national identity and gives us a distinctive voice internationally. Music is one of the most popular subjects on our school curriculum; it is the sixth most popular Advanced Higher, whereas in England, I believe music is around only the 25th most popular A-level subject and is experiencing year-on-year decline. The evidence in Scotland indicates that music education is shaped by supply and not demand. There is an unmet demand of around 100,000 young people across Scotland, with not enough qualified teachers to ensure equality of provision. Teacher training, as my noble friend Lady Fleet outlined in her excellent introduction to this debate, is vital, and I am concerned that, while the plan speaks of supporting music educators through music hubs, demand may outstrip supply and, without inspirational music teachers, the ambitions of the plan may not be realised.

I also heartily support the final goal of the plan for children and young people with musical talent to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, including professionally. Too often, financial support for excellence is downgraded; too often, the value of the arts is expressed only through the prism of health or education. The Music and Dance Scheme is vital to supporting talent, but it can only provide means-tested grants and

[BARONESS FRASER OF CRAIGMADDIE]

help with fees—not uniform, travel or any other extras—at eight independent schools and 21 centres for advanced training. In reality, given the cost of living and inflationary pressures, these places are still out of reach for too many children. As my noble friend Lord Black pointed out, the music industry is indeed a burgeoning and successful commercial sector full of opportunity, and we should recognise the importance of the financial support for excellence to build and protect the talent pipeline as an effective investment in the future of our young people.

The plan, however, does not mention the potential of the many new revenue streams, such as streaming. Spotify has opened up boundless opportunities for young musicians not only to be heard but to make a good and sustained living. Streaming provides long-term income for thousands of musicians, big or small. Younger, tech-savvy musicians are able to build careers in completely new ways—but it is competitive, with 100,000 new songs released every day. You therefore need talent, and that must be inspired, taught and nurtured.

It is clear that, in many places, cultural education, cultural services and cultural institutions are under threat as never before. Years of successive budget cuts, at national and local levels, have taken a toll and, with more to come, there are real questions about sustainability. I welcome any focus on the importance of music in education, and I call for a focus not solely on music but on arts, culture and the creative industries as a whole. I therefore also welcome the announcement that the noble Baroness, Lady Bull, is to chair the advisory panel for the upcoming cultural education plan, and I look forward to welcoming that plan, hopefully, in another debate on its publication next year. In the meantime, while I too join the chorus in welcoming the Minister back to his place—I am delighted to see him there—I urge him to do all he can to ensure that this plan does indeed become an action plan, as my noble friend Lady Fleet urged, and that the recommendations are acted upon by his department.

1.37 pm

Lord Aberdare (CB): My Lords, I start by declaring my interest as chair of Berlioz 150, a charity developing classical music teaching resources for schools. I also congratulate my noble friend Lady Fleet—as I think of her—both on obtaining for a second time today’s debate, which she introduced so powerfully, and, above all, on her sterling work in chairing the distinguished expert advisory panel that oversaw the development of the plan itself.

I very much welcome the new plan, which is ambitious, comprehensive, well targeted, much needed and long overdue. Above all, it acknowledges the real importance of music education and its value for all our schoolchildren, and I applaud its overall vision. The previous plan, published in 2011, was equally well intentioned but it has not delivered on all its high aspirations, so I will focus on three areas relating to whether, this time round, the plan will actually deliver what it sets out to do. My theme could be described as “deliver, deliver, deliver”, although I hope that it will have a greater prospect of success than that of the last

person to use that catchphrase. I will mainly reinforce points already made—rather more powerfully than I can—by other noble Lords in this debate.

One element missing from the previous plan was an effective process of monitoring progress and outcomes. There was supposed to be a board or panel to oversee this but, if it was ever set up, it was disbanded before making any impact. So I hope the Minister can assure us that the proposed new national plan for music education board will play a more effective role. Will it be able to recommend changes where needed if parts of the plan are not working or some hubs are under-achieving? How will underperforming areas or schools be helped to improve? Above all, how will disadvantaged children and schools—which I know from our own experience are always particularly hard to reach—be engaged, as envisaged in the plan? Something that might have helped in that area was the promised arts pupil premium; is the intention that that be resuscitated? Not that it ever came to life, but there we are.

Why is the plan not statutory? As other noble Lords have asked, what role will Ofsted have in assessing implementation? Surely, no school without a strong music education programme consistent with the plan should be rated good or outstanding. As most noble Lords have mentioned, there is also the vital issue of funding, given the widespread concern that the money promised to the hubs will not be enough—even before inflation. There is also the requirement for the hubs to engage in a competitive bidding process, leading to fewer hub lead organisations. What impact will that have on hubs and their staff?

Making promises in the plan for which there is just not enough funding to deliver can only lead to more deplorable situations such as Arts Council England’s peremptory removal of funding from English National Opera, which, despite its past problems, has been doing a great deal of good work, much of it benefiting performers, schools and audiences outside London. The idea that a complex, century-old opera company can just be pulled up by the roots, replanted in Manchester and expected to thrive makes no sense. The Arts Council’s real intentions might have been clearer if it had just suggested sending it to Coventry. One of the other big losers in the Arts Council funding is of course Welsh National Opera, one of whose notable features is that it brings first-class opera to some seven cities in England that otherwise would be without.

Figures published in August by the Cultural Learning Alliance show that the number of music GCSE entries dropped by 27% between 2010 and 2022, and music A-level entries by 40%. It is hard to see how the national plan will succeed unless something is done to counter the damaging impact of current accountability measures, in particular the EBacc and Progress 8, on the amount of music education being delivered in schools and the number of children taking exams as a result. Tackling those things would represent real progress.

Another aspect less fully addressed by the plan relates to the music education workforce, including vitally important peripatetic music and singing teachers. Again, the plan will not deliver unless there are enough adequately paid, well-trained, enthusiastic and motivated teachers to provide the level of education and achievement to which it aspires. It is no answer to say that these

issues are outside the remit of the plan. What is the point of a plan if it does not address how the resources needed to deliver it will be provided? How will the current national shortage of music teachers be resolved? What role is envisaged under the plan for non-specialist music teachers to help with its delivery and for them to be supported in doing that? There is clearly a strong feeling among music teachers themselves that they should have been more engaged and consulted in the process of developing the plan.

While I welcome the emphasis in the plan, and in the *Model Music Curriculum* that accompanies it, on including a broad range of music genres, it is important to ensure that all children have opportunities to experience and learn specifically about Western classical music, which is not only a central part of our own culture but requires a level of understanding and familiarity that takes time and focus to learn. I recently learned from Aurora, an orchestra which I greatly admire, about its new Magical Toy Box initiative, which provides an impressive range of music teaching resources for early years, key stage 1 and SEND students, with numerous activities and ideas for teachers to use. Will there be a mechanism for adding first-class classical music teaching resources such as these to the list of resources linked to the plan, and for helping schools access them?

