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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

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

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House of Lords

Thursday, 13 March 2014.

11 am

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Newcastle.

Royal Assent

11.06 am

The following Acts were given Royal Assent:

Supply and Appropriation (Anticipation and Adjustments) Act,

Children and Families Act,

National Insurance Contributions Act,

Citizenship (Armed Forces) Act,

International Development (Gender Equality) Act,

Leasehold Reform (Amendment) Act,

Offender Rehabilitation Act,

Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act,

Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act.

Social Tenancies: Home-working

Question

11.07 am

Asked by Baroness Greder

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made to encourage social landlords to amend new and existing tenancies to make it easier to work from home under schemes such as the new enterprise allowance.

Earl Attlee (Con): My Lords, this Government are helping entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises to start and to grow by ensuring that the business support provided is simpler, more joined-up and accessible. The department has also alerted social landlords to guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Housing which advises them on how to support and encourage their tenants to work from home, including information on how to amend existing tenancies if necessary.

Baroness Greder (LD): My Lords, I recently met a lady who is setting up her own business at home. However, because she is a council tenant she has to get permission. While the best councils and housing associations have already removed this restriction, many others have not. Does the Minister agree that this can be very constraining and is a bureaucratic and old-fashioned practice that should go? What can he do to urge all landlords to encourage rather than constrain their own tenants?

Earl Attlee: My Lords, as I have indicated, we have put out advice to all social landlords on the need to seriously consider allowing their tenants to set up businesses. There is a misconception among social tenants that they cannot run a business from a council flat. They can, but they need to apply for permission from the landlord. This process is necessary because the landlord needs to be able to accept sensible web-based businesses while not allowing industrial processes to be carried out from the flat.

Lord McKenzie of Luton (Lab): My Lords, should a social landlord acknowledge a room as being available for home-working, would that preclude it being a spare bedroom for the purposes of the bedroom tax?

Earl Attlee: My Lords, the noble Lord has not disappointed me one little bit: I was certain that he would not be able to resist this opportunity. The spare room subsidy encourages people to make full use of their property and to consider running a small business—which I think is highly desirable.

Baroness Gardner of Parkes (Con): My Lords, is the Minister aware that under planning law you are entitled to carry out any sort of business if it is your own property, provided that it is subsidiary to the residential use? I had a dental surgery in a house we lived in and that was permitted. Has the law changed, or is a restriction in the lease imposed by the landlord preventing tenants having this right?

Earl Attlee: My Lords, the matter we are discussing is a restriction in the lease which can appear to discourage tenants from carrying on their business. Some leases are drafted in a way that makes it clear that the landlord is likely to agree to sensible variations, while other leases appear not to be so helpful. A properly educated person will realise that there is a distinct possibility, whereas others could be discouraged. I think that that is one of the issues that my noble friend Lady Greder raised with me.

Lord Howarth of Newport (Lab): My Lords, further to the question put by the noble Baroness, Lady Gardner, can the Minister advise the House whether it is now the case that planning regulations no longer constrain the scope for people to nurture fledgling businesses—and, indeed, more substantial businesses—in their own home, because that used not to be the case?

Earl Attlee: My Lords, that is a detailed question about the planning rules and I shall have to write to the noble Lord.

Lord Taylor of Goss Moor (LD): My Lords, in 2008, in the rural housing review that I conducted for the previous Government, I precisely recommended that no social landlord should require a tenant to seek permission to run a business from their home if doing so would cause no nuisance. I am glad to say, as chair of the National Housing Federation, that that is the recommendation that we make to all our housing association members and that most of them agree.

[LORD TAYLOR OF GOSS MOOR]

However, does my noble friend agree that in order to access the opportunities that running your own business from home can provide, it is almost universally necessary these days that you have internet access, but that whereas 90% of those in the private sector have access to the internet, fully 30% of those in social housing do not? Is there anything that Ministers can do to help social tenants get access to the internet—and to do so as a matter of right in the modern world, not as a matter of whether they can afford it?

Earl Attlee: My Lords, we are acutely aware of the need for internet access. I am sure that my noble friend is right about the percentages, but I do not think that it is that difficult to secure an internet connection. He suggested that landlords should not have the right to restrict people from starting up businesses. It is right that landlords should be involved in such decisions on behalf of other tenants in order to make sure that undesirable businesses are not started up in residential accommodation.

Alcohol: Calorie Labelling *Question*

11.13 am

Asked by **Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Earl Howe on 11 February (HL Deb, col. 535), whether they will publish a list of the alcohol producers and retailers who have pledged themselves voluntarily in the Responsibility Deal to display the calories and sugar content of the drink on the labels of their alcohol products.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health (Earl Howe) (Con): My Lords, we welcome companies such as Sainsbury's, which have taken action in this area. While there is no responsibility deal pledge to voluntarily display energy and sugar content on the labels of alcohol products, we will continue to consider what more can be done through the responsibility deal to improve public health, including through consumer information.

Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe (Lab): I am truly grateful to the noble Earl for the efforts he has been making to try to persuade the drinks industry and the supermarkets that they have to accept some responsibility for the damage to health that alcohol causes. From the pledges he has been given by the producers and the supermarkets, can he say how many have as yet actually displayed calories and sugar on the labels of their lagers and beers? While I acknowledge that progress is happily now being made with wine, will he say what he intends to do, given that Tesco and Morrisons have now publicly stated that in no way will they go down this route?

Earl Howe: My Lords, I mentioned Sainsbury's, which is setting a very good example in this area, but I can tell the noble Lord that Waitrose and the Co-op have also taken steps to display calories on their

own-brand alcohol labelling. Naturally, we hope that others will follow their lead. As yet, none has, and it is a pity that Tesco has said that it will not, but we will continue to work on this issue. Work is also going on at a European level, and the noble Lord may like to know that the UK pressed for mandatory energy declarations during negotiations on the EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation. It met with significant resistance, and we did not succeed, but we are still pressing for that.

Baroness Sharples (Con): Does my noble friend have any estimate of the number of shoppers who actually read the labels?

Earl Howe: No, I do not, but it is worth noting that 49 businesses have signed up to the voluntary responsibility deal pledge on awareness of alcohol units, calories and other information. Those organisations have published calorie information on their websites about every single alcoholic product. If one is buying online, it is possible to compare one product with another.

Lord Turnberg (Lab): My Lords, is the noble Earl aware that alcopops are rearing their heads again? These sweetened drinks have sugar added to them to make them attractive, in a cynical attempt to bring the young on board to alcohol. They contain more than 170 calories a bottle—about the same as a sweetened chocolate milk drink—as well as the alcohol. Is there anything we can do to bring this to the attention of the supermarkets? I believe Sainsbury's has alcopops on its shelves now.

Earl Howe: My Lords, in fact, sales of alcopops are in marked decline, to such an extent that the market for these products looks like disappearing in the next few years. Nevertheless, I take the noble Lord's point. It is always a concern if people are putting their health at risk by drinking too much alcohol or consuming too much sugar. At the same time, one should not always assume that an alcopop is a high-calorie drink. For example, ready-mixed gin and tonic is technically an alcopop, but very often low-calorie tonic goes into it.

Lord Taverne (LD): My Lords, there is an unfavourable contrast in the behaviour of the UK alcohol industry as compared with the French when it comes to social responsibility. The UK alcohol industry strongly markets super-strong beers and lagers as the cheapest way of getting alcohol, whereas the French industry has suppressed access to low-quality wines and other cheap drinks through pricing. Would my noble friend urge the industry in the UK, as part of the social responsibility deal, to follow the French example?

Earl Howe: My noble friend may like to know that, in fact, 125 companies have pledged, under the responsibility deal, to help people drink within the guidelines. Perhaps the most significant pledge that has been made is the one by more than 30 alcohol retailers and producers to remove 1 billion units of alcohol from the market—around 2%—by the end

of 2015. Companies, pub chains and retailers have also made a whole range of other pledges. We are making significant progress in this area.

Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top (Lab): My Lords, I wonder whether the noble Earl is aware of quite how much this costs the NHS. Abuse of alcohol is very damaging to families and to individuals but also costs the NHS a fortune. Is it not about time that we, and the Government, took responsibility by backing the consumer, the patient and the taxpayer rather than siding with the drinks companies? Is it not about time not only for labelling, as my noble friend has called for, but for a minimum pricing policy?

Earl Howe: The noble Baroness raises a number of areas. We believe that this issue can benefit from action on a number of fronts. One of them is the responsibility deal to persuade the industry to take voluntary action. We are making significant progress in this area. Of course, the other is behaviour change by individuals and the choices that people make. Ultimately, people need to take control of their own behaviour, and the Chief Medical Officer is currently overseeing a review of the alcohol guidelines so that people can make informed choices about their drinking at all stages of their life.

Lord Lawson of Blaby (Con): My Lords, my noble friend Lord Taverne asked my noble friend the Minister to commend the French for their high-price wine policy. I commend them for their low-price wine policy. At home in France, I buy a very good everyday drinking wine from my local wine grower for €8 for a five-litre box.

Noble Lords: Oh!

Earl Howe: My Lords, I would love to receive details but, once again, it is a question of how much my noble friend consumes rather than how much he pays.

Lord Harrison (Lab): My Lords, the Minister may recall that last September I shared with him my concern at the ever-rising alcoholic content of wines that are on sale in supermarkets and the need for greater provision of lower percentage wines so that the consumer can indeed make a choice. What progress has he made in that area?

Earl Howe: My Lords, this area is currently under scrutiny by my ministerial colleagues in the Treasury.

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Lab): My Lords, the noble Earl mentioned the Chief Medical Officer. Did he see her comment last week that the Government ought to consider a sugar tax? What response have the Government made to their own Chief Medical Officer?

Earl Howe: My Lords, as I have just indicated to the noble Lord, Lord Harrison, taxation is always an instrument that Governments consider. We continue

to keep the international evidence on that under review, but we think that for now the voluntary action we have put in place is delivering results. We will keep a close eye on progress but taxation is always an instrument that Governments can deploy.

Railways: High Speed 2 Review

Question

11.22 am

Asked by **Lord Truscott**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will reconsider their decision not to publish the November 2011 Major Projects Authority review into HS2.

Lord Popat (Con): My Lords, the Government do not intend to reconsider their decision not to release the November 2011 MPA report. The decision to exercise the power of veto to override the decision of the Information Commissioner to release the report was not taken lightly and carefully took into account the views of the Cabinet and the Information Commissioner, and the wider public interest.

Lord Truscott (Non-Aff): I thank the Minister for that reply, but if HS2 is such a good project, I still cannot see what the Government have got to hide. However, does the Minister agree with that group of dangerous left-wing environmentalists—the Institute of Directors—that:

“Across the country, there simply is not the level of business support to justify blowing Britain's infrastructure budget on a project with such potential to turn into a white elephant”?

Lord Popat: My Lords, there has been widespread discussion in this House and the other place and there is widespread acceptance by all the political parties of the benefits of HS2. HS2 is about not just speed but capacity, regeneration, job creation and growth. It will connect nine major cities. It is one of the largest infrastructure projects we have and we should welcome it.

Lord Clark of Windermere (Lab): My Lords, will the Minister confirm that there is no business case whatever for HS2 north of Manchester? Will he further confirm that the decision not to have tilting trains inevitably means that all the stations north of Wigan will in fact have an inferior service?

Lord Popat: My Lords, I do not have in my brief details of the line north of Manchester. I will be happy to write to the noble Lord.

Lord Bradshaw (LD): Does the Minister agree that a lot of the demands that we have just heard for the publication of out-of-date information are really mischief-making by opponents of HS2, who wish to use the information only to pick further holes in the case? Last weekend, I was handed a leaflet by people who are against HS2 which referred to the “ultra high-speed

[LORD BRADSHAW] line". That is absolute nonsense, because the trains will run at the same speed as they do now on the Great Western and north-eastern lines and have done for 40 years. Does the Minister agree that it is right to leave the matter in the hands of the extremely competent chairman of HS2, who will come forward shortly with his proposals to cheapen and extend the project?

Lord Popat: I agree with the noble Lord that we have in Mr Higgins the best of chairmen for HS2. The Major Projects Authority, which was set up by this Government, monitors all major projects in the UK such as HS2 and gives us an annual report on whether we are on time, within cost and how well the project is doing.

Lord Cormack (Con): My Lords, how can my noble friend justify not releasing the report? He says that we want a widespread discussion. How can we have that discussion if we are kept in the dark on certain vital pieces of information? Those who are opposed are going to suspect the worst. If the report presents an absolutely clinching argument for HS2, let us have it.

Lord Popat: My noble friend makes a very important observation here. I again stress that the decision not to publish this report was not taken lightly. It was decided not to publish because it was not in the public interest to do so. The Secretary of State's reasoning has been laid before the House. He focused on three specific reasons as to why the report was an exceptional case: first, the exceptional importance of the HS2 project; secondly, the extremely strong public interest in showing that expenditure on HS2 is properly and robustly overseen and controlled; and, finally, the short timeframe between the production of the project assessment review and the request for information, and the timing of the request at this particular stage of policy development within the HS2 project.

Lord Alton of Liverpool (CB): My Lords, is it not in the public interest to have transparency and access, as the noble Lord, Lord Cormack, has just said, to all the details? How can we have a well informed public debate? Will the Minister at least tell the House the Government's current estimate of what HS2 will actually cost?

Lord Popat: On the noble Lord's first point, this Government have a strong record on transparency.

Noble Lords: Oh!

Lord Popat: Yes, they do, my Lords. Last year, they published the first ever Major Projects Authority report, covering transparency on all our major projects. The HS2 project is already subject to extensive scrutiny, including 10 public consultations in the first three years, lasting a combined total of more than 12 months. In addition, it has been scrutinised by the National Audit Office, the Public Accounts Committee, the Transport Select Committee, the Treasury Select Committee and the courts—most recently, the Supreme Court.

Lord Grocott (Lab): In the further interests of transparency, will the Minister make available and easily accessible in the Lords Library the debates in the Lords on the original line of the London to Birmingham railway in the early part of the 19th century? Noble Lords can read there of the ferocious opposition there was from all quarters of this House, explaining that the line would destroy wildlife, wreck communities and be a white elephant. I congratulate the Government on standing firm on this issue. Why look in the crystal ball when we can all read the history books?

Lord Popat: I take the point that the noble Lord has made. I will ask the department to make sure that something is placed in the Library from the public records.

Baroness Wheatcroft (Con): My Lords, might this be a more popular project if we stopped referring to HS2 and referred to North-South 2?

Lord Popat: My Lords, we have HS1 and this is HS2. It is in a "Y" shape, so it will go to both the east and the west from the south.

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Lab): My Lords, the noble Lord said that this Government are interested in transparency. Is he aware that we are still waiting for the publication of the risk register about the nonsensical Health and Social Care Act 2012? As to the public interest, does the noble Lord agree that in addition to the issue of speed, the key issue is capacity? The fact is that trains on the current lines going through the Midlands to the north are very full indeed, and capacity has to be dealt with.

Lord Popat: My Lords, since privatisation, capacity has doubled in the past 20 years and hence we have HS2 coming. In the mean time, we are addressing capacity as the number one issue and the whole purpose of HS2.

Crimea Question

11.30 am

Asked by **Lord Renwick of Clifton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further measures they intend to discuss with their European Union and NATO partners concerning the prospect of Russia proceeding to a formal annexation of Crimea.

The Senior Minister of State, Department for Communities and Local Government & Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Warsi) (Con): My Lords, the European Council agreed on 6 March that if Russia does not co-operate in de-escalating tension in Crimea, a second phase of measures, including asset freezes and travel bans, will be implemented. If further unacceptable Russian steps are taken, there will be additional far-reaching

consequences. NATO has put the entire range of NATO-Russian co-operation under review and suspended working-level meetings. NATO will continue to make strong political statements if Russian behaviour warrants it.

Lord Renwick of Clifton (CB): I thank the Minister for that reply. Clearly, the formal annexation of Crimea by Russia will require an additional western response. Otherwise, if Russia were emboldened to seek to intervene also in eastern Ukraine, that would lead to a shooting war and an uncontrollable situation. I feel sure that Members of this House will wish to see a clear warning given to Russia and effective assistance to Ukraine.

Baroness Warsi: My Lords, the Government's position, supported by the Opposition, has always been to try to de-escalate the situation and ensure that diplomatic contact is the way that this matter is resolved. The matter is continuously changing. My noble friend Lord Hill of Oareford updated the House by repeating the Prime Minister's Statement earlier this week. I can inform the noble Lord that further meetings are planned for tomorrow and we are doing all we can to persuade Russia that the annexation of Crimea and, indeed, the referendum, which we see as illegal and illegitimate, should not go ahead.

Lord Wood of Anfield (Lab): My Lords, I ask for clarification of the Government's approach to this crisis. The UK is a signatory to the 1994 Budapest memorandum, which protects Ukraine's territorial integrity. What is the Government's legal understanding of what action that commits the UK Government to in the event that another signatory, such as Russia, violates its terms? Is the UK Government's position that the aim of talks between Ukraine and Russia, which we all hope will take place in the near future, is to reaffirm the commitment to the Budapest memorandum or to supersede it with a new agreement?

Baroness Warsi: My Lords, the Budapest agreement is very clear. It basically lays out Russia's obligations in relation to respecting the territorial integrity and independence of the state of Ukraine. We believe that Russia's actions are in breach of that. That is why we have made it clear that it is important that we try to resolve the matter by de-escalating what military activity is happening on Ukrainian soil and through talks.

Lord Ashdown of Norton-sub-Hamdon (LD): My Lords, is my noble friend aware that evidence has come to light in the past 48 hours that Russia is now directly interfering in the domestic affairs of Bosnia-Herzegovina in a way that can only have the effect of encouraging Serb secessionism in that country? Given the fragility of Bosnia and its history, both recent and long past, is not an attempt to draw Bosnia-Herzegovina into the wider Ukrainian crisis an act of breathtaking irresponsibility, and what will the Government do to encourage the European Union to take the strongest moves on this matter?

Baroness Warsi: My noble friend is a huge expert in this area. Part of our diplomatic efforts in the current crisis have been to avoid this spreading much wider. There have been real concerns about comparisons that

the Russians have been drawing between other disputes, past and present, and Crimea. My view is that of my noble friend, which is that Europe must continue to concentrate on trying to resolve the challenges that we have in the Balkans and not allow the two issues to be mixed.

Lord West of Spithead (Lab): My Lords, 213 years ago today, Lord Nelson, en route to the Battle of Copenhagen, wrote to Lady Hamilton:

"I hate your pen and ink men; a fleet of British ships of war are the best negotiators in Europe".

I am not suggesting for a moment that there should be a military solution to this, but does the Minister not agree that the abysmal spending on defence across the EU means that we have no hard power as an adjunct to soft power and that, in a world inhabited by people like President Putin, you need both?

Baroness Warsi: My Lords, I hear what the noble Lord has to say but the Government's clear view, and indeed the view of the EU and the US, is that this matter needs to be resolved through political and diplomatic means.

Lord Bowness (Con): My Lords, does my noble friend agree that the actions of the Russian Federation are clearly contrary to the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act? Therefore, what role does she see for the OSCE in this matter? What discussions are we having within that organisation? Are any actions proposed? I ask these questions as a member of the OSCE parliamentary delegation.

Baroness Warsi: I agree with my noble friend's assessment of the situation. He may be aware that OSCE observers are on the ground at the moment in Ukraine. They have not been given access to Crimea. They are there at the request of the Ukrainian Government. We feel that further access should be given so that we can get a better assessment of the situation on the ground.

Lord Anderson of Swansea (Lab): My Lords, President Putin appears to assume that the western response will be weak, relying on the precedents of Georgia, Litvinenko and Magnitsky, and of course the clash of interests. Building on what the noble Lord said about the OSCE, does the Minister agree that there are implications for Russian membership of the Council of Europe, the senior human rights organisation in Europe? Should the Government consider taking the initiative in the Council of Ministers in response to the Russian invasion?

Baroness Warsi: My Lords, there are implications for Russia's membership of all sorts of multilateral organisations as a result of its actions. The G8 preparations and talks have been suspended and the OECD has now suspended accession negotiations, which will have a real impact on Russia's standing regarding trade and investment. I can inform the House that there will now be a Secretary Kerry/Lavrov meeting in London tomorrow and we hope that some progress will come out of that.

Lord Howell of Guildford (Con): My Lords, although I appreciate the call from the noble Lord, Lord West, for more frigates to meet the situation, does my noble friend recognise that in today's world the most powerful means of persuasion lie as much in the area of electronic communication, cyber operations and financial and electronic operations as they do in the classical 20th-century ideas of more dreadnoughts and more troops on the ground?

Baroness Warsi: They do, and of course trade and investment are a huge part of that. The losses suffered on MICEX a few days ago have had an impact and it has not completely recovered. There is clear evidence that this is having an impact on the Russian economy and we hope that these are factors that the Foreign Minister will bear in mind when he has discussions tomorrow.

Education: Social Mobility

Motion to Take Note

11.38 am

Moved by Lord Nash

To move that this House takes note of the role of primary and secondary education in improving social mobility.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools (Lord Nash) (Con): My Lords, I thank noble Lords for the opportunity to debate the role of primary and secondary schools in improving social mobility. We believe in higher standards for all, no matter what a child's background, and we are committed to getting every child's education right. From early years education and curriculum reforms through to more freedom for teachers and better vocational education, improving social mobility underpins absolutely everything that we are doing. Our reforms can be summarised in a few words: raising the bar and closing the gap.

It is possible to look at the education sector in this country with the benefit of hindsight and conclude that successive Governments have managed it for appearance's sake. Over the past third of a century the number of pupils getting a C grade in GCSE maths has risen from 22% to 73% with no apparent increase in performance, and between 2006 and 2009 alone the number of pupils getting a C grade in GCSE maths and English rose by 8% when, at the same time, PISA showed a slight fall in the proportion of English pupils who achieved highly.

Then we had the greatest confidence trick ever perpetrated on the English public: the absolute scandal of GCSE equivalents, whereby subjects that were often not valued by employers and did the pupils taking them no favours were hugely overrated in terms of their GCSE-equivalent status.

You might think that a young person who has five A* to C grade GCSEs, including English and maths, would indeed have five GCSEs, but not a bit of it. In many cases they merely had English and maths and the rest were entirely made up of equivalents, often in

merely one subject. For instance, a BTEC higher-level diploma in fish husbandry, in which there were no examinations, equated to four GCSEs. Other favourite equivalent subjects of mine are cake decorating, health and safety and hazard control. The fact that many pupils took these subjects is not the fault of teachers, as they can only respond to the incentives put on them by Governments, but as a result of these incentives, under the Labour Government, the number of pupils taking a core academic suite of subjects fell from 50% to 22%.

Something similar happened to content. For instance, more than 90% of questions answered on novels in English literature are on three books: *Of Mice and Men*, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Lord of the Flies*. In the country that gave us Chaucer, Hardy, Dickens, Trollope, Austen and the Brontës—I could go on and on—how can this be, excellent though these books are? It is an example of how the curriculum has been hijacked by political correctness, victim culture, guilt trips and the concept of relevance. For instance, in history, children are doing Nazism over and over again with no concept of the broad sweep of history.

Additionally, about a third of a century ago there grew up a myth that the human brain was like a computer or a calculator and that it just needed to acquire skills and did not need knowledge. More recent cognitive science shows that in order for the brain to learn skills, it needs knowledge to apply what Michael Young of the Institute of Education has called “powerful knowledge”.

Throw in a couple of other things, such as the false perception that there was such a thing as the perfect Ofsted lesson, minimum teaching from the front, group work, lots of activities, peer review, a plenary at the end, the abolition of competitive sports in many schools and the fact that many teachers were unaware of the boundaries to the behaviour strategies they could employ, and it is hardly surprising that during the first decade of this century we plummeted down the international league tables as other countries in the Far East and eastern Europe overtook us. Nor is it surprising that our school leavers are among the most illiterate and innumerate in the developed world, coming joint bottom in a recent OECD survey of 24 countries for literacy and 21st out of 24 for numeracy; or that, as Alan Milburn tells us, we are the most socially immobile country in Europe, so that we, the sixth-largest economy in the world, rank in the mid-twenties for the quality of our education.

This cannot go on. It is not fair on our children. We cannot compete internationally with education of this standard, and the only way we can break that dreadful cycle of worklessness and generational unemployment that we see in so many of our inner cities, coastal towns, former mining villages and other areas is through education. That is why this Government have such an extensive programme of educational reforms in place.

We know that the barriers to social mobility start right from a child's early years. By the time children reach the age of five there is already a 12% achievement gap between those from lower-income households and the rest. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds

can, therefore, benefit most from attending a high-quality pre-school setting. We are the first Government to fund 15 hours of free childcare for all disadvantaged two year-olds, we have extended the benefits of funded early learning for three and four year-olds from 12.5 to 15 hours per week, and we are raising the status and quality of the early years workforce.

My right honourable friend the Minister of State for Schools is currently making a Statement in the other place about action we are taking to deliver fairer funding in English schools. For too long, the system has been out of date, and schools with many disadvantaged pupils can end up being funded at a level well below nearby schools in affluent areas. Today we are announcing a substantial, £350 million, boost to schools in the least fairly funded local authorities in this country. This represents a huge step forwards towards fair funding in English schools and will make a real difference on the ground. The details of our proposals are set out in a consultation document being published today, and a copy will be placed in the House Library.

It is also important that children are well fed. Nutrition is the foundation of effective learning and development, which is why we are funding free school meals for all infant school pupils from September this year, and why we are also providing funding to help set up breakfast clubs and providing every primary school pupil with a free piece of fruit each day.

We have provided additional funding for disadvantaged children through the pupil premium. Pupil premium funding will rise from £1.9 billion to £2.5 billion in 2014-15. The primary school rate will increase from £900 to £1,300 and, for the first time, all pupils who are looked after or leave care through adoption, special guardianship or residence orders will attract £1,900 from April 2014. We are starting to see the positive impact of the pupil premium. In July 2013's key stage 2 tests, the gap in attainment between these pupils and other pupils in key stage 2 has narrowed by 3.7% since 2010, moving from 17% to 13.2% in 2013. The gap is also starting to narrow in secondary schools.

While closing the gap, we must also raise the bar across the system and we are committed to reforming the school curriculum and exams. We are reforming the national curriculum to equip all young people with the essential knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life by working with academic experts from around the world. In particular, we know that a confident grasp of maths and English is vital, with maths providing the strongest links to future earnings and employment. That is why we have made it a priority to ensure that no student leaves school without reaching a good standard in both disciplines.

In primary schools, we have introduced phonics at every stage of English teaching so that teachers can intervene early to help children catch up and we are increasing the emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar. We are strengthening the primary maths curriculum with a greater emphasis on arithmetic. We are introducing a new requirement to teach a foreign language at key stage 2. At secondary school level, we are providing a literacy and numeracy catch-up premium of £500.

We are introducing a new computing curriculum which encourages students to see how they could create technology as well as simply use it and is unique among major economies. Our new design and technology curriculum places a greater emphasis on the links with maths, science and computing and will prepare pupils for the cutting-edge technology industries of the future. All students, whether on academic or vocational courses, will be expected to continue to study English and maths if they did not achieve a GCSE grade C in these subjects by the age of 16.

In further education, we are introducing new core maths qualifications which build on GCSE study for students who achieve a B or C in GCSE maths, and will also be valuable for those with A* and A who are not taking A or AS-level maths. In addition, we are supporting increased take-up of A-level maths and further maths. Maths and English will also play a more important role in vocational education. From 2014-15, all intermediate apprentices will be required to work towards a level 2 in English and maths, and all people undertaking a traineeship will also be required to study English and maths, unless they have achieved a GCSE A* to C in those subjects.

Aside from the importance of developing strong literacy and numeracy skills, we know that disadvantaged children, in particular, benefit from the core cultural capital that comes with access to a breadth of basic knowledge and a core suite of academic subjects, as is found in all successful education jurisdictions. This was recently confirmed in a study by Edinburgh University. To quote the right honourable Diane Abbott, MP:

"It is precisely if you don't have parents to put in a word for you in a tough jobs market that you need the assurance of rigorous qualifications".

Our EBacc measure is achieving exactly this. Since the EBacc's introduction, the proportion of students taking the academic subjects in state-funded schools has risen from 22% to 35%, and we are expecting that to grow further this year. The proportion of FSM pupils taking the EBacc has more than doubled since 2011. In the past year alone, history entries went up 19% and geography by 21%. Language study is also increasingly rapidly, with Spanish up 31% since 2012.

In addition, we are making GCSEs and A-levels more stretching. Following a public consultation in 2013, the new GCSEs have been drafted by experts to ensure that the reformed qualifications match those in line with the highest-performing jurisdictions. We are working with Russell group universities to restore rigour to A-levels so that students from all backgrounds can apply to university with highly valued qualifications. We are already seeing success. In March last year, UCAS reported that the proportion of 18 year-olds from the most disadvantaged backgrounds applying to university increased to the highest level ever recorded.

Another way to ensure that disadvantaged children have access to cultural capital is through a rounded curriculum that includes character-building activities. We are strongly encouraging as many schools as possible to set a longer school day, including rich raising aspirations programmes for their pupils. We also want pupils to be able to access the cadet experience as part of school life. We are making progress towards this, having

[LORD NASH]

already established 28 cadet units. Our target for 2015 is 100 units. We are ramping up the National Citizen Service, and investing £150 million in primary school sport.

It is vital that we make schools more accountable for the achievement of our most disadvantaged children. As the Shadow Secretary of State for Education said recently,

“The great crime was an awful lot of effort being put on kids getting a C at GCSE, then not going further. There should be no limits—the system should be saying how far can this child go?”.

I could not agree more. Hence our move towards the new Progress 8 measure from 2016. That will track the progress of all pupils of whatever ability throughout their school careers, rather than encouraging schools to focus excessively on their pupils who are near the GCSE C/D borderline. We will value the progress of every child—low attainers and high performers alike. In addition, schools will not normally be judged outstanding by Ofsted if disadvantaged pupils are not making at least good progress. We are also publishing details of the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the in-school gap between them and their peers.

None of what I have outlined above would be possible without our brilliant teachers. I have often said that teaching is the most noble profession. Teachers do a wonderful job, and those many thousands of dedicated, hard-working individuals working in our schools are transforming the lives of thousands of children. We now have the best generation of teachers ever working in our classrooms. Education is now the most popular career destination for Oxford graduates. Some 14% of its graduates enter teaching—a remarkable figure—and 74% of graduates entering teaching have a First or Upper Second degree, the highest percentage since records began. We have quadrupled the size of Teach First, now the largest recruiter of graduates in our country, and extended it into primary schools as well as to every region of the country.

We are also changing the way we recruit teachers. The School Direct programme, launched by Charlie Taylor, an outstanding headmaster, enables our best schools to hand-pick the most exceptional candidates and our prospective teachers to start their careers in our best schools. That has proved extremely popular with both schools and trainees, attracting more applicants per place than any other training route, with three applicants for every place compared with 1.8 for training provision delivered by a university.

We are also offering new bursaries worth up to £25,000 to attract top graduates into teaching maths, physics and chemistry. Last year we recruited a record number of physics trainees. For those already in the profession, we are giving heads more freedom and scope to make decisions in line with pupils’ needs. Our new Teachers’ Standards remove unnecessary bureaucracy, and we have freed up teachers to teach as they wish so long as pupils are making progress.

We have strengthened the ability of teachers to discipline pupils and, through reform that links pay and performance, we have made it easier for schools to reward good performance and attract the top graduates and professionals. We have set up almost 350 teaching

schools which support other schools to improve teacher training. In addition, of course, there is the academies programme.

The genesis of the academies programme itself was of course the city technology programme introduced by my noble friend Lord Baker, whereby 15 failing schools were essentially taken over by entrepreneurs. The noble Lord, Lord Adonis, took that programme and beefed it up substantially, and by 2010, 15 CTCs had become 203 academies with about 70 in the pipeline. I pay tribute to the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, and my noble friend, Lord Baker—both of whom I am delighted to see in their places today—for the sheer brilliance of the academy concept. We have taken the number of sponsored academies now to more than 1,000 up and down the country. Schools that were left to languish in failure by their local authorities for years, with perhaps occasional and soft intervention, are now being turned around permanently by strong academy sponsors.

Those are schools such as ARK’s Charter Academy in Portsmouth, where results have more than trebled since the school became an academy in 2009 against a backdrop of high local deprivation, with 68% of pupils gaining five A* to C grades, including in English and maths, in 2013. Then there are Outwood Grange’s Portland Academy, where results rose from 57% of pupils achieving five A* to C grades, including English and maths in 2012, to 75% in 2013, and Greenwood Dale’s Stanground Academy in Peterborough, where results have improved from 39% achieving five A* to C grades, including English and maths, in 2012, to 62% in 2013.

The academies programme is working across the piece. The performance of sponsored academies is far outstripping that of other schools; for instance, sponsored academies that have been open for three years improved their GCSE results last summer by 12% versus 6% for other schools. The latest Ofsted *Annual Report* on schools found that:

“Sponsor-led academies are delivering a step change in performance for chronically underperforming schools”.

We have also allowed all good schools to become academies in their own right, and a further approximately 2,500 schools have done this. These convertor academies do better than local authority maintained schools against the new tougher Ofsted framework.

Some 60% of secondary schools are now academies or on the way to becoming academies. We have now focused our attention on primary schools; indeed, we are the first Government to really focus our attention on the underperformance of primary schools. Some 11% of primary schools are now academies, and we have taken more than 500 underperforming primary schools and turned them into sponsored academies. We are focusing the academy programme on school-to-school support by groups of schools in local geographic areas. Half of academies have engaged with a vulnerable school or schools to raise standards.

We have also taken the academies programme and expanded it into the free schools programme under which any group can apply to the Government to open a new school. Our free schools programme is benefiting disadvantaged children in particular, with 70% of open secondary free schools in areas of basic need, and every

primary free school in an area of basic need. We have created 150,000 new places through this programme. At the end of 2013, 73% of free schools inspected were rated good or outstanding, compared to 64% of all schools inspected in the same timeframe.

I think we have all been a little confused about the Labour Party's policy on free schools, but I am pleased to see that the shadow Education Secretary has now made it clear. He originally said that it would be parent-led academies, but I was delighted to see that on the "Sunday Politics" show recently he amended this to say that they will be academies led by social entrepreneurs and parents—in other words, free schools with another name.

Alongside academies and free schools, both our UTCs and studio schools provide high-quality technical education to 14 to 19 year-olds alongside academic GCSEs and A-levels. There are currently 17 open UTCs which have been designed and delivered in partnership with more than 200 employers and more than 40 different universities, with a further 33 approved. Twenty-eight studio schools are now open and over 400 employers are involved, with a further 18 approved.

The last piece of our holistic reform of education is ensuring that success at school is transferred into gainful employment. To equip our young people to compete in a global market, we need to end what my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Education has called the,

"apartheid between academic and practical learning",

and see practical, technical and vocational training integrated and as rigorous as academic learning. Professor Alison Wolf carried out an independent review of vocational education; she found that vocational education was immensely valuable as part of a broad curriculum, but made it clear that changes were needed to prevent schools enrolling pupils on low-quality qualifications that do not promote progression to further education or employment. We have slashed the number of qualifications approved for reporting from 3,175 to 180 for 14 to 16 year-olds and from 3,721 to 318 for 16 to 18 year-olds. Along with our TechBacc, these reforms will identify existing high-value vocational qualifications, spur the development of new vocational qualifications and provide students in England with a respected, high-status vocational training route to help them compete in the world and give them the skills that employers need.

Ofsted reports that schools have improved faster in the past year than at any time in its history. Our reforms are working. They are extensive, but they are necessary and I commend them to the House.

11.59 am

Lord Storey (LD): My Lords, on this auspicious day when the Children and Families Bill receives Royal Assent, I congratulate my noble friend the Minister—the noble Lord, Lord Nash—on having secured this important debate.

I am always conscious that when we in Parliament at Westminster debate education, schools and schooling we are talking only about England. We are not talking about Scotland. The only power that we have in Scotland

is over teachers' conditions of service. We are not talking about Wales either, so let us be clear that the debate in many respects is about the English education system and English schools. Perhaps we should give our Secretary of State the new title of Secretary of State for Education in England.

Why do some talented children grow up to fulfil their potential and develop their talents in particular fields while others, sadly, never reach their potential? Or, to put it another way, what can we do to help all children succeed in life? There is no one answer, but surely it is our job to ask these difficult questions and find common threads that can help.

A person's life chances ought not to be decided by the circumstances of their birth. Education and schooling must be the key to unlocking the door so that all children have the opportunity to thrive and prosper. What happens in the period from birth to the age of seven will decide a person's life chances. It is suggested that all interventions after that period will have only a marginal effect. The country's poorest children are likely to do worse, and make less progress, than their better-off classmates. I am reminded of the saying attributed to Ignatius Loyola: "Give me a boy to the age of seven and I'll make him a man". It is a little outdated, yes, but the maxim is as true today as it was hundreds of years ago.

Of course, we know that a child's brain does not fully develop until about the age of seven, so the foundations need to be laid at this formative stage to make sure that learning can flourish and grow. We need to make sure that any problems are identified at an early stage and, once they have been identified, that intervention strategies are put in place. Take reading, for example, which is probably the building block of all school learning. If a child is struggling with his or her reading by the time they get to key stage 2, it is an uphill struggle from there on in. Let me emphasise again—I underline it and underline it—that if a child is struggling with reading by the time they get to key stage 2, it will be a real struggle. As the Native American poet, Sherman Alexie, put it:

"If one reads enough books one has a fighting chance. Or better, one's chances of survival increase with each book one reads".

This sounds like an easy solution, but the fact of the matter is that, sadly, we can pinpoint the problem exactly. It starts when children come from homes where there is no love of books, no ethos about the importance of reading, and where parents, or carers, do not share books with their children. Children need, and thrive on, verbal communication. They need to feel, touch, explore, and even chew books when they are babies. They need parents to share stories with them every day. A true love of reading needs to be kindled, and nurtured, from a young age. You can literally say that non-readers and struggling readers will have a huge uphill struggle once they get past seven.