Despite all the questions that I have raised about the plan's delivery, it is a good plan, and I wholeheartedly wish it success. It has laudable goals and many good ideas on how to pursue them. One aspect that I particularly applaud is its focus on careers and progression: on ensuring that music education includes making young people aware of the broad range of career options available in the music world and of what skills they need to grasp such opportunities. The plan is commendable, and what matters now is its delivery—I am looking now at the noble Baroness. I welcome the Minister back to his place. I was delighted to see that it was his signature on the introduction to the plan and I hope that gives him a real incentive to reassure us about how delivery will be pursued. I also hope, of course, that the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, will continue to be intimately engaged with making it happen through her role on the new board.

1.46 pm

Lord Lingfield (Con): My Lords, I, too, praise my noble friend Lady Fleet for putting down this important debate, and commend her and the other members of her advisory panel for the production of the national plan that we are debating today. I declare my registered interest as chairman and founder of the English Schools' Orchestra, a charity in existence for 28 years which brings together every year some 90 of the most talented young musicians in the country.

As noble Lords have said, the national plan has many fine aspirations and it underlines the huge importance of music in our lives and in our schools. However, today I want to bring to your Lordships' attention a musical endeavour for young people not mentioned in the plan—but, as it is paid for from public funds, perhaps the Minister, who I, too, sincerely welcome back to his place, would take note of it. It is one of those partnerships that the noble Lord, Lord Wallace, mentioned as being extremely important.

Two weeks ago, I was delighted, in my capacity as honorary colonel of Army Cadet Music to attend, as I do biannually, a music camp at Longmoor barracks in Hampshire. Some 250 young people, officers and instructors were taking part. Concomitantly, two other camps were taking place, one at Altcar in Merseyside and another at Inverness, totalling some 500 cadets overall, all away from home, making music for a whole week, their ages ranging from 12 to 18. There were three orchestras at Longmoor, a small one for beginners, some of whom were coming to their instruments for the first time; an intermediate one; and one for the most advanced players, many of whom have the highest grades of the associated boards. Indeed, one young man of 17 already has a graduate-level performance diploma of Trinity College of Music.

Cadet Music has a wide repertoire comprising, of course, much military music for brass, woodwind and percussion, but also other modern and classical pieces which include strings. These events take place at least twice each year and the young people come from all over the United Kingdom. We have cadet bagpipers in the Orkneys, the noble Baroness, Lady Fraser, will be pleased to know, and even a corps of drums from Gibraltar. Throughout the country, meeting once or twice each week, we have 78 music units, including military bands, pipe and drum bands and bugle platoons, all within community cadet corps. They are funded by the Ministry of Defence—but we also have some 20 units in schools, within the Combined Cadet Force, funded often through the excellent cadet expansion scheme, which is funded by the Department for Education. I acknowledge our great debt to the department for its support. All these units offer the free loan of instruments and free tuition throughout the year, at local headquarters. Incidentally, I am pleased to tell the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, that we have several volunteer experts who service, repair and refurbish elderly instruments every year at camp, free of charge.

One of our officers asked a young cadet recently what she was enjoying the most. "I love being able to play for a whole week," she said, and then went on and said tellingly, "But, best of all, I love not sharing a bed with my sisters." It is very clear that a good many of our community cadets come from some of the most deprived areas of the country. For those who have free school meals, the cost of our camps is only £20, and we have a charitable fund which can mitigate even this small sum. Whereas for cadets in military units as a whole, about 35% are girls, in cadet music the division is nearly half and half, with a large 17% from minority backgrounds.

It is a sad fact that cuts to Armed Forces budgets have resulted in the loss of many regimental bands. Whereas these were always part of local parades, for Remembrance Sundays for instance, now very often cadet bands perform instead and do it extraordinarily well, playing marches, bugle calls and laments on the pipes. They often play in residences for the elderly and give great joy at Christmas especially. I was privileged to be the guest of honour in August at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, where the pensioners enjoyed a beating retreat played by a cadet band that had come all the way from Edinburgh to entertain them. It was a wonderful experience for both young and old.

[LORD LINGFIELD]

I ought to remind your Lordships that all our officers, teachers and instructors are volunteers, who receive a small honorarium only for their time away at camps. Many are former Armed Forces' musicians, some are music teachers or professional players, or perform this service, week after week, entirely voluntarily.

During the pandemic, when cadet numbers as a whole inevitably went down—they are now back to normal, I am glad to say—I was moved to receive on my computer, during the lockdown, a performance by Scottish cadets, with many teenage bagpipers among them, each playing in his or her solitary bedroom or garden, a part of the air “Farewell to Gibraltar”. These separate parts were combined into a concert by the wonders of technology, which was sent to me and to parents, and we much enjoyed it.

I hope very much that we may explore opportunities—I hope the Minister may look into this—for cadet musicians and their leaders to take advantages of the services of music hubs, where appropriate, and for those hubs to be made aware of all the cadet music tuition going on in their vicinities and the benefits it offers young players.

All this is made possible by the extraordinary hard work of Colonel Michael Neville, the volunteer commandant for cadet music, and I pay a tribute to him and his colleagues for their devotion to the cause of young instrumentalists. I thank sincerely Brigadier Neville Holmes MBE, who is in charge of the cadet programme nationally, for his great support.

Last year's first-class report from Professor Simon Denny, of the University of Northampton, concluded that cadet activities, including music of course, improved confidence, employability and life chances, especially for teenagers from poor areas. The plan described by the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, speaks of musical experiences staying with the young and shaping their lives. There is evidence that participation in cadet music, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, does precisely that. I commend the superb voluntary efforts of its officers, military instrumentalists and tutors to your Lordships.

1.54 pm

The Earl of Clancarty (CB): My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, for the opportunity to speak in this debate. I welcome the Minister back to the arts brief and trust that the Department for Education will take careful note of everything said in this debate. I will talk about the plan but, as we have the Arts Minister in front of us, will also touch on arts funding. Indeed, both these concerns are closely related in terms of an ecology—as the noble Lords, Lord Black and Lord Berkeley, have talked about—and the value that we as a country ascribe to the arts, including music. My background is as a visual artist.

It is good that the plan has been a joint presentation between DCMS and the DfE. Some of us have argued for a long time that there should be greater communication between the two departments—long may that continue.

The plan has been welcomed on all sides. That is no mean feat. I congratulate the noble Baroness and her team on the expert panel on the hard work they have

put in and on her comprehensive introduction. Much in the plan is admirable, such as the re-emphasis on school provision, including in early years, as has been mentioned, being clear what a music education should contain and the promotion of inclusivity, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. I also welcome what the noble Baroness said about teacher training in her speech.