The figures speak for themselves. Children who do not reach the expected attainment levels of English and maths at seven are unlikely to do well at 16. Fewer than one in six children from lower income families who have fallen behind by the age of seven go on to

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achieve five good GCSEs, including English and maths. If a child from a disadvantaged family is already behind with reading by the age of seven, they have only a one in five chance of going on to achieve a grade C in GCSE English. We must, and should, ensure that building blocks are in place at an early stage, as falling behind at school, as I have suggested, has such a monumental impact on a child's future life chances, and hence their social mobility.

The qualifications a young person leaves school with matter enormously to their chances of future employment. Just look at the furore at the PISA results. Indeed, Save the Children showed that, never mind the lack of opportunities afforded to the child, this also results in a massive cost to the health and coffers of the nation.

I mentioned early identification of problems and intervention strategies. Again this is crucial to the life chances of any child. Imagine the damage we do to a child by leaving the barriers to their learning and development unchecked, unnoticed and unresolved. That is why many of us have gone on and on about how teachers should, for example, be trained to identify dyslexia, how schools should have a trained person to test and advise, and how schools should have the necessary resources. However, there are many barriers to learning apart from dyslexia. If we could find out what they are early on, we could then deal with them, help the child flourish with their learning and go on to reach their full potential—and, by the way, help the UK economy.

If noble Lords will forgive me, I will stray slightly from the exact wording of the debate and remind us how parents need support in those crucial years of a child's development. As the Education Select Committee recommends, we must focus our minds not on only a child's educational development but on facilitating better parenting, improving health outcomes and helping parents back to work. That is why Sure Start centres were so important; they were targeted at the most deprived areas of the UK. Their success meant that there was a demand for universal provision, which strayed slightly from their original remit and purpose.

Some 3,500 centres were developed, which meant that we achieved almost nationwide coverage of children's centres, but there is a wide variance in what is offered to different communities. Some have fully integrated centres while others have smaller signposting centres. Even with budgetary pressures, there are still 3,000 centres operating, and they have a crucial part to play in child development through the support that they can give to parents.

Yet we have lost direction from the original purpose of these centres. There is confusion as to the lack of a clear, defining model, and there are disparate versions of what is on offer. I agree with the conclusions of the excellent report produced by Barnardo's, *What are Children's Centres For?*. Barnardo's suggested that they provide early intervention so that they become recognised as an early help service. Children's centres should focus exclusively on providing services to families, from a child's conception to school starting age. I

suggest as much to the Minister. Perhaps the functions, duties and oversight of children's centres should be placed on a statutory footing. I will leave that with my noble friend.

I mentioned earlier that we are talking about the English education and school systems, but whether a child is in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, a number of important characteristics matter to all children, their learning and their social mobility. That must be about the points that I have perhaps overegged: the importance of the years from birth to the age of seven, and the importance of early identification of problems and early intervention. It is also about having primary and secondary schools with highly motivated teachers who are qualified, valued and respected. I was pleased and impressed to hear the information given by the Minister about, for example, graduates coming into teaching. That is hugely important.

We also need—I would say this, wouldn't I?—the best possible school leadership. I regret the decision to close the National College for School Leadership, because leadership is not something that you just apply for; you have to have the qualities and characteristics to understand how leadership works. There are other areas that, again, are crucial to social mobility. I do not have time to go into them now but careers education is one example.

I end by saying that I hope we have seen some cataclysmic changes in the English education system over the past few years. I hope that we can start to come to a point where education is no longer an area that we constantly change, and that the political parties will come to a consensus and work with teachers, parents and pupils to ensure that the social mobility that we all want actually happens.

12.10 pm

Baroness Coussins (CB): My Lords, the coalition Government have said that they want to close what they called "the vast gulf" between the life chances of children educated in the state sector and those from independent schools. I should like to use the opportunity of today's debate to draw attention to the role of learning foreign languages in achieving that objective. If by social mobility we mean being equipped to have more choices, broader horizons and greater employability, then language learning must be a vital component in any educational or wider public policy strategy. Sadly, the status quo is that languages at GCSE, at A-level and at university are increasingly seen as a mark of the advantaged elite. I believe that state schools where languages are not offered or encouraged are doing their pupils a huge disservice in terms of the quality of their education and their future chances in a global labour market.

Before I go on, I should declare interests as chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages and as a vice-president of the Chartered Institute of Linguists.

I know that I am, in theory, knocking on an open door with this argument. DfE Ministers made it clear that the gap between rich and poor in language learning was one of the main drivers behind the EBacc initiative. There has certainly been a positive impact on take-up

of languages at GCSE in the past two years, attributable to the EBacc. It was notable that the increase was concentrated in schools with the highest levels of social deprivation. The latest GCSE entry figures for languages also show the gap between independent and state schools beginning to narrow. The Government deserve credit for this, but the EBacc is just one part of the jigsaw and by no means enough on its own to turn round the decade of dramatic decline that we have witnessed since 2004, when languages became optional after the age of 14. Indeed, a parliamentary Select Committee report on the EBacc raised questions as to its effectiveness as a measure of progression and social mobility. Nor is it enough to claim that things will improve over time because of the introduction of compulsory languages at key stage 2 from next September. Thoroughly welcome though that is, a great deal of support, recruitment and training still needs to be put in place to ensure the genuine success of key stage 2 languages.

Perhaps I may briefly summarise the evidence for languages being such an important part of any person's skill set for the 21st century. It is a myth that English is enough. Certainly no one will go very far in business or international relations, academically or culturally unless they speak English. However, if they speak only English, they will find that that is a huge drawback and a limitation on their choices and advancement in pretty much any field. British employers regularly express dissatisfaction with school and college leavers' foreign language skills. A CBI survey in 2013 revealed that only 36% of employers were happy, although 70% of businesses said that they would value such skills. Our school leavers have the worst language skills in the whole of Europe and are increasingly losing out to their peers from other countries—not just from the EU but from the US, India, China and elsewhere—in a global labour market. A British Academy report last year pointed out that language skills are needed at all levels of the workforce, not just for an internationally mobile elite. A survey in 2011 showed that 27% of vacancies in the UK for admin and clerical jobs went unfilled due to shortages of foreign language skills.

Specialist linguists are needed too, of course. We are desperately short of English native speakers in the interpreting and translation services of the EU and the United Nations. There is a shortage of public service interpreters in this country—those who translate and interpret for people in hospitals, courts and police stations. Language skills are also needed for defence, security and diplomacy purposes. Ironically, some of the languages most needed for this work are present in abundance in our own communities, such as Tamil, Turkish, Somali and Farsi—I could go on. But the Government, very short-sightedly, scrapped the Asset Languages programme which had provided a way for children who speak another language at home to develop that language in a more formal way and have it accredited at GCSE level. What a waste of talent. Will the Minister please take this issue back to the department to persuade the Government to think again about how we can offer children with English as an additional language, who often come from the most socially deprived areas and schools, the opportunity

to have their language skills recognised and rewarded and shown how this could lead to a range of professional opportunities when they are older?

It is also important to know that learning a foreign language helps you learn everything else. That is another reason why schools are misguided if they deny their pupils a chance to take languages because they are not considered bright enough. Robust evidence shows that learning another language improves children's literacy and oracy in their own language. Research from America shows that language learners are better at maths and reading tests. At key stage 3, the cognitive benefits from language learning transfer to problem solving, lateral thinking and critical analysis across the curriculum. It is therefore extremely disturbing that the practice of disapplication, whereby certain pupils are removed from the statutory language teaching during key stage 3, seems to be on the increase. I have had the benefit of seeing a preview of the 2013 Language Trends survey; it will be published in a couple of weeks and I have been authorised to refer to it today. It shows that a significant and increasing number of state schools carry out some form of disapplication of pupils from languages at key stage 3, with the result that many lower ability pupils have no experience of learning another language at all. Will the Minister agree to study with particular care this aspect of the Language Trends survey when it comes and take steps to discourage schools from this practice so that all pupils, whatever their level of ability, have access to the cognitive, social and employability benefits of learning a foreign language?

Despite the boost to take-up at GCSE from the EBacc, I am afraid that nearly half of all secondary schools still say that they have no plans to improve their language offer. Take-up overall has halved post-14 in the past decade. Twice as many pupils in independent schools take a language GCSE than in state schools. Even within the state system there is a very worrying variation, with only 14% of children eligible for free school meals getting a good language GCSE, compared with 31% of other state school pupils. This pattern carries on to A-level and to university. A third of all MFL entries at A-level are from independent schools, and at university 28% of students going on to do modern language degrees come from the private sector, compared with only 9.6% across all subjects. Alongside this, there is a distinct lack of opportunities to study a language as part of any vocational course. Only a very small number of FE colleges offer languages and this in turn has implications for employability and the general divide between those who are seen as the academic elite and the rest.

Despite the recent signs of improvement at GCSE and the advent of languages taught at primary school, it has to be said that our language provision is fragile. Competence in at least one language in addition to English should be a 21st century skill that our young people can take for granted. Those who have it will be not only more socially mobile but more culturally aware. Those without it will be left behind. Individual schools should not have to sort this out by themselves, however much the Government want to give them freedom over the curriculum. The Government must give a stronger lead and I urge the Minister to accept this challenge.

12.20 pm

The Lord Bishop of Newcastle: My Lords, I, too, welcome this debate about the role of primary and secondary education in improving social mobility, and I want to speak from my experience as a bishop in the north-east of England for the past 16 years. The north-east faces serious and significant challenges. Despite having the best record of exports of any region in the country, we have a higher level of unemployment than any other region, particularly youth unemployment, and significant and intractable levels of poverty.

Before I went to the north-east, I served as Bishop of Kingston upon Thames, and the differences are huge and stark. It has been like living in two very different countries, two very different worlds. Social mobility is a much trickier and more complicated concept than it might at first sight appear. We have always to remember the distinction between relative and absolute mobility, but in everyday understanding of the term, I use it to refer to the opportunity for individuals from socially disadvantaged backgrounds to move on in the world. It is about closing the attainment gap between the results achieved by children from disadvantaged backgrounds compared to children elsewhere. The relatively newly formed north-east local enterprise partnership has put schools at the heart of the strategy for economic development of the north-east. It calls for a north-east challenge modelled on the success of London Challenge. However, schools cannot do it all. They can be part of the solution, of course, but there has to be a wider and more integrated response.

In my diocese we have more than 50 Church of England schools. Most are primary or first schools which do very well. Indeed, all across the north-east, at the early years foundation stage the children achieve a good level of development—slightly below the national average, but not much. Furthermore, our primary schools have been judged by Ofsted to have some of the best leadership in the country, and results at the end of key stage 2 seem to support that. However, performance in our secondary schools is not strong—what someone has described as the north-east conundrum. Perhaps that is hardly surprising given the nature and reality of the social context beyond the school gate, where 18 to 24 year-olds experience much higher levels of youth unemployment than anywhere else. It is quite hard to convince some young people that education really matters.

Just for a moment I want to take your Lordships with me to south-east Northumberland, a former coal-mining area clustered around the famous town of Ashington, home of the Pitmen Painters, and Jackie Milburn, Jack and Bobby Charlton and Steve Harmison. Several years ago I was asked, and I asked myself, “What is the single most important thing we can do for the young people of this area? What is the one thing that would do most to transform the lives of these young people, their families’ and their community?”. The answer was to provide the very best kind of school and education that we could. This led to the birth of the Northumberland Church of England Academy, where the diocese of Newcastle and the

Duke of Northumberland worked in partnership with the help of the Government to establish this new school. We had to raise £1.5 million to found an academy in those days. It is the largest academy in the country, located on five different sites, serving 2,500 children aged from three to 18. The school has within it a wonderful centre for 100 children and young people with severe and multiple disabilities and special educational needs. I am as proud of the care and the commitment shown by the staff and of the development of those young people there as of anything else that we do—even though, of course, that never ever shows up in school league tables.

More than one-half of all the children in the academy receive free school meals; 47% of the children there are officially defined as living in poverty. There is real deprivation all around. And yet last year half of our young people in the upper sixth—I still cannot get used to calling it year 13—went on to university, one-quarter into apprenticeships and the rest either into further education or some kind of employment. Three-quarters of our 16 year-olds now stay on into the sixth form and, crucially, parental engagement with the school has increased significantly. School attendance is improving, the teaching quality is getting better and progress is moving towards the national averages.

The academy is charged with being a catalyst for change in the community. That is a very big challenge, but it has transformation of the community at its heart. It is about beginning to change the culture and developing children who are well educated in the broadest sense, young people who are resilient, creative, articulate and socially engaged. Education is the only means I know to help social mobility and to begin to break down some of the barriers that hold young people back. To build an aspirational culture that values, encourages and equips every child it has to permeate all that we do, so that we can overcome the social background of disadvantage in which our children find themselves and enable each and every one of them to be the best that they can possibly be. Last year, pupils eligible for the pupil premium outperformed their ineligible peers in GCSE maths, a small indication perhaps that a young person’s background need not hold them back and that, when our schools get it right, we can overcome disadvantage and transform both lives and communities.

So what conclusions do I draw? If our schools are to be successful in transforming communities facing adversity they will need to be supported by a whole and committed network of other groups, including local business, local government, the arts, churches and other local institutions. Partnerships are absolutely vital, whether they be with, say, the Army—which has led to the Combined Cadet Force being established in the academy last year and allied to the Coldstream Guards—or with other schools elsewhere, including independent schools. We need to continue to find new ways of building new networks which will successfully work in harness with our schools.

While good attainments and high-quality qualifications are crucial, we have also got to develop character, confidence, resilience and spiritual development as

well as academic standards. As the noble Lord, Lord Storey, said, we need clear pathways and encouraging support for young people as they make key decisions about their future. Imagine how hard it is for the bright young girl or boy who is the first in their family ever to consider applying for university to make the kind of choices that will affect the rest of their lives. I know about that from personal experience because I was such a person once upon a time myself. Guidance and good advice are crucial.

This country has some of the very best education institutions in the world and some of the most able and dedicated teachers. Here I join the Minister in paying tribute to our teachers, many of whom are working heroically by almost always going the extra mile, sometimes working against the odds, and yet not feeling as valued and appreciated by the rest of us as they should. We must not underestimate the challenges we face if we are to unlock the potential of every single child so that they have the widest opportunities to become the best they can be. They, like we, can then give back to our own society.

A few weeks ago noble Lords would have found me in the miners' welfare in Ashington. It is a community centre that is open seven days a week and it is superbly led by a very able young woman. Originally from Ashington, she went away to university but then, crucially, returned to give back to the wider community the benefits of the education that she had received. We need more people like her—people not using their education to escape from the area, but realising that with well trained minds and warm hearts they have much to give for the common good. Fortunately, resilience and a strong sense of local identity, together with shared communal values, are still a strong feature of life in the north-east. To build on them with the best kind of schools we can offer is the way to bring hope for the future, both for individual young people and for their communities, and indeed hope for us all.

12.31 pm

Lord Baker of Dorking (Con): My Lords, I congratulate my noble friend Lord Nash on initiating this important debate and I thank him for explaining to the House the various initiatives the Government have taken in order to achieve improvements in the education system. Social mobility has to start in our schools or it can start nowhere. If it does not start at school, there will be virtually no social mobility. In one striking area it has worked very well: namely, in the expansion of universities. Parties around the House have supported this expansion. When I was the Education Secretary, the percentage going on to university was 15%. Just before I left that job I forecast that it would rise to 30% by 2000, and that was slightly exceeded. Today it is close to 50%, and there is no doubt that many children from disadvantaged families now experience the huge richness of university life.

So, three A-levels and a university degree are one pathway to success. I suspect, however, that it will be a rather less crowded pathway in the immediate future because graduate unemployment has now become a common feature. One study examined students who graduated in 2010 to see what they were doing two

years later. At that point, four out of 10 had got jobs at graduate level, two had jobs at below graduate level, usually in bars and cafés, one was unemployed, and the others were trying to recycle themselves back into the education process. Added to that is the fact that students will now leave university with debts approaching £40,000, so many young people who in the past would have thought about going to university will be looking for other things to do. I rather welcome that in several ways, because a university system that turns out people who are unemployable is not a very effective system.

The days have gone when large numbers of unskilled jobs were available. Very few unskilled jobs are available in our economy today. We therefore have to find other pathways to success beyond three A-levels and a university degree. That is the reason why, with Ron Dearing, I established five years ago what are now called university technical colleges. Seventeen are already open and a further 33 have been approved. They aim to give young people skills. The pupils are aged between 14 and 18. The UTCs operate on a normal working day, so pupils have to turn up between 8.30 in the morning and five in the afternoon. However, we see very high levels of attendance for those hours, at 95%. Students learn for two days of the week by making things with their hands or designing things. We are giving them the skills that will make them employable.

I think that the employability potential of education is one of the most important tests. Every school, whatever it is doing at secondary level, should report on the employability of its students when they leave. I am very glad to say that the employability of students from UTCs is really quite remarkable. Our target is that when youngsters leave at 16 and 18, none of them gets jobseeker's allowance or joins the ranks of the unemployed, and I am glad to say that in the two that have had leavers at 16 and 18—the first being the JCB Academy in Staffordshire, which has had 300 leavers since it started—everybody got a job, an apprenticeship, a place at college or a place at university. Twenty-three went to university and 84 became apprentices, while others went on to study A-levels or went into work. That is a remarkable achievement for any school.

The one in Walsall, which has an average comprehensive intake, is in a much more challenging situation. It took over the remnants of a school that was closing, with very disgruntled students. It has had 107 leavers, and I am glad to say that none of them joined the ranks of the unemployed and there were no NEETs. Fourteen went to university, 30 or so to apprenticeships and some into work or other colleges. That should be the target for all schools—no NEETs. I think it is the intention later this year to judge schools on the destinations of their pupils. If a school, of whatever nature, manages to ensure that none of its pupils become NEETs—they all get a job or go on to further education—it cannot possibly be described in an Ofsted report as inadequate. That would be a contradiction in terms, as it is a major achievement.

The other thing that we have now developed, alongside UTCs for the STEM subjects, are career colleges for the other range of skills such as hospitality, catering, tourism, the creative arts and logistics. Two of these colleges, based on UTCs, are going to start this year in

[LORD BAKER OF DORKING]

Oldham and in Bromley and 60 other schools are interested in becoming ones. We have established the success of specialist colleges for 14 year-olds in promoting social mobility. Many of these youngsters at 13 and 14 would be disengaged and would switch off from education, but we are engaging them and giving them a real opportunity which they would not otherwise have. I really believe that unless we increase the numbers of these colleges very considerably, we will rather stifle social mobility. These are alternative pathways of success, with pupils going to university, in some cases, or getting into very good jobs.

Finally, I remind your Lordships of the success of the some of the old technical schools that existed in 1945. The committee established in 1941 said that the pattern of education after the war should involve selective grammar schools, selective technical schools and secondary moderns. There were 300 technical schools, which all closed in five or six years. They were closed by snobbery—everybody wanted to go to the school on the hill like the grammar school, not the one down in the town with the dirty jobs and greasy rags. It was a massive mistake, which Germany did not make in adopting its education system, which is one of the reasons why Angela is ruling the roost.

The success of those technical schools was really remarkable, and I will just leave noble Lords with the names of four people who went to them and are today very distinguished. The vice-chancellor of the University of Leeds, one of the biggest universities in our country, Sir Alan Langlands, who ran the health service for six years, went to a technical school in Glasgow that also received Charles Rennie Mackintosh through its doors—a very distinguished figure. Mike Turner, the chairman of Babcock and GKN, who ran BAE Systems very effectively for many years, went to a technical high school. Sir Mike Tomlinson, the former Chief Inspector of Schools, started his life at Oakwood Technical High School. Coming to your Lordships' House, the noble Baroness, Lady Boothroyd—the dear, beloved Betty Boothroyd, former Speaker of the House of Commons—went to a technical school. Those technical schools were real agents of social mobility, as they can be again today.

12.39 pm

Baroness Massey of Darwen (Lab): My Lords, I am very grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Nash, for giving us the opportunity to debate the issue of social mobility and education and I thank him again for his flexibility on the Children and Families Bill. However, I might dispute some of his rhetoric today, some of which I found somewhat selective. It is surely the case, as the right reverend Prelate said earlier, that social mobility is much more complex than I think the Minister made out. I share the concern of the noble Lord, Lord Storey, that education should not be a political issue. Children are too important for that. We have enough research and experience now to know what benefits children. I call for a consensus based on independent evidence.

I declare an interest as chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Children and a trustee of UNICEF. I will reflect for a minute on social mobility,

recognising that it has many more influences than education, and then give some examples of what I think schools might do.

If every head teacher of a primary or secondary school was a brilliant and inspiring leader, as many are, and if every teacher was relentlessly focused on raising standards, building social skills and closing attainment gaps, as many are, we would still have problems in this country with social mobility. Schools can make a difference. I appreciate what the right reverend Prelate said but I also think that social mobility—or immobility—can begin at birth.

The National Children's Bureau was founded in 1970. In 1973, it published a study called *Born to Fail?*, which looked at the experience of children from poor, disadvantaged backgrounds and how their lives were damaged, resulting in poor health, underachievement at school and lack of opportunity to fulfil their potential. I am not sure whether the term "social mobility" was used then, but that last phrase summarises for me what social mobility is about: the opportunity to fulfil one's potential—perhaps, in the process, moving from the social class and limited ambitions of parents and communities.

Fifty years on, the NCB has just produced another report, called *Greater Expectations*, which examined whether children in this country are still suffering from inequality and disadvantage. The findings are stark. The number of children in poverty has increased by 1.5 million since the publication of *Born to Fail?*. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds do worse educationally and their health is poorer. The report calls for a new course of action so that our children do not,

"grow up in a state of social apartheid".

Of course, there have been signs of progress. Examination results have generally improved, with more children going on to higher education, but that is not the whole story. Alan Milburn, the Government's adviser on social mobility, criticises all political parties for being on,

"a carousel of short-termism that prevents them from addressing the deep-rooted causes of inequality and social immobility in the UK".

He blames decades of entrenched elitism, which may well worsen because of the breakdown in the link between economic growth and the wages of most workers. Sir Michael Wilshaw, Chief Inspector of Schools, has criticised selective school systems for not improving social mobility. Top jobs tend to go to people who have been to elite schools. There is a concentration of power and influence in the hands of a minority.

Of course, for some children, education is the way out and up—the opportunity to achieve potential. This is not about picking out small numbers of children and sending them to elite schools; it is about increasing opportunity for the majority of pupils. Some academies have failed; some free schools have failed, with damage done to children before mistakes have been discovered. Government cuts to the Building Schools for the Future programme have led to shortages of school places; for example, in Swindon North.

An independent taskforce chaired by Professor Chris Husbands reported last week and recommended major reforms to the 14-19 education system. The report states

that we have a poor record of delivering high skills and effective qualifications for that 50% of young people overlooked by the Government who wish to pursue a vocational route through education. The report proposes a rigorous technical baccalaureate—I am now looking at the noble Lord, Lord Baker—driving up standards in English and maths and strengthening character and resilience, about which I shall say more later. It is simply disgraceful that we lag so far behind other countries in this area.

I worry about the early years, about access to childcare, about the depletion of Sure Start centres and about the paucity of school counsellors, careers advisers and school nurses. I worry about the seemingly growing emphasis on the expectation of academic achievement without the building blocks being in place to achieve that.

I turn to some things that schools could do which may enhance social mobility—I am trying to be realistic here. The first is to improve pupils' confidence in their own ability to learn and communicate, and have ambition. I have discussed personal, social and health education in this House more than once. Let me give one more inspiring example from a primary school that I visited two weeks ago. The school is in Watford, an area with much disadvantage. It has set up a centre of excellence for social learning and it makes visible the social aspects of learning in every part of school life. The centre brings together academic research and practical innovation to improve outcomes for pupils—and it does improve outcomes, providing significant benefit to individual children, accelerated progress and raised attainment, a learning community, and maximised individual learning potential. Such a model can and does improve social mobility early by giving pupils social and academic confidence.

It is interesting that a Demos report in 2011 noted that soft skills such as communication, teamwork and application were as important as academic ability in the prediction of earning rates at the age of 30. A DfE-commissioned report in 2012 found that children with higher levels of emotional and behavioural well-being have higher levels of success in school. The CBI in 2013 called for a more “rounded and grounded” education, concluding that personal behaviours and attributes play a critical role in determining personal effectiveness. What more do we need to convince Government that PSHE is a vital component of a child's development and essential for social mobility? I think that the noble Lord, Lord Nash, understands this, but do his colleagues in government? If so, I wish they would say more about it.

The Association of School and College Leaders has other identified the need for other structural changes in addition to good PSHE; for example, improving quality in the early years workforce, building on London Challenge and City Challenge, monitoring the comparative performance of academy sponsors, more incentives for teachers and so on.

Another intervention which can have a great impact on social mobility is the mentoring of pupils—a one-to-one, adult-to-young person system which boosts ambition and achievement. The Aspiring Professionals Programme is open to ambitious students who may

not have family members with relevant educational achievement. The Amos Bursary, of which I am a supporter, enables ambitious black boys to achieve through a mentoring system and other support. Some banks have teamed up with the Sutton Trust to boost access to careers in banking through training and support. Future First connects students to successful role models—people who went to their own school and are now at college, university or in jobs. It builds communities of former students around the school, most of which have twice the national average of free school meals, to provide support through mentors and work experience. The programme has had a significant impact. Eighty per cent of students say that they feel more confident that they can succeed in the world of work and 75% say that they have been encouraged to work harder.

The word “support” has occurred many times in my previous sentences. I wish that all means of support could be drawn together. Every child who could benefit should have a mentor from outside the school, someone who will push and encourage. More industries and communities could be encouraged to supply such people. Will the Government survey mentoring and support schemes to see whether they could be extended? I know that good practice in PSHE is being surveyed, thanks to the Minister's intervention on the Children and Families Bill but, as I said, it is not emphasised by Ministers.

Social mobility is indeed a complex issue. It is societal as well as individual. All children deserve opportunities to succeed, and we are up against some enormous barriers. We must get the 14 to 19 offer right. We must increase mentoring and ensure that PSHE is integral to every school. I hope that some of the thinking in this debate will have an impact on improving systems to enable children to achieve their full potential in their lives.

12.50 pm

Baroness Garden of Frognal (LD): My Lords, I, too, thank my noble friend for initiating this debate on a topic which is of importance to those in education but, even more widely, to the well-being of our society. This debate follows one called by the noble Lord, Lord McFall, last month on the impact of inequality on social mobility and the report from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility published earlier this year—a group chaired by my noble friend Lady Tyler, who has great expertise in the subject and whose contribution we await with interest.

There have been several reviews, reports and strategies on the subject in recent years, all from slightly different vantage points, but with general agreement that social mobility makes for a fairer society and a stronger economy. As the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission highlighted in its excellent report:

“When one in six children—2.3 million—is officially classified as poor, it exacts a high social price. There is an economic price too in wasted potential and lower growth”.

My noble friend Lord Storey highlighted in his comments the importance of parents at the start of children's lives. Indeed, they are crucial to children's development, helping them learn and build their self-confidence.

[BARONESS GARDEN OF FROGNAL]

Government can play a part at that early stage by improving the focus on parenting skills within relationship guidance, which forms part of such programs as PSHE or citizenship. Such lessons are appropriate before young people become parents.

The noble Baroness, Lady Massey, is a doughty champion of PSHE, but the Minister will be only too well aware of the support around the House for the teaching of life skills within the curriculum. I draw to the Minister's attention the report from the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, which makes a recommendation to,

"bring together organisations from across the third and private sectors to develop an innovative parenting campaign with clear strategies to target those at the lower end of the income spectrum".

What progress is being made on that? How might such a parenting campaign be introduced to the parents of the future while they are still at school?

As has been mentioned, the OECD has found that in the UK, more than in other countries, the start of a child's life has a powerful effect on that child's educational success. We seem to face greater challenges than elsewhere in breaking the cycle of deprivation for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and giving them the skills, self-confidence and aspiration to better themselves. We very much welcome the moves that the Government have taken with such developments as the pupil premium to try to redress that balance.

Schools have a distinct part to play in preparing their pupils for life with the soft skills that are essential to social mobility, but they also need to prepare them for the world of work. I add my voice to those concerned at the direction being taken over careers advice and guidance. The indications are that many schools have been struggling to provide comprehensive advice about the range of opportunities in the world of work that their pupils might consider. From primary school age, a child's interest can be captured by exposure to jobs and careers outside their immediate experience. Children are open to new ideas, through visits to workplaces and by coming into contact with people who are engaged and enthusiastic about their work—people who they may never have come across within their close circle of family and friends.

Those links with the world of work help them make connections between lessons and future opportunities, between study and business, between paying attention in class and earning a living. They can have a very positive effect on behaviour and engagement in school studies. For all young people, these connections are important. They are particularly so for those who do not take naturally to formal learning but who may have talents and find motivation in craft, technical or business activities—such as are encouraged in my noble friend Lord Baker's technical colleges—or indeed in modern languages; I entirely agree with the noble Baroness, Lady Coussins, that foreign languages can also open doors and broaden aspiration and understanding.

The Government rightly take pride in the growth of apprenticeships—not only in their numbers but in their status, as they come to be seen as a valid alternative to university. This standing is helped by their extension

to higher-level skills and into professions such as insurance, accountancy and the law. What place will progression to apprenticeships have in school league tables? I note what my noble friend Lord Baker said about the importance of the employability of school leavers. We hear all too often of young people aspiring to apprenticeships being encouraged—sometimes even coerced—into applying to university instead. What encouragement is given to schools not only to record progression to apprenticeships but to celebrate their students' success in being taken on as apprentices with the same enthusiasm as they report progression to higher education? It is very difficult to find from school reports, from their websites or indeed the notice boards in front of their schools any mention of where young people have gone on to these keenly sought future careers.

Of course, many professions used to have direct routes from school, which were as highly regarded as graduate entry and led to careers that could be just as successful. Those were the days before university fees. Those routes were a powerful means of enabling social mobility. Increasingly, young people are finding it attractive to learn and earn, but it is important that their achievement has the recognition that it deserves from schools and from parents. It would benefit the country if, as recommended, non-graduate routes became the norm across the professions.

I would not wish this debate to pass by without paying tribute to youth organisations for the part that they play in social mobility. They provide invaluable services, particularly in more disadvantaged areas, and give young people an opportunity to develop personal and social skills, take responsibility, gain confidence and learn both self-respect and respect for others. The Minister made reference to the value of the cadet forces, as indeed did the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Newcastle, and it is encouraging to hear that there will be an increase in cadet units within schools.

With uniformed organisations such as the cadets, Scouts, Girl Guides and many others, and with schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, young people are faced with challenges. They learn how to manage risk and how to channel their youthful exuberance into positive action and to develop in ways that, whatever their start in life, can lead to a fulfilling and useful life. Schools have a part to play in encouraging their pupils in these formative activities.

I join in the tributes to the teaching profession; the teachers that I know work amazingly hard and give of themselves to their pupils, often at very low rates of pay. They can be transformational in young lives. However, society as a whole has a responsibility to enable young people to achieve their potential. Schools have a key role in opening up opportunities, encouraging aspiration and making the UK a country where, whatever a child's start in life, he or she will have a chance to shine.

12.58 pm

Lord Northbourne (CB): My Lords, I thank the Minister for bringing forward this debate today on this hugely important subject. I was, however, very

disappointed that his introductory speech made it perfectly clear that the Government believe that schooling is only about cognitive learning and cognitive achievements. I am going to follow the noble Lord, Lord Storey, and the noble Baronesses, Lady Massey and Lady Garden, in taking a rather different view. In my view, the key to social mobility is hope.

The glass ceiling of social mobility is a lack of self-confidence and self-belief. Self-belief, or the lack of it, starts in the family on the day the child is born with the experience of being, or not being, loved, the experience that to someone you matter and the experience of feeling safe and belonging. That is why to me social mobility depends so much on the first few years—indeed, on the first few months—of a child's life, which is usually spent in the family. That is why I believe that families are important and that we should be including them in our debate today.

This Government and, indeed, previous Governments have for some time realised the importance of what are called the early years. The noble Lord, Lord Storey, referred to seven years. Some would perhaps say that the first three years are the most formative in a child's emotional development. Governments have introduced many excellent interventions, not least children's centres, the positive attitude towards supporting childcare and so forth, but what they have so far significantly failed to do is to encourage and require schools, particularly secondary schools, to develop in their pupils the personal and interpersonal skills—the soft skills we were talking about—which they will need to create a secure, nurturing environment for their child in the home.

Why are we not doing more through schools to promote those so-called soft skills which are so central in creating a secure and supportive family environment for the young child? Why are we not doing more in secondary schools—indeed, in all schools—to help pupils grow up to be positive, confident, hope-giving, love-giving parents and to ensure by doing so that a child grows up full of hope?

I remember being privileged to give the prizes at a school in Eastbourne for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It was a weekly boarding school. I was talking to the headmaster, a very wise and experienced man, and as I had some time to fill in, I asked, "How do you make contact with new pupils when they arrive in the school?". He said, "I sit the child down in my study, I make him comfortable and say, 'Tell me about yourself'". Half an hour later, sometimes three-quarters of an hour later, the child has told me about all the awful things that have happened in his life, how hopeless he is, the mistakes he has made, all the disasters and how everything is hopeless. When he dries up, I say, 'Right. Now you've told me about the things you can't do. Let's talk about the things you can do'". I suspect the Government's education system is not really addressing that problem.

The importance of hope and self-belief was strongly emphasised four or five years ago when Ofsted did a special report on 16 primary schools and 12 secondary schools, I think, which had outstanding records but were taking young people from very disadvantaged areas. Ofsted was trying to find the common factors which made those schools so successful. Among the

first three common factors was every child believing that they can succeed. There is a message here for those who think that only academic learning is important.

The ability to rear a child who can succeed is highly relevant to the issue of social mobility. We need to do more in schools to develop confident, competent adult parents. Some of your Lordships will know that I have been boring on about parenting in your Lordships' House for the past 25 years. What surprises me is that so little is being done by the Government or local authorities to try to improve the quality of parenting children are receiving by doing more to prepare teenagers when they are still in school for the challenges they will encounter as they grow up and become parents. What is needed is not prescriptive advice to pupils about the details of parenting, but, as noble Lords have already suggested, to develop, as they grow up in school, the self-confidence, understanding and personal and interpersonal skills which they will need if they are to be able to give their children the confident love, support and guidance they need in the home in the early years. I call upon the Government to recognise the importance of these relationship skills and soft skills and to do more to encourage secondary schools to recognise that their job is not only to produce academic success for young people but to prepare them for the challenges of adult life.

I shall mention one more thing: teachers. Teachers are a great problem. There is a terrible lack of teachers who have any training or skills in developing social skills and helping children to develop their social skills. Will the Government please do more to ensure that secondary schools take this responsibility seriously? Our secondary schools should be encouraged to accept that their role is to educate the whole child and to prepare their pupils for the challenges they are likely to meet as they move into the adult world.

1.07 pm

The Lord Bishop of Winchester: My Lords, I, too, am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Nash, for the opportunity of this debate. I shall focus on the impact made by initial teacher training on social mobility. I begin by quoting from the Government's 2010 White Paper *The Importance of Teaching*:

"All the evidence from different education systems around the world shows that the most important factor in determining how well children do is the quality of teachers and teaching".

I have a particular interest in teacher training as I am the spokesperson for the Bishops on higher and further education, and in my diocese 12% of the University of Winchester's intake is trainee teachers wanting to play their part in transforming lives and enabling social mobility. I also declare a personal interest as my daughter has recently trained as teacher on a mixed-mode teacher training programme and is now a teacher working in a school just north of Southampton.

We are debating the impact of schooling on social mobility, and noble Lords will know the Church of England's long commitment to education, particularly for the disadvantaged. The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Newcastle has well illustrated this. My main point is that teachers can make the greatest difference to pupils from the most disadvantaged communities.

[THE LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER]

Thus without a strong cohort of excellent teachers, we cannot hope to inspire disadvantaged young people with the confidence to contribute to society and equip them with the tools to seize opportunities. Academic success is vital, but so too is capacity, resilience and spiritual maturity.

It is from this perspective that I question whether the Government's policies for improving the quality of teaching have been fully effective and will enable social mobility. I am particularly concerned about the School Direct programme. In fact, I suggest there is an urgent case for rethinking arrangements around initial teacher training before a crisis develops. School Direct gives individual schools responsibility for running teacher education. The school adapts the programme for the local needs and distributes funding as it sees fit, buying in training, sometimes from universities, either as part of a PGCE or as a bespoke qualified teacher status package.

In a number of examples, the policy has worked very well. Canterbury Christ Church University for example, which has an Anglican foundation, is working with a great many schools over a wide area to support their recruitment and training of teachers in the classroom. Indeed, I visited that university yesterday and I commend to noble Lords the work of the Kent and Medway Progression Federation, energetically promoted by Canterbury Christ Church. It is a partnership between universities, local authorities and more than 40 schools and colleges in Kent and Medway, working together to raise the attainment and aspirations of disadvantaged young people who may not otherwise consider higher education. Results have been extremely positive, with 26% of the tracked participants from deprived areas progressing to higher education. However, I fear that these successes cannot be taken as the rule, and there are three major concerns about aspects of School Direct I should like to share with your Lordships.

My first concern is that the take-up of the School Direct programme has been rather disappointing, and raises the danger of a damaging teacher shortage very soon. The move to School Direct has been rapid. This year, the allocation for School Direct will jump from 25% to 37% of all ITT places. However, last year it was widely reported that only two-thirds of School Direct places had been filled. This might not be particularly troubling had the core allocations for existing universities not also been reduced. For every School Direct place unfilled there is one less teacher available in the classroom. Your Lordships will be aware that primary schools are in many areas experiencing a high pressure on places, and this pressure will soon flow through into secondary schools. This is not the time to pressurise schools to take on training responsibilities when many are desperate for new teachers. The Government must surely recognise that this policy is simply not attractive to schools in the numbers they first imagined. If the aim is to get good-quality teachers teaching in the classroom, then now is the time to free up those surplus places to universities, many of which have 200 years of experience in training some of the best teachers in the world.

My second concern is that by placing planning decisions in the hands of individual schools, the Government are jeopardising the financial viability of

our teacher training institutions. It is my privilege to be working with the 11 Anglican universities which account for 24% of primary initial teacher training and 12% of secondary. They are enormously valuable institutions for our whole education sector, and they see initial teacher training as core business. The School Direct policy is undermining these institutions and runs the risk of putting them out of business.