Nevertheless, there are questions about how the stated goals can be delivered and the plan built on, including what it leaves out. I am grateful for the briefings we have received, but one in particular immediately caught my eye: that from the City of London concerning the views of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. I was struck that, while supportive of the plan, it said:

“The School's view is that it ... has too great a focus on in-school provision, despite no further resource being offered to develop this provision.”

In a way, this is not far off the point of the Independent Society of Musicians that funding is a key concern, although the ISM welcomes, as I do, the emphasis on schools. My worry is that, if there is a lack of commitment to further funding, we will fall somewhere in between the focus on music hubs and the focus on schools. The fact that this plan is non-statutory will exacerbate this. What are the Government's long-term plans for funding this plan, both in schools and hubs?

I was against music hubs when they started, but it would now certainly be a shame if creative partnerships were to be sacrificed and jobs lost. However, as things stand, schools are not required to engage with hubs. What happens with academies? For maintained schools, local authorities are a key partner. Hubs may vary considerably in size and composition, something which formal competition between hubs will no doubt point up. Music hubs were started to address the postcode lottery, but so far this has been only partially successful. In the end, the prime focus must be back on schools if, to adapt Bob and Roberta Smith's dictum, all schools are to be music schools. The plan acknowledges this.

We need to explode once and for all the myth that the EBacc has had no significant effect on the arts. The Government are very much in the minority in their belief in this. For instance, a 2017 University of Sussex study found that almost 60% of the schools surveyed highlighted the EBacc as having a negative effect on the provision, while just 3% thought the opposite. The Education Policy Institute identified the EBacc and Progress 8 measures as central to the downturn in the number of entries to arts subjects at key stage 4 between 2007 and 2016. In its briefing, the ISM refers to the music critic Richard Morrison's piece in the *Times* on the plan, in which he says these measures have

“skewed the curriculum disastrously against music.”

The EBacc is a major obstacle not only to the delivery of this plan but to the delivery of all arts in schools. It is an obstacle that should be removed, though the plan does not address it.

A further problem is oversight. This year, the Fabian Society and the Musicians' Union, in their joint report following and inspired by the plan, suggest setting up a national music service, with a national co-ordinating body. This is itself inspired by the Welsh national plan for music education and would be stronger than a

board. A strong emphasis would be on music teachers, with good pay and conditions being crucial to delivery. Another significant aspect for which the service would be responsible is data gathering from music hubs, which is fragmentary and flawed currently. The arts premium should also be reintroduced. I support such initiatives, which would clearly aid delivery of the plan.

I turn to the question of arts funding more generally. Yesterday, I attended a remarkable presentation by Ireland's Minister for the Arts, Catherine Martin, at the Performers' Alliance All-Party Group meeting. She told us about her basic income for artists pilot scheme, which will last three years and cost €25 million. This scheme would cover hundreds of artists working in a variety of media, including music, the visual arts and literature, but what is particularly admirable is that it would not be assessed on outcomes other than how much it is deemed to have helped the artist concerned. I hope Ireland takes this further. The UK can learn something from this approach, which is about believing in the artist for the work they do and believing in the value of the arts.

There is a contrast here with what has happened to the Arts Council settlement in the last couple of weeks. The regions should receive more funding from the settlement, but I for one do not believe in levelling up if it means robbing Peter to pay Paul. As noble Lords have already mentioned, that is happening in London and elsewhere. The term "levelling up" says nothing about the size of the pot, which is certainly diminishing for artists and arts organisations in favour of community and other projects. There has been a lot of concern expressed in the press about these cuts, and with justification.

Instead, as a strategy for growth across the country and an incredibly cheap one, we should be investing more money in the arts, not less. I say this in the belief that, as others have pointed out, austerity is a political choice, not an economic necessity. The Government have not really grasped that the arts and creative industries are, or should be considered, a crucial part of the future economy of this country. That same argument can and should be applied to the arts in schools, including music, because it is from schools that the talent pipeline starts and the future emerges.

2.03 pm

Lord Sandhurst (Con): My Lords, music has played a vital part in the development of mankind. The Open University reminds us that Homer's two great poems, the "Iliad" and "Odyssey", the oldest in the western canon, stood in the tradition of lyre-accompanied epic song—musical performance. As the new national plan explains, music is a cornerstone of the broad and balanced education that every child must receive. We all owe my noble friend Lady Fleet great thanks for this debate and for the work she has done with her advisory panel to bring about the new plan.

Here, I declare a modest interest as a supporter of the excellent charity which my noble friend described and chairs, the London Music Fund. Its aim is to transform underserved communities in London by enabling London children in all London boroughs to access high-quality music education. The London Music

Fund's vision is that every child who demonstrates significant musical ability, enthusiasm and commitment is given the opportunity to develop their potential. This aim is in harmony with that of the national plan. I shall come back to that later.

Excellent music education opens opportunities and, as the plan says, should be an end in itself. It is an essential part of a curriculum for all. As the plan stresses, a strong foundation in music in the early years is vital for all children, particularly so for disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs, as we have heard from others. The plan's aspiration is to support more schools and teachers, and to develop stronger partnerships at local levels; I shall come back to that. Together with an investment of £25 million in instruments and equipment, that is to be applauded.

Music hubs will, we hope, take musical education forward but we have a way still to go. The 2011 national plan, *The Importance of Music*, was obviously a good moment for music education, but the call for evidence two years ago, in 2020, found that provision has remained patchy: good in some places but rather less good in others. Only half of the respondents said that music education is currently being delivered in line with the Government's vision put forward 10 years ago. Although existing music hubs raised opportunities through the support that they give, the level of provision across the regions as a whole has been found to be inconsistent. That is why the 10 year-old plan needed reinvigorating.

It is absolutely right to make the point that musical events and performances are valuable to engage children and parents in the wider life of schools. The plan is right when it says that singing should be the golden thread in every primary school, and to stress the benefits of developing music in primary schools, taught by music specialists wherever possible. I suspect that most Members here will, like me, remember the pleasure we had in our early days at school in learning to sing in unison and, for some of us, progressing to harmony. Everyone can sing a bit and, with a little help, sing decently. Singing is elemental to our existence as human beings. Singing, even just in unison with others, is a team activity. It is a valuable tool for socialising the youngest members of our society. Learning to sing at least half-decently is good for our humanity. Equally importantly, as the plan reminds us, singing is the key to developing musicianship. We should all applaud that it is to become a core part of the curriculum on offer in primary schools.