They report a number of very real dangers. For example, as I have said, a significant increase in places allocated for School Direct limits the funding for traditional PGCEs. Last year, Cumbria University lost 60% of its core PGCE provision. Secondly, where universities are involved in providing training for School Direct places, this is at significantly reduced funding per student. It also requires each contract to be renegotiated every year—not only a labour-intensive process but an arrangement that makes long-term strategic planning extremely difficult, not to say almost impossible. Lastly, as the number of classroom-based routes into teaching increases, universities are finding it harder and harder to identify school placements for their students. This means that one of the central advantages of university-based training, the opportunity to work in a number of different schools, is left vulnerable.

I am not asking your Lordships to be sympathetic to Anglican universities. Rather, I am highlighting that their vulnerability has grave implications for social mobility and our wider education system. These institutions host high-quality, long-standing ITT departments which provide specialist lecturers and resources, access to continuous professional development and leadership training. Through these universities and their ITT departments, research is conducted on the efficacy of different teaching practices. Our understanding would be deeply diminished without them.

These universities also maintain and develop a mixed ecology of teacher training routes by keeping open the opportunity of university routes for those who are keen to start their career with the benefit of the highest-quality tuition and the widest possible experience of schools. To jeopardise these institutions and all that they offer the education system is surely an act of great folly which will not serve a Government committed to improving social mobility, but will rather pull apart the very institutions dedicated to the primary engines of social mobility: excellent teachers.

My third concern is that we run the risk of demoting the academic rigour of teaching that underpins its practice. I have referred already to the importance of teachers in equipping young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with the tools they need to take advantage of opportunities placed before them. Excellent GCSEs alone are not a passport to success. What we ask of our teachers is not to fill empty vessels with knowledge, but to inspire young people, to nurture them, and to give them the confidence to make the most of themselves and to contribute to society.

If we are to ask this of our teachers, we must provide them with appropriate training. On-the-job training is good, but not if it focuses too heavily on planning, marking and behaviour management at the expense of developing a confident understanding of

pedagogy and child development. It is from that deeper background and understanding that teachers can impart a vision for getting on in life and work.

My own experience, in a previous role, has allowed me to see, around the world, the importance of education—to see the power of quality teaching and teachers for transforming students from disadvantaged backgrounds, nurturing them to become the nation-builders of their countries. However, quality teaching and teachers need quality preparation and training and I am not sure School Direct will do it on its own unless it is set within a wider ecology of university and research.

The universities are not against classroom-based routes into teaching. Canterbury Christ Church University was the first institution to take up the Teach First programme, and has been deeply involved in its development since then. Indeed, more widely, 18% of all School Direct allocations for 2014-15 were in partnership with Anglican universities, often as part of a PGCE.

I have no doubt that many School Direct programmes are working very effectively. However, we must keep a careful eye on how the policy is implemented because it is the young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who will be disproportionately hit by the looming crisis. I urge the Government to reflect again and to promote a truly mixed ecology of teaching training that allows for proper planning and forward thinking, ongoing research in education as well as an entrepreneurial spirit for how teachers are trained.

1.17 pm

Baroness Perry of Southwark (Con): My Lords, I, too, thank the Minister for initiating this debate with such a powerful speech. His own record in offering truly life-changing opportunities to hundreds of children in the Pimlico Academy stands as an example to all providers, whether local authorities or sponsors of free schools and academies.

Although I am a once-upon-a-time philosopher, I will resist the temptation to deconstruct the phrase “social mobility”, complex as it is. We all know what we mean by it and recognise it when we see it. If an individual rises in social and economic status over their lifetime, and if they rise beyond the social status of their parents, we say that they have achieved social mobility. Much of our proper concern as a civilised and prosperous society has been towards breaking what Keith Joseph—the late Lord Joseph—called the cycle of deprivation, in which children from the poorest parents never rise above the level of their parents’ deprivation, and nor do their children or grandchildren. All Governments have tried to find ways to break that cycle, beginning with the Education Act 1870. Rightly, in my view, they have looked to education as the means of breaking it. A brief look at the history of those efforts, all of them top-down, may help us to understand why the Government are tackling the issue in a new way now.

I will not weary the House with a complete history of education, but I must pause on the effects of the Education Act 1944, which was so earnestly well meant and which was, in my view, so sadly misguided. That

Act provided that something between 15% and 25% of young people, depending on the local authority, would be selected at age 11 for grammar schools. These academically excellent schools provided the young people with the skills needed for white-collar jobs at the least, or with access to the professions via university at best. Although the excellent ambition for technical schools was a part of the Bill, we now know, as the noble Lord, Lord Baker, so eloquently said, how little was achieved in providing that demand in technical education. That left up to four-fifths of the population sent—as failures—to secondary modern schools which provided at their best a generalised and undemanding curriculum, which in my less kind moments I describe as soup-kitchen education.

That model was based on an economy which had already begun to die. It assumed a structure in which 80% of workers could be unskilled—an economy which our competitors in Germany, Japan and elsewhere had abandoned. They saw the need for all workers to be skilled in industries where technology was taking the place of the unskilled workers, and they rejected our 1944 model in favour of a model which ensured that 100% of their young people were given a demanding education, both academically and technically. Our error did more over those crucial post-war decades to deny social mobility and economic growth, as we saw in our competitors. So many of our young people simply lacked the skills for the changing economy.

Like many of my generation, I hoped that the move to comprehensive schools would reverse our educational and economic decline. By offering all children access to the same good-quality education, we hoped that all would leave with employable skills and opportunities that had been denied to their parents. I will not enter the argument about why the original comprehensive failed to deliver. The noble Lord, Lord Adonis—the much admired pioneer of the academies movement, as several noble Lords have said today—makes clear the reason that they failed in his excellent book *Education, Education, Education*. He commented that,

“too many comprehensives were simply a continuation of the secondary moderns”,

and that even the celebrated Holland Park and Pimlico schools,

“soon became educational battlegrounds in the face of low standards, poor teaching and hard-left politicisation”.

So, comprehensives were not the answer, though for my part I remain wholly convinced that selection is not the answer. I do, however, believe that elective differences in the route through education for older pupils—a formula which works for most other successful economies and which has been offered by the UTCs of the noble Lord, Lord Baker—should be the way ahead for this country.

Experience over the years had demonstrated all too clearly that top-down reform and diktat has had little impact on the quality of education. As many began to understand, it was the quality of the leadership and the initiative of the individual school which determined the success of its pupils. Some years ago I was entranced by the words of a Scandinavian educator who declared at an international conference:

[BARONESS PERRY OF SOUTHWARK]

“The school is the living cell of the body educational; it is the health of the individual school we must address if the body is to become well”.

I equally rejoiced in the words of the chief inspector of Ofsted at the launch of his annual report this year, when he said that we should end the categorisation of children as either “deprived or well-off”. Their social background, he said, is not the arbiter of their success; there were simply “lucky or unlucky” children: those who went to a good school were lucky, those who went to a poor or inadequate school were unlucky. This puts the emphasis on the quality of education each child receives and not on their social background.

We have spent far too long being emotionally concerned about poverty and too little concerned in shining a light on the crucial contribution of schools. Good schools have been shown time and again to be able to grant success to all their pupils regardless of background. It was this understanding which led to the founding of independent state schools, first started as CTCs in the 1990s, as has been said, and then becoming the academies movement, first under the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, and now hugely accelerated under my right honourable friend Michael Gove.

Academies have autonomy over many aspects of their provision. Their quality depends on the leadership and expertise of the head with her or his staff. Control from the centre has been replaced by responsibility at the school level, with freedom for the professional judgment of heads and teachers to meet the needs of their individual children and the community from which they come.

One story of an academy trust illustrates the huge success of this approach. My noble friend Lord Harris of Peckham started one of the first CTCs back in the 1980s. Now there are 27 academies in the Harris Trust, 17 secondary and 10 primary. Those schools were previously classed as failing or near failing: 45% of the pupils qualify for free school meals, and 44% come from black and ethnic minority backgrounds. Under their previous management thousands of children would have been consigned to educational failure and to a lack of any prospect of social mobility. Now, 20,000 “lucky” children are finding success; 72% of the pupils in these schools achieved the magic five good GCSEs—well above the national average—and that improvement has been sustained year on year since the schools became independent.

The Harris Trust story has been matched up and down the country by over 3,500 schools, now with over 2 million pupils. These schools have taken the opportunity to determine their own professional destiny, backed by powerful and supportive governing bodies. These independent state schools are innovative, using all the professional skill and judgment of the teachers and their leaders. Uniformity imposed from the state or local authority too often stifled innovation and the flowering of professionally creative schemes in the academies has been a delightful feature. Examination success has not been their only contribution. Music, art, dance, drama and creative writing have flourished as teachers have felt free to share with their pupils their own enthusiasm and skill. To the noble Lord,

Lord Northbourne, I would say that good teachers very much recognise the need for emotional development, emotional skills and emotional intelligence.

Not all academies and free schools will succeed; in any system there will be problems and failures. However, there are mechanisms for those to be dealt with quickly and firmly in the way that local authorities manifestly found it difficult to do with the huge number of failing schools under their control.

We are watching a revolution in education. It is a benign revolution. It is contributing hugely to social mobility and has brought life-changing opportunity and the experience of success to thousands and thousands of children. The academies movement is one which all who care about the future of our young people should welcome and celebrate. I am pleased to do so in this debate today.

1.27 pm

Baroness Taylor of Bolton (Lab): My Lords, I will also start by congratulating the Minister on initiating this debate. When I heard his first few words, I thought that I would agree with much of what he was to say, because he talked about the importance of education in breaking the cycle of deprivation and praised teachers, and I was very happy with that. However, I am sorry that he then went on to be so aggressively political in his opening remarks, and so critical of the previous Labour Government. That made me cast my mind back to 1997, when class sizes were often over 40, and we had to make a pledge to bring them down to a maximum of 30; when many of the schools I visited had leaking roofs and even outside toilets, and we had to have a fantastic building programme to get them up to scratch; and to the initiatives we took on pre-school education and on early years generally, especially with Sure Start.

I am very proud of many of the things that the Labour Government did, and I am sorry that there has not been more scope from what the Minister said in his early remarks about us working together on these issues. In all parts of the House there is a great deal of consensus about what should be happening in education and how we should value each and every child. We can all agree that social mobility is important and that schools play a vital role in that. Incidentally, I hope that we can also agree that education is more than just about the product of providing social mobility. Education is of value in its own right for each and every one of us, as it gives people confidence, the equipment they need to face their lives and, indeed, enjoyment.

The noble Baroness, Lady Perry, has just said that it is very difficult to define social mobility. I have read with some interest some of the definitions that have been provided. I saw one that said that absolute mobility is whether a person is better off financially than their parents. Mention was made of Alan Milburn, whose concerns might be very well founded, given the level of personal debt that we see many young people having and, indeed, the difficulties that people will have providing for their pensions in future. So that type of social mobility is actually quite difficult. Then I saw a definition about relative mobility—a measure of which rung of

the ladder a person lands on compared with their parents. Personally, I am not very comfortable with using any definitions like that whatever. Perhaps the noble Baroness is right that we should just say that we know what we mean, but I think that we should be careful about how we assess an individual's contribution to society and, indeed, to their families.

What I think that we have to accept from the research is that in 2014 there is still, from all the analysis, a dreadful and unfortunate link between poverty and limited educational attainment. Too often that is true—not universally or absolutely, but too often. When the noble Baroness, Lady Coussins, talked about language skills, her comments reinforced that. Too many social and economic outcomes are almost predictable, with too much in education reinforcing advantage and, indeed, privilege. To my mind, education should be about countering disadvantage, not reinforcing privilege, and about giving very real opportunities to all—and I mean all—of our children. We should be grateful to the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Newcastle for putting the context in which many children are making their decisions about their futures.

Many of us got educational opportunities that our parents never had. That may make us more socially mobile, but I would put it that we got opportunities to make decisions and have more choices about our lives, and that is what we should be talking about when we try to advance every child. I do not think that the amount of debate on the structures of our education system provides the answers. I am sorry that the Minister boasted so much today about the success of free schools and academies and placed so much emphasis on that, not least because, as we all know, there have been some very well documented failures that have recently been reported. Just the other day, I heard about Goole High School, which became an academy in 2011 when rated good by Ofsted; since November of last year, just two years later, that school has been put in special measures, with Ofsted concluding that it was inadequate in all categories—a pretty horrific decline in a very short time. When the Minister was talking about academies providing a step change, I do not think that he was thinking of it going in that direction.

I could certainly boast about the success of many local comprehensives that I know of in many different parts of the country, but that does not get us very far. However, I must take issue with the Minister when he says that local authorities often leave schools in difficulty to languish in failure. I do not think that trying to undermine what local authorities do in that way really helps us at all. I wish that he would not push the idea that academies and free schools are the answer to everything. Yes, we should have some flexibility. The Minister knows that my football club, Bolton Wanderers, which is on a high at the minute—we will see how long it lasts—has recently been given the green light to have a free school, which is almost a pupil referral unit with, of course, an extra dimension. I am not saying that we should not look at how to provide different structures in education, but we should be cautious in presenting any one form as a panacea.

Thinking about this debate made me think back some time. More than 50 years ago, in a primary school in a council estate in Bolton, a class of 10 year-olds sat the 11-plus examination. Education at that time required children to stay at school to the age of 15, but those children who passed the 11-plus for grammar schools were required to stay at school to 16 and complete O-levels and examinations. Indeed, parents had to sign an undertaking to that effect. I passed my 11-plus and my parents signed happily. My best friend also passed the 11-plus for grammar school, but her parents refused to sign the form. They just did not see the point of it. Our head teacher eventually persuaded them to change their minds and sign, and my friend went to grammar school—albeit without a school uniform. She was a bright girl and did very well; but that was not the end of the story. When she was 15, her mother found her a job in the local shop, took her out of school and paid a fine in the magistrates' court to effect this—no exams, no qualifications and no further education. They were not bad parents; they just did not see the point of education.

I am not sure that all the factors that influenced those parents are not still present today. As the noble Lord, Lord Storey, pointed out, not all parents read to their children, have books in the home, see education as a priority or understand its importance. If we are going to counter disadvantage, we have to tackle the causes of parents not being engaged and deal with this vital issue, because anyone who has ever taught in a school knows that, if parents are interested and involved, teaching that child is so much easier. That is why we cannot simply talk about structures or parental choice—and we certainly cannot just talk about league tables and results. As others have said, we have to look at this issue long before children go to school.

I have a few suggestions to make to the Minister on the other things that we should be doing. We need a different outlook, which sees education as about opening doors for young people, not creating a series of hurdles, which I think we are still doing. One day I hope that we can discuss credit accumulation for qualifications. The noble Lord, Lord Baker, touched on the fact that we have to value not just the traditional pinnacle of education. What he has done in terms of other pathways, university technical colleges and career colleges is something that we can all learn a great deal from, not just in providing routes for young people but in giving real value to some of those alternatives.

We also have to teach children how to learn. The Minister said that we had to emphasise facts, and facts come into this—they play a part. But we have to teach people using modern technology in teaching, mentoring and monitoring, and do it in a way that is relevant to the modern world, whether it is talking about relationships, social media dangers or the dangers of payday loans. The noble Baronesses, Lady Massey and Lady Garden, both made very important points in that respect.

I come back to one of the essential points. We have to start very early. In a way, I was disappointed not just with the closure of so many Sure Start schemes but with the attempt by some in government almost to undermine them. If there are problems, we should build on the experience and look to close them. We

[BARONESS TAYLOR OF BOLTON]

need to look at what we need to do to engage parents as soon as possible. If you have a baby in hospital today, you are given a freebie bag when you go, with free nappies and free creams. There should be a children's book in there, and things that would start to engage the child in the right way. When we talk about steps to advance social mobility, we have to start talking about the period before any child ventures into school.

1.39 pm

Baroness Greenfield (CB): I would like to congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Nash, on introducing this highly important topic for debate. As a neuroscientist, I can appreciate only too well the impact that the environment, and thus the experience in the home and the classroom, can have on the physical brain processes, and subsequently on the unique individual that each child will become. The human brain is astonishingly “plastic”, which is why we as a species occupy more ecological niches than any other on the planet.

Our brains are constantly adapting to wherever we are placed and to whatever we are doing. Even thinking alone can drive an observable physical change in the brain. An intriguing study, which is much cited, showed this very well. It involved three groups of volunteers, none of whom could play the piano. Over a five-day experiment, the control group was exposed to the experimental environment but not to the all-important factor of five-finger piano exercises, while a second group learnt the exercises. Even within five days, you could see an astonishing change in their brain scans. However, the third group was the most remarkable. In this group the subjects were required merely to imagine they were playing the piano, and their brain scans showed almost identical changes to those who did the physical practice. Therefore, the important issue here is not the contraction of the muscle but the thinking that preceded it.

Such endless neuronal updating on a “use it or lose it” basis is particularly marked in critical timeframes during development within the first 10 years or so of life. So, if that is the case, what would be the ideal educational outcome in terms of mental prowess? For example, the Education Minister, Michael Gove, has suggested that all young children should learn a poem, but surely the more important, and harder, goal would be that they should understand it. There is a temptation sometimes to adopt the Gradgrind approach from Dickens' *Hard Times* to aim simply to transmit facts. After all, you can readily train a brain—in certain cases, even that of a parrot—to give the right responses to a given input and to answer factual questions with factual answers. However, such success in, for example, activities such as Trivial Pursuit or pub quizzes is not regarded by even the most enthusiastic fans as the apotheosis of intellectual endeavour. Facts on their own are not enough; information is not knowledge. While collecting information may be simply gathering dots, knowledge is being able to join them up, seeing one thing in terms of another, and thereby understanding each component as part of a greater conceptual whole.

I would like to suggest that the more connections you can make in your brain across an ever wider and disparate range, the more deeply you will understand

something. This connectivity, which is achieved through the plasticity of neuronal connections during development, could then be the key feature that defines real learning, and which sets the human brain above and beyond the information processing of a computer.

The work of the late educational neuroscientist John Geake provides hard evidence for this proposition. Geake's imaging studies on gifted children revealed that their brains showed greater interconnectivity than the brains of those with average cognitive ability. Specifically, Geake's findings led to the idea that giftedness is linked to analogical reasoning: for example, the analogy of the extinction of a candle with the extinction of life, as in the famous soliloquy in *Macbeth*. This ability to make connections where they did not exist before—to connect the dots—probably accounts for exceptional talents and creativity in many areas, including art, philosophy, mathematics, science and music.

So, how can the education system best provide an environment conducive to making such connections? Some might think the answer lies in digital technology. One meta-analysis of 46 different original studies involving a total of more than 36,000 students showed significant positive effects of computer use on mathematics achievement. Similarly, a recent large-scale analysis reviewed how educational software programs could beneficially affect reading outcomes in some 84 studies based on more than 60,000 students. Yet a report commissioned by NESTA in 2012, entitled *Decoding Learning*, concluded that:

“In the last five years UK schools have spent more than £1 billion on digital technology. From interactive whiteboards to tablets, there is more digital technology in schools than ever before. But so far there has been little evidence of substantial success in improving educational outcomes”.