So too I applaud the plan's aim to ensure that every child has an opportunity to learn an instrument and progress with instruments. My children were lucky, in that they learned instruments because I could afford to pay for them, but we all know that, for many people, that is not possible. The amount of money, some £25 million, is a good start but it can be only a start. Even in these rather difficult financial times, I am an optimist. I hope that the lead schools and music hubs will see this plan as a base from which to tempt and secure outside, top-up contributions. I see two particular routes: local businesses should be asked to match the contributions that schools put into purchasing instruments, and regional music charities should be established where they do not already exist, along the lines of the London Music Fund.

[LORD SANDHURST]

I hope then that we can see business and regional music charities working with the proposed lead schools and music hubs to see more instruments made available and more teaching provided for keen young instrumentalists. Certainly, I hope that, spurred on by this plan, imaginative schools and teachers will not just sit there in their schools but seize the opportunity of a new beginning to go out and seek sponsorship from local charities and business, so that everyone plays their part.

If business can be persuaded, as it should, that music in schools produces better and more skilled citizens, it will be encouraged to sponsor the provision of teaching and instruments. It is in the interests of business to do so. This national plan, properly promoted by enthusiastic members of staff, can be a platform from which to strengthen music in the community, bring support from communities into schools and involve parents. This plan offers a real new start, and the Government and their advisory panel are to be commended.

Finally, I welcome back, with real enthusiasm, my noble friend the Minister to the Front Bench. I look forward to his reply.

2.11 pm

Baroness Mobarik (Con): My Lords, I am grateful to be allowed to say a few words in the gap, especially following the excellent speeches of other noble Lords. I congratulate my noble friend Lady Fleet on her excellent report. I am a witness to the hard work and dedication that went into it, as we often both take refuge in the Earl Marshal's Room in order to do some work.

I understand that some schools include international musical genres as a way to understand and appreciate other cultures, and I endorse the words of the noble Baroness, Lady Bull, when she spoke of the importance of diversity and inclusion. There are innovative ways to impart musical knowledge, and we should look to see how schools in other countries are doing it. I will give just one example. About nine years ago, I visited Lahore Grammar School for girls, in Pakistan, accompanied by the principal of a private girls' school in Glasgow, of which I was a governor. On arriving at Lahore Grammar, we saw a board at the gate with the words, "Today's music: Mozart". As we wandered through the school, the playground and the corridors, we heard piped music, that day being Mozart. It was a wonderful way to become familiar with one of the great classical composers. The girls in that school learn about not only their own cultural musical heritage but that of the West in a relaxed and inspiring way.

The importance of music to mental well-being has been emphasised by other noble Lords. Music also has the power to bring people together and appreciate each other's cultures. I was heartened to hear the words of the Culture Minister that:

"The panel's expertise will guide us to ensure that young people from all backgrounds will have access to an exceptional music education. This will not only benefit student wellbeing, but also help grow the pipeline of people participating in our wonderful cultural and creative sectors."

Those are just a few words I wanted to add today. I once again congratulate my noble friend Lady Fleet on the very important work she has done and will no doubt continue to do.

2.14 pm

Lord German (LD): My Lords, I say to the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, that this has been a very interesting debate. We have had a wealth of experience; musicians of every character from around this Chamber have contributed. We have had expertise at all sorts of levels. Perhaps I should also say that now, with the connection between the noble Lords, Lord Black, Lord Berkeley and Lord Lingfield, we have a system for handing in musical instruments and getting them repaired free of charge. I encourage all noble Lord to look in their lofts and in the backs of their cupboards to see if they can find one. I think I have a violin without any strings, so I will be coming to see the noble Lord, Lord Lingfield, in a few days' time.

I echo the opening remarks of the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, when she talked about how this national plan looks at inclusion, progression and excellence. I say amen to that. It has been quite clear from the debate today that people want to say very little about the plan itself, as it has the essence of all good things. However, I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, on composition, but that is one of the factors I want to emphasise later on.

What people have been concerned about, of course, is what the noble Lord, Lord Aberdare, said: delivery, delivery, delivery. There have been some very specific examples of when we hope this plan will be delivered. I know that the Minister has not gone away because his picture is in the front of this document, so it is there for perpetuity, he cannot escape and he is now going to be responsible for it. However, I understand that many of these things that we are talking about may be the responsibility of the DfE or of other Ministers, and certainly the Treasury has a hand in it all.

It has been clear in this debate that a national plan, no matter how sound it is, will only be as good as the sustainable actions that lie behind it to achieve its ambitions. In the past, the ambition has been quite patchy. When the noble Lord, Lord Aberdare, said that we might think of moving the ENO to Coventry, I looked at the figures for Coventry, and it had only eight A-level entries for music this last year—only eight. For a city which has a great cathedral with a great musical background—some of us in this Chamber have sung many times in Coventry Cathedral—that is a shame. It is one of the examples of the patchiness of the provision being made to us.

Inflation is also going to hit this. Many Members of your Lordships' House have mentioned how the budget and its delivery matter, and how inflation has been biting away at the budget that has been provided. We have already heard about schools having that terrible difficulty of considering laying off teaching assistants and teachers because of the effect of inflation. It is a very real matter at present—all the headteachers I have talked to spoke about the difficulty of the budget—so clearly there is work to be done. To echo the point made by my noble friend Lord Wallace of Saltire, unless the Minister is going to tell us that he has been very successful in getting the additional expenditure needed to cope with inflation, I imagine that we are going to have to look to partnerships to raise the additional money that we require. I hope the Minister

will tell us how we can incentivise those partnerships. The noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate, told us that business ought to contribute. That happens in London but it is not happening much around the rest of the country, so there needs to be some kind of incentivisation.

The third area, which many noble Lords emphasised, is about the fact that while the hubs are obliged to take note of this plan, deal with it and implement it, schools are not; they can avoid it. The noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, said that hubs may have great plans, but if a school does not wish to implement them it need not do so. I would like to understand from the Minister what this new board will have in the way of powers. If it has powers over monitoring what happens in the hubs, that is one thing but, if it cannot deliver what the hubs want to achieve within the schools, that is much more concerning.

Rightly, music education does not start in secondary schools. As the noble Baroness, Lady Bull, said, it is right back at the earliest age that young people need to be involved in music. It is absolutely clear that this plan must apply much earlier. While she rightly said that it is not a statutory sector, clearly as soon as you get into the early years of infant school and primary education we hit the next problem, which is what hubs are trying to do but cannot succeed in because they have no role in implementing it. As the noble Lord, Lord Black, said, it needs implementation by statute or some other means to ensure that these two important parts of our education system—the hubs and the schools—are linked and have to work together. It might be said that this might be provided through incentivisation through funding, but it clearly has not happened because there are such patchy results around the country.

The other point of course is about staffing. The essence of good music education as everyone knows is good music teachers, but now that many specialist music teacher training courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels have closed, what is the Government's assessment and how will they meet the laudable ambitions of this plan without the feedstock provided by good music education teacher training programmes? As the noble Lord, Lord Black, said, it is a vicious circle. We have the plans, and the plans have led to the present lesser take-up of music in schools, and therefore fewer people training as music teachers, and so it goes on. How does the Minister intend to break that cycle? It is a very important question, especially as the National Foundation for Educational Research found that only 57% of the Government's target for music teacher training will be met this year. That was a point made by the noble Lord, Lord Black. On the current plan, that number of teachers is not coming through. We are short of that number, so how do the Government intend to meet their ambitions in their plan if they cannot provide the teachers to carry out the actions they propose?

Then, as the noble Lord, Lord Aberdare, said, there is a need to bolster the support that the Government provide for peripatetic workers. We say "peripatetic workers", but we mean "peripatetic music teachers". That is what we have always called them, and that is what we should continue to call them. Calling them a "workforce" downgrades them to an element which is not the same as a "teacher". I never call them anything

but a peripatetic teacher. They may not have a teaching qualification, but—goodness me—they have music experience par excellence. They have such an important role to play. The Welsh national plan for music provides protection in conditions and terms of work for peripatetic teachers. I think we should at the first stage call them peripatetic teachers, not workers. What will the Government do? Will they do what has been done in Wales and strengthen the role of these people simply by status? That status does not cost money; it just means that you get the thing in the perfect place.

I do not remember which noble Lord said it, but there is a problem about timetabling. It is difficult in schools, as you have to get the right timetabling for the right number of teachers and when you can get them to come in at certain times. That is something that certainly needs to be considered.

A point from me that has been amplified by the noble Baroness, Lady Bull, and the noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate, is that music education, as the plan states, can provide students with

"experiences and skills which develop their creativity."

That underplays the role that music education can play in developing vital personal cognitive skills that are transferable for future life. I will give two examples: timeliness and accuracy. Time runs throughout music. It changes, it flexes, it is an essential if you take part in a collegiate music activity. You have to work together in time. You have to be in time for your rehearsals and performances. Music trains you to work with time.

Accuracy is a vital component in anyone's life and career. No one will thank you for playing a wrong note many times over, so you need to be accurate. Music requires you to take note of accuracy and performance trains you to value it. Those are two examples of how music education can play a much broader role in training in those competencies that are of value throughout our work and lives.

I would like to add a little strength to the argument that the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, made about composition. Music is about listening, performance and composition. We underplay composition if we want the feedstock for the future—as I think the noble Lord put it. It seems that new technologies can help with this, because you do not have to get the inevitable pencil with the rubber on the end, which I have in my pocket, and a sheet of staved paper so you can rub out and correct. Now technology allows you, when you play an instrument, to translate the notes directly into music written on staves.

So we need to worry less about the competence of being able to write on paper, and more about the creative skills of creating sounds and music which stretch the minds of young people. You certainly used to be able to do that through improvisation, and jazz in particular, but you can do it through other music technologies as well. There is a very nice, neat couple of paragraphs on composition in this plan—it is about 10 lines—but if there is one thing it underplays, it is that.

The noble Baroness, Lady Mobarik, made a point about international comparisons. Are we trying to produce a music education system which matches the best in the world? That is what we should be achieving,

[LORD GERMAN]

because in the past this country has had a tradition of world-class musicianship and, if we want to sustain that, we need world-class music education.

I have just a little anecdote. I was in Slovenia just two weeks ago and was asked to go into a primary school to talk to their English class—nothing to do with music at all—in English, which was quite interesting. They were 11 year-olds and they put questions to me, all in English. At the end of my talk about the United Kingdom and whatever else, I asked them how many of them played a musical instrument, and 75% of the class put their hands up. Of that 75%, each one of them was able to tell me which instrument they learned. They were speaking in English, and I did have a little trouble with the “saxhorn”. When I did not quite understand it, the young man of 11 years of age said, “It’s a bit like a tuba”—and I realised that it was a euphonium.

Parents pay €35 per month for eight music lessons. If they get through the grades further on, they get free tuition from the age of 15. That is progression for you, because they pay at the beginning, at the feedstock end, but, as they progress, the best have the opportunities available to them. I mention that as we need to look at international comparisons to make it work.

In conclusion, we have had a very interesting debate. I cannot let it pass without talking about touring. Many Members of this House, as the Minister will know, have been aggravated about this issue and will be taking it up. What we need is a carve-out in the TCA. It is very straightforward. That is what we are after and, if the Government are not going to take full steps forward on this—perhaps the Minister could tell us if the Government are trying to get changes in the TCA—we have a parliamentary assembly of the EU and these Houses of Parliament, of which some Members in this Chamber may be members. One of their roles is to be able to recommend to the Commission and the European Council changes to the TCA.

It looks as if the Minister is saying that is not the case. I am just saying that, if the assembly has the right to recommend, members might like to press that recommendation on others of our colleagues, to make sure that that happens.

In conclusion, this has been an excellent debate and I very much thank the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, for bringing it forward. She raised some very interesting issues and she has a plan—let us deliver it.

2.30 pm

Baroness Wilcox of Newport (Lab): I am very pleased to follow the noble Lord, Lord German. When I was a young drama teacher up the road in Newport, he was a music teacher in Cardiff, very well known and very well respected by colleagues. I am also pleased to see the Minister restored to his place; we entered the House at the same time. We may be political opponents, but we are both good public servants.

I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Fleet, for her comprehensive introduction and her work on this plan to

“ensure all pupils receive a high-quality music education, strengthen the creative pipeline, and help create the musicians and audiences of the future”—

all children and young people receiving a high-quality music education, all music educators working in partnership, and all children and young people with musical interests and talents having the opportunity to progress.

Many noble Lords know that I spent more than three decades teaching the performing arts. Indeed, Wales is stereotypically the land of song, and music underpinned so much of my work in other areas of creativity. I was very proud to work alongside many inspirational music teachers in my time—people such as Lisa Fitzgerald-Lombard, a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music. I am sure that the noble Lord, Lord German, knows her father, Bob Childs, a renowned brass band conductor. Lisa and music teachers like her in Wales will now be working with our *National Plan for Music Education*, launched this summer by the Welsh Government.

Nerth gwlad, ei gwybodaeth—the strength of a nation is in its knowledge. All children and young people in Wales, regardless of background, will have the chance to learn to play a musical instrument that has previously been for those few whose parents and carers could afford the tuition or those who had a musical tradition in their family. The development of the National Music Service has now ended this inequality and will ensure that the musical skills of the next generation are nurtured in our schools in Wales.