How can we reconcile these seemingly conflicting perspectives? I think it is done by flagging one all-important additional factor. The findings of the meta-analysis had indeed suggested that various reading programs, predominately computer delivered, generally produced a positive, but small, effect on reading skills. However, the really significant factor to emerge time and again has been that innovative technology has much more positive impact when accompanied by teacher support, so the greatest promise of digital devices lies not so much in the software and screen delivery themselves but in their use in close connection with teachers' efforts. For anyone who has read *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, or *Goodbye, Mr Chips*, this will come as no new insight. Nothing beats an inspirational teacher—not even an iPad.

Education research and practice supports this argument too. Sir Michael Barber has stated that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. Meanwhile, Pearson Education, in a recent report on worldwide school attainment, states that there is no substitute for good teachers. This conviction would seem nowhere more relevant than in schools in low-income areas. Take, for example, Mulberry School in Tower Hamlets—a non-selective, fully comprehensive school in which 76% of the pupils are entitled to free meals. The school has a policy to concentrate its resources on developing teachers and using as much of its budget as it can to pay for extra teaching and support for learning in a multitude of ways so that it

maximises the amount of focused attention which pupils receive. The results have already shown considerable success. GCSE results doubled between 2005 and 2011 from 34% gaining A* to C with English and maths, to 78%, and, most commendable of all, 80% of students at this school now go to university.

So when it comes to giving a child the best start in life, to realise their potential irrespective of their background, we need to focus on ways of helping the young brain to join up the dots and to understand deeply what they are learning. This is best done by someone who can interact with them personally and act as an intellectual guide—a mentor. A mentor has been defined as someone who believes in you more than you believe in yourself. Could not more of the education budget go on ensuring that those key players—the teachers—have the best possible pay and conditions, so that they can focus on being much needed mentors, especially in cases where, as the noble Lord, Lord Northbourne, has already flagged, a child comes from a background where perhaps they have not been able to believe in themselves at all?

1.47 pm

Lord Lingfield (Con): My Lords, I, too, thank the Minister for choosing this important subject for debate and refer noble Lords to my education interests in the register. I hope that your Lordships will forgive me for straying out of the realms of primary and secondary schools into an area of education which, if it were more successful than it is at the moment, could practically guarantee an increase in social mobility in this country. I refer, of course, to the further education sector.

In 2012, the Government's own statistics show that, of 16 year-old school leavers, an incredible 28% were functionally innumerate, at best with the arithmetical accomplishments normally associated with a nine year-old, and just under 15% were functionally illiterate, using much the same criteria. These young people cannot even enter the gateway of social mobility unless further education providers pick up the pieces and teach them skills that should have been dealt with at primary school. It is an appalling indictment of our teaching system that this should be so, and that so many pupils have been let down by it. One sincerely hopes that the reforms which the Government are carrying out, and which the Minister mentioned today, will help to alleviate this serious problem in the future.

I pay tribute to the dedicated teachers in our FE colleges who attempt to remediate underachievement in these subjects, although for many of their students, it is almost too late. The huge task of teaching what are often kindergarten skills to these young people, also, in my view, has a profound effect on FE providers and too often distracts them from their primary mission, which should be to teach vocational subjects to those who, we hope, will be the technically accomplished workforce of the future that will enable this country to outperform its competitors in a difficult economic climate.

I have in the past couple of years had the privilege of visiting many excellent further education providers, and yet I am also aware of many that are mediocre and, indeed, a small minority that are, frankly, of

extraordinarily poor quality. One of the ways in which the Government hope to improve quality across the sector is gradually to identify the very best providers, to give the professionals who run them and those who govern them as much autonomy and freedom from government control as possible, and to allow them to flourish and spread best practice throughout further education.

To this end I have accepted the challenge of creating a new body that will receive into membership only the most distinguished providers. This will be known as the Institution for Further Education and I have petitioned the Privy Council for a royal charter, which will give this group of colleges, whether public, charitable or private, a collective status akin to that which a university has. Although the new body is being created with seed-corn funding from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, to perform its task properly it must be authoritative and entirely independent of government. The petition makes it clear that, like the other royal chartered institutions, it will be governed by professionals from the sector itself.

Prospective member colleges and private and charitable providers will have to demonstrate high-quality provision, including consistently good teaching, learning and assessment. They must: provide direct routes to higher education; have strong leadership, management and governance; and provide first-class professional development. They must show a culture of innovation and high levels of satisfaction from students. Most importantly, as my noble friend Lady Garden of Frognal reminded us, they must have effective involvement with employers and a strong contribution to economic well-being and growth in their areas. They also must have a high commitment to transparency. Evidence will include Ofsted grades, robust self-assessment reports, an inspection regime, rigorous peer review, and references from a range of employers.

There are some 1,100 providers within the sector, serving more than 4 million learners. One of their strengths is that they are a mixed economy, dealing with further education, full-cost work for United Kingdom and foreign customers, and, in the case of most colleges, higher education. As Ofsted deals with only a part of these providers' work, and the Quality Assurance Agency only their degree courses, there is at the moment no single quality-assurance association for them, and the new royal chartered institution will endeavour to be that.

It is our hope that a significant number of providers will aspire to membership during our first years and that the institution's device, which it will be entitled to display, will be a mark of the highest quality for students and employers alike. In the fullness of time there is no reason, in principle, why every FE institution should not qualify for membership. As with other such bodies, any that are seen to be diminishing in quality could be asked, of course, to demit their membership.

We hope that opportunities will be given for collaborative work and the spreading of the tradition of a high-quality service to students throughout the sector, thereby driving up vocational standards nationally. I hope very much also that in time the new institution

[LORD LINGFIELD]

will help bring some rationality to the plethora of vocational awards that bewilders employers and students alike. In 2012 there were 164 national vocational awarding institutions and many thousands of vocational qualifications. The Government have in the past two years, as the Minister told us, bravely set about rationalising the approved list and have cut it considerably. However, the time is long overdue for the establishment of a simple set of benchmark qualifications for the sector that are easily understandable by all and guaranteed to be of high quality. In higher education, bachelor's and master's degrees are easily recognisable by employers; there should be parallels at FE level.

There is no doubt that the gaining of a valuable vocational qualification by a young person not only leads to a greater sense of self worth, to far more opportunities for gainful employment, to the possibility of entry to higher education and to the respect that professional skills bring in our society, but enhances immeasurably his or her chances of social mobility.

1.56 pm

Lord Addington (LD): My Lords, it is interesting that I have not totally disagreed with anyone who has spoken in this debate—it is always nice when you can pretend you totally disagree with someone. But the theme that is coming across from the debate is that everyone understands that it is complicated and difficult to talk about social mobility, the lack of it, how to encourage it, and the role that education plays. We all agree that it has a role. Education allows you to become more socially mobile.

It is also worth pointing out—no one has done so yet—that if you fail in education you can become downwardly socially mobile. I have made that point because I want to draw attention to hidden disabilities as a factor in this cocktail of reasoning and pressure. I will talk primarily about dyslexia because I am dyslexic and know more about it than the other conditions, but hidden disabilities are a group of conditions that covers such things as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia, to which can be added the higher-functioning areas of autism and numerous other conditions. It means that you do not relate to your environment, particularly your educational environment, in the way in which others do. It means that you are always going to have more problems with the educational part of your life than others will.

This is probably very much accepted now. When I first spoke about this subject nearly 28 years ago in this Chamber, it was more of a revelation. People asked, “Is it there? Is it really happening?”. Now the vast majority of people understand and accept dyslexia. We still occasionally hear from the “It doesn't really exist; I have a miracle cure” brigade. However, if we accept that these factors are there, how do they affect this argument about social mobility?

After first accepting that the factors are there, we must then identify them. If we cannot do so, it does not really matter what is in place or what understanding we have because we will not be helping the right person at the right time. We have a history of saying, “Yes, we should do something”, but not putting enough

in place to do it. All political parties bear a degree of blame for this, because it is much easier to pass a piece of legislation than it is to change structures, provide funding, and change the structures that administer the funding. There is not much doubt about that.

How does this affect our outcomes? What if you cannot access, for instance, the written word successfully enough to get a qualification that says you have passed? Most structures and exams are training paths towards taking a job that provides status and money. Both are factors in social mobility; having enough confidence in yourself to apply or encourage your children to do so is another factor that we should not forget. The noble Baroness, Lady Taylor of Bolton, talked about things that are “not for us” and not relevant. These things are still happening, not in exactly the same terms but the principle is still there, based on the assumption that we know what normal is—“Normal is me”.

What do we need to do to improve this situation? The first thing we must do is to train our foot-soldiers—that is, our educationalists at all levels—to identify these problems early. This situation is better than it was, but we are still not investing enough in the teaching profession as a whole for it to be able to say with confidence, “I think that person is dyslexic and they should see X and Y”. There are still far too many cases in the dyslexia world of the parent going to the teacher and asking, “Why is my child not succeeding?”, and that is what inspires the movement through the machinery which this House and others have put in place.

Of course, my noble friend will point out that the big change that we are celebrating today—the big change in that recent Bill—means that we now have a duty to identify the problem, and to identify those at risk, if I remember correctly. When the Bill was going through the House, I said that this was a fundamental change, but do we have the foot-soldiers in place to do this easily and well? I would say that at the moment the situation is better than it has ever been, although it is still nowhere near good enough. However, at least having that duty is a step forward, so let us not get bogged down in it too much.

However, what happens if we do not identify those at risk? If we do not, we find ourselves with that hard core whom we cannot reach, and that hard core is reinforced by the factors that I have already spoken about. When you choose a life partner, one of the big things that you tend to look for is that a person has had the same educational experience as you. Two people who can discuss books, theatre and so on, and who at least had a chance to go to university, have infinitely more in common than a couple where one of the two has consistently failed. Increasingly in the dyslexia world, we find that generations of families have all had dyslexia and nobody has passed an exam. We are increasingly finding that the people in the last couple of generations of such families have never had a job, and that contributes to the downward spiral. That happens when you fail to be identified as dyslexic, when you are not given the necessary support and when your parents do not have the desire, the money or the time to make sure that you get the help that you need within the education system. This goes back to

the point made by the noble Baroness, Lady Taylor. It happens when you are not economically active and do not receive the support to catch up.

It should be remembered that one of the problems is that you are on a conveyor belt in the system. You have to hit targets at points in your life that are directly related to your age, and if you are not achieving, you are slipping back. Also, if you are told that you are a failure, you are even less open to that prolonged process of still having to achieve things which you know other people have already done.

Whatever progress we have made in the nearly 30 years since I first spoke about this, unless we concentrate on the early recognition of this problem, we will always compound it. There is an argument within the prison system about whether dyslexics are over-represented by a factor of two or a factor of five. We know that the prison population has the lowest level of literacy compared with any other part of the population, at 50% to 70%. Possibly having some more substantive academic work done in that field would help, but these are the groups where you find the by-product of reinforcing failure by not identifying it.

I hope that my noble friend will have some words of encouragement on this, because unless we start to get to this hard core at the bottom of the pile—this group that reinforces failure—it will always be there. It will always be difficult to reach and to help. People in the education system need to start saying, “I think you have a problem”, as opposed to individuals having to go to the education system and saying, “I think I have a problem”. First, we should remember what some people know as normal—that nobody in their family has passed an exam—and, secondly, we should remember that people do not want to be told one more time that they are stupid. If we do that, we will start to chip away a little at our hard core and make the system a little more accessible to the people in that group. It is not a miracle cure but it might take away some of the problem.

2.05 pm

Baroness Uddin (Non-Aff): My Lords, I, too, thank the Minister for the opportunity of this debate and I add my salutation to all those wonderful teachers who go beyond their duty of care. I agree with the noble Baroness, Lady Greenfield, that an individual teacher can make all the difference. In my own case, I remember my wonderful teacher, Nicolle Freni, who made all the difference to many of the girls whom she taught.

I believe, and have always believed, that through the opportunity of education people enhance their chances of having greater access to improved personal and financial circumstances. That is why many parents like mine crossed the seven seas. At the same time, having myself experienced an English education and other institutions, I can say with confidence that being better educated and becoming integrated into the mainstream of life does not necessarily protect a person from the walls of prejudice. Thus, for some, social mobility through education can never be guaranteed.

I and my cohort of the late 1970s and early 1980s in the East End of London fought for the notion that not only do we have to address the quality of schools and

equality in education but we also have to tackle head on the structural and societal deficits and inequities to kick-start a generation of communities who are stuck simply because of where they came from and where in the inner city they and their families settled.

As an activist in the very exciting period of the 1980s, I remember how I and others hoped that social policy changes enveloping poverty, poor housing, education, health, employment and childcare would have a significant impact on improving people's life chances. Although it has taken many more decades than we had envisaged and anticipated, our intervention has produced some positive developments, although those are far from meeting our expectations. Overall in the same population, poverty, unemployment and health inequalities remain deeply embedded, and social mobility is, at best, stagnant. Indeed, for the poorest in our society, opportunities to get on and prosper have probably shrunk.

Far from creating social mobility, the variable provision of primary and secondary education too often compounds social immobility according to available resources and, sadly, postcodes. Just as the Americans mythologise a land of opportunity that is a fallacy, we are guilty of speaking in favour of a social mobility that is truly out of reach for too many in this country. The OECD study, which has already been mentioned, found in 2010 that Britain had the lowest intergenerational income mobility of all the developed countries in the study. This pattern can be found in relation to attainment throughout the life cycle. Taking GCSEs as an example, in 2011 34% of pupils on free school meals achieved five good GCSEs including English or maths, compared with 62% of pupils from more prosperous homes. I agree with the noble Baroness, Lady Perry, that it is not necessarily about social circumstances; it is what is provided in many schools that can make a fundamental difference to pupils.

Take the top universities—five elite schools sent more pupils to Oxford and Cambridge than 2,000 schools comprising two-thirds of the entire state sector. We know the statistics. Take the professions—more than two-thirds of the public servants and leading lawyers studied by the Sutton Trust were privately educated, while the thousands of graduates in Tower Hamlets and neighbouring boroughs cannot access the hundreds of thousands of jobs on their City doorstep and the increasing number of our home-grown graduates are staffing the rising pockets of areas which have local branches of Sainsbury and Tesco. As Sir John Major observed last year:

“In every single sphere of British influence, upper echelons of power in 2013 are held overwhelmingly by the privately educated or the affluent middle class”.

He said that, counterintuitively, our education system is not an engine of social mobility and that too often it reinforces social division.

The truth is that there is scarce room at the top for accommodating diversity and for disadvantaged groups. We are not an equal society when it comes to men and women, majority and minority groups, the able bodied and the disabled. Social mobility will remain cloth that is cut by the elite and a matter for the conjecture of social scientists rather than of social ambition or

[BARONESS UDDIN]

justice. Higher spending on primary and secondary education over the past decades has not succeeded in rectifying this. Money alone will not create opportunities unless we root out institutional and societal prejudices and inequalities.

The gentrification of east London and the docklands has had little impact on the social mobility of the longer-established Bangladeshi, Chinese and Somalian families. Most second-generation people born and educated here can look in awe at the skyscrapers, penthouses and townhouses which are beyond their financial capacity. With too little in the way of mobilising the consciousness of the large corporate businesses that occupy these neighbourhoods, most workers commute in daily. The ongoing regeneration has certainly not catapulted the British-born generations into social mobility or given them the opportunity to take up any meaningful leadership position and senior jobs in the neighbouring square mile.

Even the magnificence of the Olympics and its aftermath has had only little, limited and peripheral benefit for the local communities—bar catering and retail jobs. The stagnant social mobility of past decades has revealed that economy, growth and higher overall educational performance will not create social mobility when accompanied by inequality. Intervention targeted at the most disadvantaged is required to open up opportunities still enjoyed by only a few.

Needless to say, children with special needs are eight times more likely to be permanently excluded than those without SEN. Among children with autism, 27% have been excluded from school compared with 4% without autism. The Children and Families Act, which has concluded its passage through this House, will replace special educational needs statements with education, health and care plans. I welcome the Bill's attempt to reduce the labyrinth of bureaucracy that confronts children with special educational needs and their carers by co-ordinating the provision of schools, NHS and social services. But removing the legal obligation for services will, I believe, further alienate the vast numbers of already disadvantaged students in the education system, and it is regressive. I am particularly concerned about those who are autistic and their carers; our mishaps will almost certainly create another underclass for whom social mobility is out of the question. I wonder whether the Minister will take on board social mobility in the upcoming review of strategies for people who are autistic.

As someone who has struggled and fought against apartheid in the education system, I understand that no Government or institution alone can root out inequality totally. However, as someone who has local government and parliamentary experience, I also believe that we must make our best efforts to erase structural inequalities so that all children have equal opportunities, at least in terms of the result that they leave school with, and that when they face the prejudice and barriers in their adult life, we will have equipped them with the skills, strength and aspiration for them to develop sufficient tools to compete in the workplace and in life as an adult generally.

Social engineering of the education system, depending on the Government of the time, uses mainly already disadvantaged children as pawns to trade statistics. We know that in reality any impact on the state of education would have been accumulated over decades, not over the term of any particular Government.

Raising the Bar: Closing the Gap is an admirable ambition. The panacea of upward social mobility will remain an ambition unless the best that primary and secondary education has to offer is constructed with equity and social justice. I agree with the comprehensive analysis of the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Newcastle that we have to be all-encompassing in our response to unlocking the full potential of all our children.

2.16 pm

Lord True (Con): My Lords, it is a privilege indeed to take part in this debate, not least because it was initiated by my noble friend Lord Nash, for whom I have enormous respect. I did not find his speech rhetorical or partisan—I found it compelling and impressive, and his logic was unarguable.

I declare an interest as leader of a London borough. Perhaps I should also say, in the light of some of the things that have been said implying that the grass was once so green, that in the 1990s I was for a good time a member of Sir John Major's Policy Unit at No. 10., with responsibility for education—a sort of precursor of the noble Lord, Lord Adonis. There, like him, I had experience of the tenacity and, at times, ferocity of those who opposed the kind of reform that Mr Major wanted in terms of creating opportunity for all—the creation of Ofsted, the publication of school results, and so much else. Rarely, in a life of public service, have I found such a shocking lack of humility or indeed any sense of responsibility, as was displayed by some of those who had peddled and clung to nostrums in education which were manifestly failing and have manifestly failed. Many were complicit in what I think were lost opportunities and the waste of young lives. Some, at best, washed their hands week by week in the *Times Educational Supplement* as Beveridge's "giant of ignorance" stirred. England slid down the tables of international competitiveness and a generation and more of young people, almost invariably the least privileged and most disadvantaged, were let down by those who underasked of them, attacked knowledge-based learning and dumbed down standards. My noble friend Lord Nash is right to be angry about this, and I believe that that feeling is shared by many on all Benches in this House and outside. I wholly agree with what he said about examinations, curriculum content, the tyranny of politically correct methods and so much else.

It has always been the case that reformers such as my noble friend Lord Baker of Dorking, the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, and my right honourable friend Michael Gove are accused of acting in haste or out of ignorance. But we need urgency; we need determination. I speak as a strong admirer of what Mr Gove is seeking to do. I say to the House and to many who criticise him that his life story and his humane intellect speak to us of what good education can achieve. He is right to act quickly and decisively. The Prime Minister

is not here to listen, but I trust that Mr Gove will remain in office to complete the work that he has begun.