However, today we are talking about the English plan, which builds on the *Model Music Curriculum* for years 1 to 9, published by the Government in March last year. Its four key areas are singing, listening, composing and performing. The Government described the curriculum as non-statutory guidance,

“designed to assist rather than to prescribe”

in designing music lessons—and here is the first obstacle, as noted by the noble Lord, Lord Black. In my decades of experience, whenever something is non-statutory there is a reluctance to engage with it, despite best efforts. So much is statutory in a curriculum that non-statutory gets crowded out. I respectfully suggest to the Minister that the sooner plans for music education are enshrined in law, the better.

In the early part of the debate, my noble friend Lord Stansgate also raised significant concerns in these areas, including about the exclusion of music from the core curriculum and the pressures that the English baccalaureate has brought on all creative subjects, including music.

Labour is ambitious for every single child and every precious teacher. We have a *Children’s Recovery Plan*, under which we intend to train up to 6,500 new teachers, including music teachers, and give them ongoing professional development. We should not settle, anywhere in the UK, for less than world-class standards of teaching.

A further barrier to this plan, as with so many of these plans, is inadequate staffing levels right across the public services. On the education workforce, noble Lords will be well aware of the crisis in teacher recruitment; many noble Lords have mentioned it. In the 2021-22 academic year, recruitment for secondary music trainees was just 72% of the DfE’s target—the largest yearly decrease of any subject. The NFER’s 2022 report

predicts that, judging by current application trends, music will meet only about half of its target this year—I have 51% but others have said different figures. Without music educators there is no plan for music education, so I ask the Minister: what is the Government's plan to stop this totally unsustainable workforce crisis?

However, in positive terms, I am particularly drawn to the statements in the plan about the importance of inclusion in a number of areas. It says that the Government “will pilot a Music Progression Fund to support disadvantaged pupils with significant musical potential, enthusiasm and commitment.”

In my career—from Brixton to Brynmawr, to Newport to Pontypridd—I saw potential and was able to support that potential, enthusiasm and commitment.

I am going off script because I have suddenly remembered that I had a fantastic pupil called Adam. He used to call himself Billy Sausage; I do not know why but in every book, we could find that name. Adam Parsons was an incredibly gifted young man who won a place at Guildford School of Acting—3,000 applicants for 30 places. He was unable to take up the place through a lack of funding, because it was not grant funded and he lived in Pontypridd with his mum. They were unable to stump up the thousands of pounds. We tried everything: we wrote to Anthony Hopkins, Tom Jones and Shirley Bassey. We tried everything but we could not get Adam to get that place. He would be a West End star now if he had. As it is, he is making a good living—he was out in Europe, and he now does a Tom Jones tribute act—but that lack of funding meant that he was not able to fill that wonderful place he had won. However, I digress.

The report also says that

“all Music Hubs should develop ... an inclusion strategy”.

I do not know enough about music hubs, but I picked up what the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, talked about. I have reservations; the money should be in schools. The report also says that all music educators should commit to

“removing barriers, including for children in low-income families”, and that those teaching music should

“take action to support increasing access, opportunity, participation”.

These are admirable aims, but I am concerned about the follow-through aspect. I ask again of the Minister: how will the Government ensure that these important outcomes are sustained and monitored?

These are not just my concerns; they are shared by music professionals such as the Incorporated Society of Musicians, the professional body for musicians in the UK, which welcomes the national plan, particularly the commitment that music should be a key part of the school curriculum, but also calls for more funding for music in schools and hubs, stating that existing levels are

“almost certainly not sufficient in order to implement the Plan's broad ambitions”.

It expresses concern, as I do, about the new oversight board, stating that the predecessor, set up under the 2011 plan, “fell into abeyance”. I reiterate that close monitoring and assessment by the Government are vital if this plan is to succeed.

In conclusion, the plan's ambitions are summarised by this statement:

“This refreshed NPME, realised through dynamic partnerships across the country, will ensure all pupils receive a high-quality music education, strengthen the creative pipeline, and help create the musicians and audiences of the future.”

For the children of England and their artistic ambitions I sincerely hope that this is the case, but it will need strong funding and even stronger political will for it to work in practice.

2.39 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay) (Con): My Lords, this has been an excellent debate, as I knew it would be. Although this is a plan that focuses on provision of music education in England, it has been a pleasure to hear two Front-Bench speeches from former arts teachers in Wales, who brought their particular passion and experience to it, along with all the valuable insights and excellent points raised by noble Lords today.

I pay particular tribute to my noble friend Lady Fleet, who is a committed and passionate champion of music. Twice now, I have had the pleasure of seeing with her the talented scholars of the London Music Fund, of which she should be extremely proud. She was absolutely right in her opening remarks about the potential for music to change lives. She has brought that commitment and passion to her chairing of the expert advisory panel for the national plan for music education, and brought it again to today's debate in the excellent way she opened it. We are all very grateful to her for that. Her work, and the work of the other excellent members of the panel, led to the publication of the refreshed plan, with its powerful and well-chosen title, *The Power of Music to Change Lives*, in June. As was the case with the first music plan, this is a joint plan between my department and the Department for Education. I echo the tributes paid to my noble friend Lady Barran and would also like to pass my thanks on to Robin Walker, with whom I jointly wrote the foreword to the plan.

The panel members gave many hours of their time to provide valuable insight and challenge, without which the plan would not be as ambitious or as reflective as it is of the voices of educators, young people and musicians. I am extremely grateful to everyone who took part in the panel and informed its work. Studying and engaging with music is not a privilege: it is a vital part of a broad and ambitious curriculum. All pupils should have access to an excellent music education and all the joy it brings. That is why music is part of the national curriculum in all maintained schools for pupils from the age of five to 14, and why the Government also expect academies to teach music as part of their statutory requirement to develop pupils' cultural development.

A number of noble Lords touched on the English baccalaureate, which was designed to be limited in size to allow for the study of other subjects. I stress that the Government believe that it should be studied as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, and that every child should experience a high-quality arts and cultural education throughout their time at school.

[LORD PARKINSON OF WHITLEY BAY]

The best schools in the country combine high-quality cultural education with excellence in core subjects and we are committed to ensuring that students have access to both. We therefore continue to direct funding towards ensuring that a rich diet of arts, sport and music remains available to all pupils.

The refreshed plan reflects the vision of the original, published in 2011, in wanting

“all children and young people to learn to sing, play an instrument and create music together, and have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents, including professionally.”

It sets out clear actions to improve music education between now and 2030, as part of the Government’s long-term vision for schools, as set out in the schools White Paper published in March.

My noble friend Lord Black of Brentwood and others asked why the plan is not statutory. It is important that schools have the autonomy to tailor their curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils. We have, however, clearly set out what effective practice looks like to inspire schools to ensure a focus on quality as well as quantity. An important aspect of the plan is the wide range of case studies it covers, showing examples of schools of all types and how they have developed a rich musical offering.

The model music curriculum published by the Department for Education in 2021, again with the assistance of my noble friend Lady Fleet, is designed to assist rather than prescribe, providing a benchmark to help teachers, school leaders and people designing curricula to make sure that every music lesson is of the highest quality. I can reassure the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley of Knighton, that composition is a key aspect of this. The noble Lord, Lord Aberdare, asked about the role of Ofsted: in July last year, Ofsted published a research review on music, summarising key lessons on effective music curriculum design and delivery. Ofsted also plans to publish a subject report on music next year, which will report on the quality of the music curriculum in schools.

Funding is a core aspect that was touched on in a number of noble Lords’ contributions. As part of the refreshed plan, the Government will continue to invest £79 million per annum in our national network of music hubs, which have a key role in supporting schools to provide high-quality music provision. We recognise the vital importance of every child being able to access the instruments and equipment that they need to advance, including technology and adaptive instruments, which is why the Government announced £25 million of new funding for musical instruments alongside the plan. I was asked about the timings of, and next steps for, that £25 million of new funding. Arts Council England is currently working with a range of relevant parties to help identify the needs of children and young people, including the extent to which schools are making use of music technology and instruments for pupils with special educational needs. We will set out more details once they have completed that work and brought the insights forward.

Officials in both departments are also working with the sector on how instruments are maintained and supported, so I am very grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, for his suggestion of an instrument

amnesty. We will take that forward and look into what can be done, with or without the help which was offered today by my noble friend Lord Lingfield and other noble Lords.

The Government have invested over £714 million between 2016 and the last financial year in a diverse portfolio of music and arts education programmes to ensure that all children, whatever their background, have access to a high-quality music and arts education. This includes music hubs, which provide specialist music education services to around 90% of state-funded schools, and over £30 million a year through the Music and Dance Scheme, which my noble friend Lady Fleet mentioned and which provides means-tested bursaries to over 2,000 young people showing the greatest potential in these art forms.

I am afraid that I must tell my noble friend Lord Black of Brentwood that the DfE grant to hubs and the capital funding will not be index-linked. However, the grant makes up 40% of the total funding for music hubs nationally, with 60% coming from other income sources, including fundraising, and with many hubs raising more than this. This is why one of the pillars for hubs in future will be on sustainability.

The expectations set out in the plan, starting from early years, are unashamedly ambitious and informed by the excellent practice that we see demonstrated by many brilliant schools across the country, by music hubs and by music charities. We want to see all schools provide timetabled curriculum music of at least one hour a week of the school year for key stages 1 to 3, as well as co-curricular opportunities to learn instruments and singing and to play and sing together in ensembles and choirs. Music should be represented in every school’s leadership structure at primary and secondary phases, with a designated music lead or head of department at school and/or academy trust level.

In partnership with their music hub, every school, including academies, should have a music development plan setting out how it will be staffed and funded. The refreshed plan reaffirms the Government’s commitment to music hubs and sets out our approach for their next phase. In future, music hubs will develop plans for five functions, covering partnership, support for schools, progression and musical development, inclusion and sustainability. The music hub programme will also be opened up to competition. Specifically, Arts Council England will be inviting applications for the role of music hub lead organisation, with details to be published in due course. Together, these reforms should lead to concrete action, as has been urged by noble Lords, to ensure that every school and academy trust can take to improve their music education provision through partnership and collaboration with their hub partners.

On the questions about accountability raised by the noble Baroness, Lady Bull, and other noble Lords, schools are accountable for teaching a broad and balanced curriculum, and Ofsted will, as a matter of course, undertake deep dives on specific subjects when carrying out their inspections, including in relation to music teaching.

The noble Lord, Lord Wallace of Saltaire, and my noble friend Lord Lingfield highlighted the importance of partnerships. Hubs will need to take a leading role

in building a sustainable and local infrastructure for high-quality music education and music making. That would include the community-based organisations working with aspiring young musicians and other regional or national youth music organisations, as well as the music industry. It can certainly include independent schools or cadet organisations with high-quality music provision.

Being part of a strong multi-academy trust can benefit a school's music provision, and we expect more academy trusts to take a leading role in arts education across their schools. The opportunity to share resources and expertise, under the strategic direction of trust-level leaders for music, can broaden opportunities for pupils and strengthen the quality of teaching. Ark Schools, for example, pools its resources to provide great music education across its schools. Ark includes 39 schools in London, Birmingham, Portsmouth and Hastings. There is a choir in each of them, and over 1,000 children a year aged between nine and 18 are currently in after-school clubs. At the time of the case study mentioned in the plan, the take-up of GCSE music at Ark had increased by 80%, and students who want to enter the music industry are provided with mentoring and advice from Ark's network of 100 professional artists.

Underpinning the entire plan is our expectation that music education should be fully inclusive, including for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, in both mainstream and special schools. To help make this a reality, we have set out some new initiatives, including that all music hubs will be expected to develop and publish an inclusion strategy and that all music hub lead organisations should have an inclusion lead by 2024.

I take a moment to highlight the fantastic work of another school featured in the plan's case studies, the Barbara Priestman Academy, which is a specialist school on the outskirts of Sunderland for students aged 11 to 19 with autistic spectrum disorder or complex learning difficulties. At key stage 3, all pupils there receive weekly music lessons where they perform, compose and improvise. Students are given the opportunity to develop their musical skills and work towards qualifications at key stages 4 and 5, with performance at its heart.

We know that, while the potential of pupils is equally spread throughout the country, opportunity is not. The noble Baroness, Lady Wilcox, gave us the striking example of one of her former pupils. That is why, as part of the Government's commitment to levelling up, we will pilot a music progression fund to support pupils, mainly in education investment areas, with significant musical potential, enthusiasm and commitment. On the timing of the progression fund, about which I was asked, we intend it to start from next autumn and run over four years, testing a range of interventions to support disadvantaged pupils.

The noble Lord, Lord German, highlighted the example of Coventry, as first mentioned by the noble Lord, Lord Aberdare. I should also mention that, as part of our work to extend opportunity, the landmark City of Culture initiative that DCMS supports saw Coventry have a very successful year as City of Culture, which culminated just a few months ago. As part of that, I was pleased to hear a new composition by Nitin

Sawhney at Coventry Cathedral, in the company of the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Coventry. Other initiatives included the CVX Festival, which trained schoolchildren and school leavers from across the city in event management—another key part of supporting them and encouraging them to forge careers in other parts of the creative industries.

The noble Lord, Lord Wallace, the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, and others focused on support for disadvantaged young people. The music progression fund will involve testing a range of interventions to support disadvantaged pupils. Eligible pupils will receive small group or individual support over a sustained period to learn instruments or how to sing to a high standard. Our aim is to reach 1,000 disadvantaged pupils in four to six music hub areas, mainly from education investment areas, as I say. The lessons from that pilot will help hubs embed best practice across the country.