I think that this debate's title is something of a truism. As other noble Lords have said, social mobility is the essence of all education. Is not the purpose of education to show young people the best, teach them the best and bring out the fullest potential in all? The great betrayal is not to ask the best and the most of all and to stretch every child. I owe all that I have done in my life, after my parents, to those who taught me. Like the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Newcastle, I was the first in my family to go to university. Like the noble Lord, Lord Baker of Dorking, I do not necessarily think that a university education is the be all and end all, but my teachers got me there. I was taught by a remarkable group of people, from my year 2 primary teacher who recognised that my love of books and precocious reading did not make me strange but opened up a great thing in reading and those teachers in my secondary school. The other day I came across a yellowing prize day booklet. All their names were in there—it made for wistful reading. Almost none of them had a formal education qualification, although they had degrees in subjects about which they were passionate. They would never be allowed to set foot in a maintained school now as they would not have so-called qualified teacher status. Frankly, I cannot think of a more qualified group of teachers to bring out the best in young people and I honour what is sadly now mostly their memory, as I honour all good teachers who seek to bring on the young.

I support what my noble friend said about training and the freedom given to free schools and academies to employ those without qualified teacher status. We need diversity in education, including the best teachers wherever they come from. Diversity also means a wider range of schools and choice. Yesterday I had the pleasure of attending the topping-out of a new sixth-form school in my borough where we have invested £25 million or more in bringing sixth-form choice to young people in all our secondary schools. If your Lordships will allow me a whimsical aside, I must say that this change has been bitterly opposed at every stage by my Liberal Democrat colleagues on the council who have voted against sixth-forms at every stage—a quite bizarre policy from that party, although I do not expect my noble friends here on the right of me to defend that.

Some youngsters will still choose to go to FE colleges; some will want the technical course that is so wisely and brilliantly being opened by my noble friend Lord Baker. It also must be right to offer the option of sixth-form choice with the attraction that that offers to specialist teachers and the example that successful more mature youngsters offer to younger children. We need to help young people to move on in the best way for each of them, and I believe that inspiring peer models within schools are incredibly important in education. Had I more time, I would also say how much I support, in the cause of diversity, faith schools which do outstanding work in primary and secondary schools often, as we heard from the right reverend Prelate, in some of the toughest inner cities. I deplore the attacks now being made on faith schools. How

perverse it is to wish to destroy such islands of excellence and their ethos, as if we are not all taxpayers mutually contributing to the diversity of free education for all.

As part of diversity, I welcome academies and free schools. All our secondary schools in Richmond are now academies, but most have become so in informal partnership, working as a local family of healthily competing but friendly schools. I am a little suspicious of very large chains of academies. Again, like the right reverend Prelate, I believe that the spirit of place is important in a school. A good school should be at the heart of its community; it should not be remote-managed from afar. I was pleased to hear my noble friend speaking about more multischool academies where local primary and secondary schools work together, pooling their experience for the benefit of their area. We are working actively on these concepts locally now and I hope that my noble friend will reiterate his support for that.

The independence of schools is something that people in local government and everywhere must accept as a great benefit. In my Downing Street days we worked to support the new grant-maintained schools, whose parents actually voted for self-government. How sad it was to see those parental hopes snuffed out by an incoming Government after 1997, along with a number of other things which offered opportunity. It is good to see many academies, CTCs and free schools now recapturing that self-governing spirit, following on from the work of the noble Lord, Lord Adonis. I thank him and my noble friend for that, and I hope that we will hear unqualified support for academies and free schools from the Front Bench opposite in the wind-up.

Having spoken strongly in support of my noble friend's policies, I hope he will allow me a couple of more qualifying comments. First, the system is too loaded against local authorities. I understand the suspicion of local authorities. I well remember in the 1990s how some councils worked to thwart and even threaten self-governing schools. But the world has moved on. Not all local authorities are hostile to academies, CTCs and free schools—quite the reverse. We still have a statutory duty to provide school places and welcome good schools from any source.

I understand why successive Governments might want to stop local authorities preventing or hampering new academies or free schools, but the law now even hampers their creating them. It seems absurd that department officials do not always openly discuss with local authorities sites for free schools. That makes it much harder for free schools and planning school places alike. It is absurd that councils seem the only institutions not able to propose new academies or free schools, except at the fringes. We would not want to do this to run them; running schools is for others. I believe in the support of academies and local authorities have a contribution to make. I hope that my noble friend will consider that as the law evolves.

Perhaps I may make a special plea from the point of view of the London area. Will my noble friend on the Front Bench beat the drum at the door of the Department for Communities and Local Government to stop its damaging policy of allowing the uncontrolled change

[LORD TRUE]

of offices into residential flats? We are seeing blocks going that could have been free schools and prices are being forced up to residential levels beyond the Education Funding Agency's pocket. This is happening for quick financial gain, with the developers required to contribute not one penny towards new schools for the children of the new residents they are packing into former offices. It is a destructive policy with a potentially bad impact on medium-term education provision in London. I do not expect an answer now, but I plead with my noble friend and Mr Gove to use all their powers of persuasion to stop this soon.

I will not trouble your Lordships further. I am enormously heartened by the courageous steps being taken by my noble friend and Mr Gove. They have my strongest personal support in all they are striving to achieve to improve the life chances of all.

2.28 pm

Lord Graham of Edmonton (Lab): My Lords, it is a great pleasure to make a contribution to the Thursday debate club because many, like me, look forward to the relaxed opportunity that we have of speaking without the Whip and about our own experience. If we are talking about social mobility, there is no better place to start than at the bottom. That is where I started on my social mobility. I was the eldest of five children, born in the 1920s. My dad was unemployed in 1930 and finally got a job in 1939, when the war started. He was on what we would call the dole, and in 1937 he received the state benefit of 37 shillings a week. I remember discussing this with him. It was two shillings for each child and there were five of us, so that 10 shillings was very important.

Of course, I remember most the love and affection that I received from my brothers and sisters and from my parents. However, let me give two illustrations of the extent to which being at the bottom of social mobility occurred to me. One day I dashed home with a piece of paper in my hand and said to mam and dad, "Mam, dad, I have passed the exam, the 11-plus". Dad laughed and mam cried. They reacted in that way because they could do nothing about it. There was little discussion about whether I would be able to go to the other school. Having earned the place and shown that I had some ability, that was it.

I finished up at school as head boy. When people ask, "What kind of a school was it?", I say, "Well, it was not a secondary school or a grammar school; it was an elementary school". I took an exam to move on from the elementary school, which I passed, but I was unable to go. Later on I got the opportunity to take an exam to go to Atkinson Road Technical School—my friend from Newcastle who sits on the Benches opposite will understand the geography—which I passed, but of course I did not go. In time, mainly through my own efforts but thanks to the good work of the National Council of Labour Colleges, the Workers' Educational Association and the Co-operative College, I finally landed here.

I know that my friend from Newcastle will enjoy this extract from the Newcastle *Chronicle* which, under the heading "Remember When", states:

"Haven't you come a long way, my Lord?"

That was me. I have not changed. It tells my life story and says that eventually I went on to the Open University. I remember that in the first class I was associated with was an 82 year-old lady who was taking advantage of the opportunities.

When we talk about social mobility, we must remember that there are many illustrations—I was delighted by the contribution of my noble friend Lady Taylor—of the reasons why people who have potential fail to take advantage of it because of circumstances. She mentioned a good friend of hers who left school at 15 because there was no incentive or opportunity to go on even though she could have done. The only question I want to ask the Minister, which I have asked before, is whether we can have a 2014 comparison with the days I am talking about. I am convinced that many people would have had the opportunity to go on last year and this year but failed to take advantage of it, not because they were unable to do it but because, primarily, their parents needed their wages to come into the house.

I can remember when I dashed home with a pair of boots and said, "Mam, dad, look, I have got a pair of boots". At the age of 10 or 11, I had never had a pair of boots in my life. Dad said to me, "Where did you get the boots from?". I said, "A policeman came to the school and gave me this pair of boots". He hit me around the head. He said, "Tell the truth". I said, "Mam, I am telling the truth". What had happened is that two policemen had come into my classroom, whispered to the teacher and the teacher pointed out different people—Tommy, Willy, Wilfie, Charlie, Teddy. We all went out and we were all fitted with a pair of boots. Years later I spoke about this to my mam and dad and said, "Mam, when I told you about the pair of boots, you cried". She said, "Yes". I said, "Why did you cry, mam?". She said, "Because I knew that the teacher had selected the poorest pupils in the class to get a pair of boots". In those days, all I ever wore were plimsolls, sandals and sand shoes, but I got a pair of boots. When things like that have happened to me and other people, social mobility becomes meaningful.

I was grateful to get the Library brief on this. It is an excellent document, which lays out the various interpretations of social mobility. The greatest illustration of it, to my mind, is opportunity. If you have it in you and you take advantage of the opportunities, you may or may not get some of the rewards. I would welcome from the Minister—not today because I realise research may have to be undertaken—a statistic that will tell me, fairly and honestly, the number of people who fail to go on with their school education and drop out at the earliest opportunity, and which shows the intelligence that informs the teachers and others that this is because of economic circumstances.

I do not wish to extend the politics involved in this debate—which is primarily about education but involves politics as well—except to say that there are undoubtedly many children in school now who have demonstrated that they could go on but will leave as quickly as they can. This is not because they cannot go on but because their parents have decided to pull them out of school. I think this is a crime. We are talking about young

boys and girls who may not be as fully aware as we are of what lies ahead, but who are denied the opportunity of going on.

The opportunity to debate these topics is very good. In his opening remarks, the Minister used the phrase, “Our brilliant teachers”. I know that the teachers’ unions will be grateful to have the endorsement that in the mind of the Minister they are brilliant. They do a fantastic job under circumstances which are far from ideal. I hope that out of this debate there will come a better understanding not only of aspiration but of achievement.

2.38 pm

Baroness Tyler of Enfield (LD): My Lords, it is always a huge pleasure and privilege to follow the noble Lord, Lord Graham, whose powerful personal testimony brings vividly to life the rather dry term “social mobility”. I thank my noble friend Lord Nash for calling this debate. Certainly there can be no overstating the importance of this subject for both the long-term prosperity of the UK and a fairer society, by which I mean equal chances for all irrespective of background.

I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that if we want to give everyone an equal chance to succeed in life, our education system needs to function as an instrument of social mobility. However, as other noble Lords said, I fully accept that education has a wider purpose. Alan Milburn, the chair of the Child Poverty and Social Mobility Commission, said recently that when it comes to school, an “energetic focus on reform” is needed to narrow the educational attainment gap and “drive social mobility”. As we have already heard in this debate, some of that important work is going on.

A contribution to the thinking to which I would like to draw the attention of noble Lords is set out in the recent report of the All-Party Group on Social Mobility—here I declare an interest as vice-chair—called the *Character and Resilience Manifesto*. The report was drawn up in collaboration with CentreForum and the Character Counts! programme. It highlights the increasingly convincing case for how important attributes such as character and resilience are in terms of improving social mobility. The fundamental argument of the report is that in order for all children to have a fair chance of succeeding in life, character and resilience need to be given a stronger priority within the education system and should become the core business of all schools, as they are already becoming in some. It is this crucial piece of the social mobility puzzle, which has already been alluded to by other noble Lords, that I will focus my remarks on.

What do we mean by character and resilience? I think that language can sometimes get in the way in this area. It is really a shorthand phrase for a set of traits that are sometimes called the soft or non-cognitive skills. In my view, both terms are somewhat misleading as some of this is definitely tough stuff which involves a lot of cognition. Character and resilience traits are closely aligned with social and emotional skills—emotional intelligence, empathy, self-awareness and the ability to forge relationships with others. All of these are important.

It also encompasses traits such as self-esteem, self-worth, confidence, a sense of well-being and the belief that one has a degree of control over one’s life, as well as things like mental toughness, application, delayed gratification and self-control.

All the evidence shows that character and resilience involves having the drive, tenacity and perseverance to stick with it when the going gets tough, to make the most of opportunities, to bounce back from life’s inevitable setbacks, not to accept second best and to be able to deal with failure. I have laboured that point slightly because I hope to get across the message that we are not talking about pink and fluffy things here; this stuff really matters. The other key thing the evidence tells us is that these character traits are not innate or genetic—a common misconception—but can be taught, and that, significantly, you can learn and develop them throughout your life.

While the core academic skills are of course an indispensable component of education, character skills have been empirically shown to be an equally important predictor of future success across all socioeconomic groups. The work of Nobel prize-winning economist James Heckman builds a strong case for the correlation between character traits and life chances. This is true not only because children with good character skills tend to do well at school—which they do—but because many of the skills that are valued in the jobs market such as self-reliance, teamwork, customer empathy, enthusiasm and being able to communicate well, are ultimately more about character traits than any particular academic skill set.

John Cridland, the director-general of the CBI, said recently:

“There is a danger that schools become exam factories, churning out people who are not sufficiently prepared for life outside the school gates ... alongside academic rigour, we also need schools to produce rounded and grounded young people who have the skills that businesses want”.

That point has already been made by the noble Baroness, Lady Massey. In light of this evidence, the question must be asked: how do we ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have access to an education that prioritises both academic development and character development? I want to stress that both are important. It is not a case of either/or; they are mutually reinforcing.

I am not someone who buys into the simplistic argument that if only state schools were more like private schools, the world would be a better place. Many state schools are doing a fantastic job in very difficult circumstances and facing various challenges. They have hugely talented and dedicated teachers who often work with significantly fewer resources than are available in private schools, but I do believe that both sectors could and should learn from each other and collaborate. As others have said recently, the so-called “Berlin Wall” between the two sectors should come down. That is true when you look at some of the differences between private and state schools. The former tend to put more emphasis on character and resilience, which is reflected in the wide range of extracurricular activities that are offered, as well as providing the resources to do so.

[BARONESS TYLER OF ENFIELD]

That leads me to the first major policy recommendation made in the all-party group report that I should like to highlight. We need to ensure that the Ofsted inspection framework, which we all know is a key driver of behaviour in schools, takes more account of the efforts made and activities offered in a school to develop these key non-cognitive skills. That means evaluating the extent to which a school provides opportunities for participation in character-building activities as part of its ethos. I agree with other noble Lords that competitive sports and links with the uniformed organisations can be highly beneficial. It might also include engaging with local charities or taking part in social action projects. It may indeed be part of the way the curriculum is taught, perhaps by providing leadership and debating classes alongside more traditional subjects, as well as ensuring that students are helped to deal with both success and failure, and attending to their own emotional well-being. I would contend that the way we evaluate our schools is the strongest policy lever we have for effecting change in education.

A model I want to mention briefly is that of the Bedford Academy, a charitably funded academy school in a deprived area that is modelled on the Knowledge is Power programme that was first implemented in the United States. Students at the academy receive marks not only for their academic performance, but in seven key areas: grit, zest, optimism, social intelligence, gratitude, curiosity and self-control. Although it will be many years before we can measure the full effects of these methods, students are already reporting feeling more aspirational and having a sense of possibility for the future.

As other noble Lords said, the greatest resource we have at our disposal for building character in all students is the teachers who are currently working in primary and secondary schools around the country. Our nation's teachers are incredible people with wide-ranging interests and talents. If a maths teacher is an excellent chess player, if an art teacher has some previous training in fashion design, or if a science teacher plays football at the weekend, we ought to encourage them all to share these skills with their students.

In light of that, the second policy recommendation I want to highlight is that of incorporating extracurricular activities into teachers' employment contracts. Just to be clear: this is not about asking teachers to take on extra work for no reward. It is primarily about rebalancing the school curriculum and allowing more time for these activities in the school day. Alongside this, we also call for an understanding of character and resilience to be incorporated into both initial teacher training and continuing professional development.

I should say at this point that I recognise that private schools have resources that state schools do not have. For example, in terms of extracurricular programmes, a state school is not likely to be able to do very much if it does not have adequate playing fields, drama rehearsal spaces, musical instruments and the like. That is why I would like to see private schools being encouraged to share their facilities for extracurricular activities. Many private schools have first-rate facilities in these areas, and, given their charitable

status, it surely makes sense and serves the public interest to share facilities that are often underutilised with students in the state sector. This would be a significant step forward in terms of equalising life chances.

My final point concerns the geographical disparities in the quality of primary and secondary education. As the all-party group's report, *Capital Mobility*, stresses, London has gone from having some of the worst state schools in the country to outperforming other areas in almost every category relevant to social mobility. One reason cited in the report for this imbalance is the visibility of potential opportunities. Students in London, regardless of their background, see opportunities for success all around them. Translating that positive thinking into all geographic contexts will require radical and innovative thinking, but it is essential in order to achieve the goals we are aiming for.

There is much more that I could say, but I think I have used all my time. I look forward very much to hearing the Minister's response to some of the recommendations I have highlighted today.

2.49 pm

Lord Sutherland of Houndwood (CB): My Lords, I will be the 18th to thank the Minister for ensuring that we have this debate, although my thanks are none the less heartfelt for that and are very sincere. This is such an important topic and it is much appreciated that he succeeded in finding a slot that gave us more time than the usual two or three minutes.

The debate has focused on a wide variety of things. I have agreed with some of the points of view expressed, but I would vary from some of them. One of the opening points made by a number of noble Lords, and indeed in some of the briefings I have had, related to what we mean by social mobility. I find this a bit tricky. When I hear the two options of "absolute" or "relative", I am reminded of Garrison Keillor introducing the mythical Lake Wobegon, that town in the far, far Midwest in which all the eggs laid by chickens were larger than normal and all the children were above average. That is one of the risks when we start to talk about social mobility. We need to try to understand not what the statistics are, but what Johnny would achieve if he were liberated and opened up to the future and what Mary would succeed in that she might not have otherwise. That is social mobility.

I had two versions of notes for this speech. One, in case I was called early, is packed full of statistics. Happily—as I suspected—most of those have already been produced, and I will not bore your Lordships with them again. The version that noble Lords will get now is, I fear, slightly autobiographical. I do not think I can match my noble friend Lord Graham of Edmonton but I will do my little best. I am from the north-east of Scotland, not the north-east of England, and we are a little less forthcoming with our emotions up there. None the less, I wanted to point your Lordships to a school and a date.

The date is 5 January 1946, and the school is called Woodside Primary School. That was my first day at that state primary. It was just after the war, with my father not yet out of the military, when we all fronted

up to this state school. It was right at the edge of the north end of Aberdeen—which now extends for another four miles—and surrounded by council estates and old-fashioned tenement-type rented accommodation. That was its catchment area and the population it served. We went along as part of a three-class intake on that first day. My class had 48 pupils in it and our teaching location was a nissen hut that looked as if it had been used to store tanks during the war. It had a coke stove in the middle, which I am sure was a health hazard—there is no doubt that you would not get away with it today. The lavatories were outside and required more of a triumph of mind over matter than anything else even to contemplate going near them.

That was the physical context. Among the 48 of us and the other two classes that arrived at the same time at the school, there were no better-off families, just those who ended up with one shilling and eight pence in their purse at the end of the week and those who did not manage that. That was the difference financially between the children in the class and their parents. It was wartime but, happily, we mostly ate a reasonable diet because food was rationed. We did not have a lot of choice and could not go and buy expensive food, but you got your ration. Most of us, in one way or another, found that that was more than adequate. We wore our brothers hand-me-downs and read the comics that they discarded towards the end of the week.