Professional development was raised by a number of noble Lords. The quality of teaching remains the single most important factor in improving outcomes for children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. That is why the Government will be providing additional funding for and placing a stronger emphasis on teacher development as part of the music hub programme in the future, including peer-to-peer support through new lead schools in every hub. We will also establish four national music hub centres of excellence for inclusion, continuing professional development, music technology and pathways to industry. We plan to appoint all the centres by autumn 2024.

My noble friend Lady Fleet asked what plans there were to scale up and train more specialist music teachers. I shall go into a little more detail there, as she pressed me on that particularly. The initial teacher training core content framework, published in 2019, defines in detail the minimum entitlement of all trainee teachers. Drawing on the best available evidence, it sets out the content that training providers and their partnerships should draw on. The core content framework aligns with the early career framework to establish an entitlement to a three-year or longer structured package of support for all new teachers at the start of their careers. It remains for individual providers to design curricula appropriate for the subject, phase and age range of the course. Once a teacher is qualified and working in schools, music hubs have a vital role to drive specialist music education continuing professional development, or CPD, as it is often called. In addition to a centre for excellence focused on CPD from autumn 2024, hubs will also work with lead schools to develop an effective CPD offer for all schools in the hub area, and a rich peer-to-peer support programme.

The noble Baroness, Lady Bull, was right to highlight the importance of careers advice. I am pleased to say that the DCMS has recently relaunched the creative careers programme, with nearly £1 million in funding. That follows the successful pilot in 2018-20, which saw seed funding from the Government, and £8.5 million of in-kind and cash contributions from the industry, which delivered over 92,000 student interactions with industry—an important way to ensure that pupils in school know about the opportunities available to them in our thriving and expanding creative industries.

[LORD PARKINSON OF WHITLEY BAY]

The noble Lord, Lord Berkeley of Knighton, the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, and others took the opportunity to extemporise a bit and ask about arts funding. I am happy to say a bit about that, although it is slightly off the topic of today's debate, if connected to it—because this is an important issue following Arts Council England's announcement of funding on Friday. It was in response to a request from the Government to ensure that taxpayer subsidy for arts and culture is spread fairly around the country. In the previous round, it amounted to £21 per capita in London and just £6 per capita outside London. London is our nation's capital and includes many excellent world-class institutions, which we all want to see continuing to thrive, but that discrepancy is very striking.

Taxpayer subsidy comes from taxpayers across the country as part of inspiring people to seize opportunities everywhere in the country. We want to make sure that they have access to world-class arts and culture on their doorstep. As a result of that, and the larger pot of funding secured at the last spending review, Arts Council England has announced its largest ever national portfolio, with nearly 1,000 national portfolio organisations, including 276 new ones. I am pleased to see also an increase in the number of supported music organisations to the tune of 38, which includes support for music organisations such as the National Children's Orchestras, based in Bristol, which delivers a national programme of orchestral training for young people. The music portfolio is now broader in its subdisciplines.

The noble Lord, Lord Aberdare, mentioned the Aurora Orchestra, whose funding has been increased by more than 50%. Opera still accounts for 40% of the overall investment in music, with uplifts for the English Touring Opera and the Birmingham Opera Company, as well as new joiners to the portfolio, OperaUpClose and the Pegasus Opera companies. The focus of Arts Council England, which has taken those decisions independently of government, as it rightly should, is on developing audiences around the country and developing new talent, including in these vital musical art forms.

Noble Lords also took the opportunity to ask about touring. When I was previously in this role, one of the last debates I responded to was the noble Earl's debate on the importance of touring, where I acknowledged the remarks made by my noble friend Lord Frost about the negotiations. I do not want to foreshorten my time back in the role by extemporising too much about the Prime Minister's views, but if the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley of Knighton, would be willing to share with the Prime Minister the correspondence that he mentioned, perhaps I can take that forward on his behalf. As noble Lords will have heard me say before, we are committed to supporting touring artists and musicians to adapt to the new requirements for touring. In many areas, the arrangements are much more workable than has at times been reported. I am happy to repeat my commitment to take that forward and ensure they are given the support they deserve.

In conclusion, children across the country should be grateful to my noble friend Lady Fleet not just for her work in shaping this plan, and its original version

a decade ago, but for her vigilance and commitment to ensuring that it is actually put into practice. There is a lot to do to make sure that our refreshed vision for music education becomes a reality, which is why we will be setting up a monitoring board to help us continue to drive forward those commitments. I know that my noble friend will continue to hold our feet to the fire, as well she should, but we are very proud of the way that the plan brings together the voices of all the individuals and organisations who helped to shape it: the teachers, head teachers, young people, parents and guardians, peripatetic teachers, hub leaders, youth music organisations, musicians and representatives of our thriving music industry. I am grateful for the contributions from noble Lords today, which have added to it, and look forward to their continued scrutiny on putting this plan into practice.

3.01 pm

Baroness Fleet (Con): My Lords, on behalf of the whole House I thank my noble friend the Minister for his insights and typically generous remarks to me and to everyone here. It has been a really good natured debate; at times, I felt we were all on the same side, which in itself is a good thing. It has been quite a passionate debate but music is a very passionate subject and we all care so much about it. I will do my very best to hold the Government's feet to the fire, as the Minister suggests, and monitor this to ensure it really is a plan of action, not just a plan.

I would like to thank all noble Lords personally but we are probably running out of time. However, I will note the comments of the noble Lords, Lord Aberdare and Lord Berkeley, who I have come to know quite well over recent months through our shared interests. They are both brilliant advocates of music education, as all your Lordships are, and never willing to let the Government off the hook—good for them. We cannot hear enough of their arguments or those of the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty. My friend the noble Baroness, Lady Bull, has courageously taken on a fantastic new role, which I am sure your Lordships all know about. I congratulate her on being appointed as chair of the advisory panel for the cultural education plan. That really is an important piece of work and we are most fortunate that she has agreed to take it on.

I will say a few words to sum up what an important debate this has been, rather than taking each speaker separately; I thank them all. I would like to pick up on a point made by the noble Lord, Lord Black, who is right that we need political leadership to give the plan a proper position in schools. I am sure we would all be delighted to hear the new Secretary of State at the DfE express her belief in the importance of music and music education. We have been waiting for this for some time; there has been rather a lot of moving chairs and people around, but now is the moment. We all need good news, and this really would be very well received by all Members of this House and the other place. It has been most constructive and an important subject for all of us. I hope it will be taken away by those in government, and the whole of the sector, and studied and acted on, for children and young people are at the heart of the national plan for music education.

We must work together to ensure that we bring music into their lives and into the lives of all children, whatever their backgrounds and circumstances. I thank noble Lords for their inspiring contributions.

Motion agreed.

House adjourned at 3.05 pm.