That is a picture of a state primary school that apparently had all of the disadvantages that we fear. Did it have anything by way of social mobility to offer? Where did the pupils end up? I will give some examples. Two of us became professors, one of electronics and one of philosophy—the electronics man was the smart guy. One became a *Guardian* features writer and one became a solicitor. Two became heads of school departments in excellent state secondary schools in Scotland, one in mathematics and one in English literature. One became a Fleet Street printer in the days of hot metal and, from what I remember of him, I dare say that he was one of those who caused Rupert Murdoch most trouble in getting out of Fleet Street. That was a big step, from the north end of Aberdeen to Fleet Street, but he wanted to become a printer and he did it. He was very successful. One became a radio and TV engineer in the early days. He was happy in his work and very good at it; if you had something flickering on your television screen, it was Colin you went for.

The whole range of careers, futures, jobs and professions came out of that class. The range was huge, which allowed some form of social mobility. Was this then some sort of urban idyll, which we could create again? Of course it had one huge flaw, referred to several times in this debate, which is the great divide between what came next: senior secondary and junior secondary. We did not have the 11-plus up in Aberdeen—they are tough guys there—we had an exam named “the control”. You were allocated. Occasionally, one parent would not allow their son or daughter to go on to senior secondary, which was a real tragedy, but there were those who moved through the system. That was a large—perhaps the biggest—flaw in the system but there were forms of upward mobility for all of us. A number went into the construction trade. You still

had shipbuilding in Aberdeen then; later there was the oil industry and so on. They had the opportunity to move forward.

What allowed this? Was there anything different about that school? Just the obvious things: we had excellent teachers, who were absolutely superb. They were not soft; they were tough, and if Miss Paul called you out in front of the school, you walked shaking towards her. However, tough as they were, they taught us the core skills that an education should teach. We became competent in mathematics, reading and writing; perhaps less so in articulation, but that is a local, social thing. Perhaps if we had had to learn another language, that might have improved things, but we learnt skills that were basic to what we eventually all became. We had supportive parents, who were not involved that much but did care. My parents read books and had books around the house. They read books to me and took me to the local library—originally set up, interestingly, through philanthropy of one kind or another.

There were some other, some might say softer, skills. Football was quite good. I was not especially good at it, but the shining example was held up, as an aspiration for all of us, of an older pupil, Graham Leggat, who had signed professional forms for Fulham Football Club. He might as well have been going to Real Madrid as far as we were concerned. For us, that really was hitting the high spot, at least until a few years later, when we discovered that the guy down the road who kept engineering the defeat of our football team—a spotted youth with national health specs—was actually called Denis Law. That was good, in that we had competitive sport of a good order.

That was education and social mobility at work, and I do not see why we cannot do that now. There are different problems today, and we did not have schools with 39 and 40 native languages to deal with, but we did have a degree of poverty in the place. We did not have the possibility of overseas trips, holidays elsewhere or even visits to the farm. Occasionally, on the odd day when the sun shone, we went for a walk through Persley Den, doubtless slashing at the weeds as we walked down the road without caring about the future of the ecosystem, but that was it.

Are there any lessons to be learnt or is this just sheer self-indulgence? I think there are lessons, such as the excellence of the teachers and the grittiness of the head teacher, who was too old to go to the war but extended his working life to provide opportunity. He was great. He was tough but he was very good. We inherited the problem of the junior and senior secondary. Comprehensivisation was eventually brought in to solve that. I have to say it failed and it is because it failed that we are where we are in the OECD league tables. There are good comprehensive schools but we cannot all be Holland Parks—nor were we.

The education system has had to change and I salute those who have been bringing about that change, not least the noble Lord, Lord Baker, who is with us today, and the Minister and his colleagues in the current Government. The one lesson we take from comprehensivisation is that there is not a single solution. There is not a quick switch in the structure that will

[LORD SUTHERLAND OF HOUNDWOOD] mean that all will be well and there will be social mobility. That is why I think we have yet to exploit the full richness of the possibility of giving more power to the schools and the head teachers; for example, through the excellent UTC system. We have to give these opportunities and allow schools to develop new ways. There will be failures and there will have to be a decent regulatory system, which, happily, I think we have in Ofsted, but we have to keep working with it.

All the drivers that we have had outlined to us, such as the excellent pupil premium, are necessary but are not sufficient. Eternal vigilance in the education system is all that will be sufficient. We place our hopes and expectations on the teachers, good leadership in schools and commitment to high standards.

3.02 pm

Lord Lexden (Con): My Lords, it is very good to follow the noble Lord, Lord Sutherland. I remember doing so in a previous education debate, when he drew most interestingly on his reminiscences, and it was immensely instructive to hear more from his work of autobiography again today. I will speak chiefly about independent schools and social mobility in this debate, which we owe to my noble friend Lord Nash and which he introduced so brilliantly to us.

My noble friend will always be remembered in connection with the Children and Families Bill, which, by happy coincidence, receives Royal Assent today, as the noble Lord, Lord Storey, told us. None of us who took part in the debates on the Bill—in my case it was only a small part—will forget the immense care and skill with which my noble friend dealt with the protracted proceedings through this House, which resulted in major changes and major revisions to this most important piece of legislation.

The impression of independent schools and social mobility that I would like to give the House differs from that conveyed briefly by the noble Baroness, Lady Tyler. I declare an interest as president of the Independent Schools Association, the ISA, and of the Council for Independent Education, CIFE. The association represents the interests of some 330 independent schools. The council acts on behalf of 18 colleges of further education, which offer a wide range of A-level subjects in extremely flexible combinations.

These schools and colleges, whose success year by year is reflected in the impressive examination results of their students, do not exist to serve a narrow band of well-off families. As a result of the truly excellent education they provide, ladders of opportunity are placed before children of families in all manner of different circumstances. The ethos that these institutions possess makes them profoundly conscious of the contribution they can make to the wider community in general and to social mobility in particular.

My colleague, Mr Neil Roskilly, the chief executive of the ISA, has summed up the predominant features of our member schools as follows:

“The 330 schools within ISA are often small and tend to cater for their local communities. Many of their pupils come from socially deprived backgrounds. A large number of our schools are heavily involved in working with local maintained schools. In

some cases the fees represent not much more than the cost of places in the maintained sector. An open access scheme backed by the Government would enable us to realise our aspirations—and particularly our contribution to social mobility—even more fully”. The essential basis of an open access scheme of the kind to which Mr Roskilly refers would involve the transfer of funds equivalent of the cost of a place in the maintained sector for each pupil taking up a place in an independent school participating in such a scheme. My noble friend the Minister has made it abundantly clear that the Government have no plans for such a scheme, but the House will understand that it is widely supported among independent schools, which want to serve their communities more fully.

The characteristics so prominent in ISA schools can be found throughout the independent sector, as I discovered during my seven years as general secretary of the Independent Schools Council, the ISC, which works on behalf of seven member associations—of which the ISA is one—and their 1,220 schools. These schools are firmly committed to the values of a meritocratic society, not those of a privileged elite. They are firmly attached to an idea commended to them nearly 75 years ago. In 1940, the year in which our country faced the severest trials, Churchill declared that,

“after the war, the advantages of the public schools must be extended on a far broader basis”.

Two years later, he said that he wanted 60% to 70% of the places to be filled by bursaries. Like many others at that time, he envisaged that the bursaries would be provided by national and local government to create an enduring partnership between the state and the great public schools, as he always referred to them.

If Churchill’s vision had been carried into effect, the history of post-war education in our country would have been very different, but no great scheme linking the independent sector with the state in the way in which he proposed was ever implemented. From time to time, ambitious plans were drawn up but the results were extremely limited until the introduction of the assisted places scheme by Mrs Thatcher’s Government. The scheme was widely mourned when the Labour Government abolished it in 1997, yet progress towards Churchill’s ideal—access to independent schools on a far broader basis—has taken place.

Wider access is being secured as a result of determined action by the schools themselves. The families of more than a third of pupils at ISC schools now receive help with the fees. The total value of that help is more than £730 million a year and more than 85% of it comes from the schools themselves, even though nearly all of them have little or nothing in the way of endowments on which to draw. Increasingly, fees are being reduced through means-tested bursaries, to the benefit of less well-off families and with the objective of contributing to greater social mobility over the years ahead.

How should the process be carried forward to make independent schools as open and accessible as possible? The headmaster of Eton College, Mr Tony Little, has recently pointed the way. He wrote:

“Schools should state their intent by publishing targets for increasing means-tested bursaries. At Eton at present, 263 boys receive means-tested financial assistance averaging 60 per cent remission of the fee, with 63 paying nothing at all. The short-term target is to raise that number to 320 with 70 on full remission –

and then move on to the next target, with the ultimate goal of being, in the American phrase, ‘needs-blind’: in a position to take all suitable candidates irrespective of their family’s financial situation”.

The words of the headmaster of Eton make plain the extent of the ambition that can be found in the independent sector, particularly among the great public schools today, ambition which, if given practical effect, would have a profound impact on social mobility even in the absence of a government-backed open access scheme. Already, nearly 30% of pupils at independent day schools in England come from ethnic minority families, a figure uninfluenced by overseas pupils who study in ISC boarding schools. That 30% compares with some 26% from ethnic minority families in English maintained schools.

Widening access to highly successful schools is the most obvious way in which the independent sector can assist the increase of social mobility in our country, but there is a second way: through partnership with the maintained sector, to which my noble friend Lady Tyler referred. She mentioned the frequent references that are made by journalists and by politicians of all parties, including, I am sad to say, recently by the Secretary of State for Education, to a “Berlin Wall” separating independent and maintained schools. Such references create an utterly misleading impression of two antagonistic sectors interested only in exchanging insults. Whatever may have happened in the past, I assure my noble friend Lady Tyler that there is no such Berlin Wall today.

Up and down the country, partnership between independent and maintained schools is flourishing. There are myriad examples; I shall mention just one, well known to my noble friend the Minister: the London Academy of Excellence in Newham, east London, set up in 2012 and sponsored by a group of seven independent schools, including Eton. Yesterday, it was reported in the press that 100 students of the academy had received offers from top universities. Mr Little, the Eton headmaster, is an enthusiastic supporter of partnership because of the mutual benefits it brings. He has said that,

“our teachers and students have something to learn and something to give. Their understanding and skills are enhanced as much as those in the partner state school, if perhaps in different ways”.

Partnership is one of the unsung success stories in education today. When the House is not in session, this Chamber is used for various purposes connected with young people. I suggest that there could be no better purpose than to bring here students and teachers from both maintained and independent schools who have participated so enthusiastically in partnership work. Such an occasion might be organised under the auspices of the independent/state school partnership forum, with which my noble friend and I are connected.

There are some who say that independent schools are part of the problem of stunted, arrested social mobility in our country. I would like to suggest that they could be part of the solution.

3.14 pm

Lord Shipley (LD): My Lords, I am one of three speakers in today’s debate with roots in Newcastle upon Tyne. All three of the speeches may have had

different content, but the broad argument is the same: it is about enabling all young people to succeed. I therefore thank the noble Lord, Lord Nash, for the opportunity to discuss the role of schools in promoting social mobility.

I think that all speakers in the debate so far have acknowledged that, for social mobility to be a reality, a good education relevant to the career possibilities for each young person is an essential building block. Many have pointed out that a good education has to include experience not just of the world of work but of all the opportunities that could be available to that young person. As we know, career choices often need specific qualifications, not least in STEM subjects, but these career choices can be more limited if the right subjects are not taken at the correct time in a young person’s education.

Raising the participation age means that, next year, young people will have to stay in education or training until they are 18. After the age of 16, young people can study full time, do full-time work or volunteering together with part-time education or a training course, or they can undertake an apprenticeship. In addition, since last September, secondary schools and academies have had a duty to prepare young people for post-16 education and training and provide an individual plan for them. They have to engage with local employers and work-based training providers to offer young people the opportunity to consider options they may not have thought about. It is reasonable to ask how things are going with careers guidance given the raising of the participation age.

An Ofsted report published last September said that,

“the new statutory duty for schools to provide careers guidance is not working well enough”.

It reported that three-quarters of schools are not executing their statutory careers duties satisfactorily—that figure is very high. It identified the problem that links need to be much stronger between schools and businesses. That is a fairly obvious thing to identify because it is about the transition from the world of school to the world of work, but it has nevertheless caused me much concern, not least because there is a very real and fast-growing skills gap that is proving very frustrating for employers. For example, in the north-east of England, my home region, it is reported that there will be too few young people ready and trained to take over from skilled workers now in work but due to retire in the next five years, never the mind the growth in key sectors of the economy demanding more skilled young people. In a region with higher than average unemployment, this is an unacceptable situation to be in, and it is quite unnecessary.

I want to draw the House’s attention to a recent report by IPPR North published in January and entitled *Driving a Generation: Improving the Interaction Between Schools and Businesses*. The IPPR concludes:

“Today’s secondary school pupils are being let down by careers services that are not equal to the task of helping them navigate the increasingly difficult transition from school to work”.

In essence, it echoes the Ofsted report. The IPPR report makes three important proposals, to which I want to draw your Lordships’ attention: first, that the remit of the National Careers Service should be expanded

[LORD SHIPLEY]

to enable it to perform a capacity-building and brokerage role for schools; secondly, that careers advice should be more fully embedded in the curriculum for pupils beginning in year 7; and, thirdly, that all secondary schools' careers services should be required to take the lead in developing stronger relationships with major employers and that all employers, especially those with skills shortages, need to be proactive in this process. This amounts in practice to something similar to what is taken for granted in Germany and from which we must learn.

The IPPR has emphasised that the trend towards skills hubs, currently being developed in some of our urban areas and which provide a central information resource, is increasingly important. Basically, they involve information hubs to show key contacts for each business online, what visits they would host and what advice they could offer schools in specific subject areas. As the IPPR says, making those resources easily accessible would enable careers services to spend less time finding local employers to engage with and more time giving face-to-face careers advice to older pupils and arranging the logistics of visits for younger ones.

I have come to the conclusion that we can turn the current problem into an opportunity, because this is not just about money. The cut in funding, amounting to £200 million made available annually to the Connexions service, has not helped but, on the other hand, we have the pupil premium which, as the Minister reminded us in his opening speech, amounts to £2.5 billion. That money is available but there is also the extra £300 million to which the Minister referred, the extra allocation. I am pleased to say that Northumberland Council has received £10.6 million of that, which I hope will be used to increase opportunities across the county to enable young people to be more mobile in gathering work experience.

However, it is not just a matter of money; it is a matter of culture, organisation and leadership. Increasing social mobility starts in primary schools, as a number of speakers have emphasised. Preparation for post-16 education and training should not be considered entirely a matter for key stages 3 and 4. From an early age, children should be encouraged to think about careers and the appropriate ways in which ambitions can be achieved. That means that children need to be taken out of their school and local environment at that stage, encouraged to see a variety of ways of earning a living and to develop their personal aspirations. As we have heard from a number of speakers, that is particularly important for children living in areas of deprivation, where their parents may not themselves have had the opportunity to develop their ambitions. Those children need to be taken to visit their local universities and colleges, to visit local businesses, to visit rural areas, if they live in urban areas and, perhaps, to develop links with schools in other countries or other parts of the United Kingdom that are very different from their own.

The critical issue is this: many young people are unaware of the opportunities available and what educational qualifications are needed to take up those opportunities. Conversely, not enough employers are taking up the chances to invest time in helping young people make the right choices.

In conclusion, I return to the IPPR report that I cited earlier. What is particularly interesting about its report—I hope that, following our debate, the Minister will look closely at it—is that it tested its conclusions. It arranged for four secondary schools to receive talks from local employers in the automotive industry and for pupils to visit local plants to learn more about the industry and the careers within it. It surveyed young people's thinking about available careers and found that pupils had insufficient knowledge about which careers did and did not have science qualifications as prerequisites. As a case study, that is very important, because it demonstrates the gap that exists and points to a way to bridge it.

If one of the aims of raising the participation age is to enable young people better to understand the job opportunities that could be available to them and thereby to improve social mobility, the responsibility for achieving that needs to be shared between schools, careers advisory networks and business, but we must be very clear that the leadership role lies with a school's careers service. I do not know when Ofsted will return to the issue, but I hope that the Minister will be able to say something further about that in his response. We cannot have another Ofsted report which says that three-quarters of schools are not fulfilling their statutory role.

3.24 pm

The Earl of Clancarty (CB): My Lords, I am grateful to the Minister for giving us the opportunity to participate in this debate. I thank the House of Lords Library for an excellent briefing paper. I want to talk about two things: social mobility generally and, secondly, the area of education that is my specific concern: arts education. I declare an interest as a vice-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Art, Craft and Design Education.

A number of your Lordships have carefully called social mobility “tricky”. I intend to be more critical about the term, which is today widely accepted as a social policy and, indeed, perhaps even as a goal in itself for many individuals. However, I read carefully the speech made by the noble Lord, Lord Giddens, in the debate initiated by the noble Lord, Lord McFall, on social mobility on 6 February, which challenges social mobility as a major social policy, and indeed questions whether social mobility, in the sense in which it is usually meant, operates in anything other than a limited manner.

The noble Lord, Lord Giddens, gave an education example which is worth citing. He said that,

“you might introduce a policy to help kids from an inner-city school to get into a higher level of the system, but middle-class parents can easily mobilise to negate that because they are not stupid and they know what is going on, too”.—[*Official Report*, 6/2/14; col. GC 166.]

In other words, they are more powerful and school education is today a significant site of competition in itself.

That is an important point about the intransigence of the system as it stands, but it also seems to me that social mobility in the sense that it is commonly understood is necessarily predicated not only on the existence of

but the acceptance of a hierarchical society, because the journey taken from A to B of those who in theory become socially mobile involves moving up rungs, including rungs perceived to exist within the educational system itself, which of course will leave people behind. That is the assumption that has to be made—otherwise there will be no journey.

To me, one of the big problems with social mobility as a policy is that it is too narrow; it is not ambitious enough; it is too piecemeal. Social mobility is not about society, it is specifically about individuals. There is nothing wrong with wanting all people to do better at the thing that they enjoy or are good at—alongside knowledge of the opportunities possible, as the noble Lord, Lord Shipley, pointed out—but a policy that highlights material gain, makes money the god and its accumulation the only worthy pursuit, which social mobility also does, is inevitably flawed and ethically questionable.

What of the people who are left behind: for instance, the children in those schools at the bottom of the league tables? Do we really want “getting on”, to use the old colloquial expression, to be the overarching social policy of our time, when perhaps we should be fundamentally challenging the structure of society itself—the extreme income differences that now exist and the shaming food banks? I would say that social mobility, because it makes unacceptable assumptions about our society, is not a solution to the problem but, unfortunately, part of it.

That is of relevance to school education not least because all sectors impinge on each other. Families that are poor, struggling to survive and feel disfranchised from or neglected by society—I believe that social mobility as an underlying social principle will further promote that sense—will have school-aged children who will grow up within that culture, so the job of good education, particularly in the early years, will be made harder at those levels within society, as the noble Lord, Lord Storey, and the noble Baroness, Lady Massey, made abundantly clear.

The 2012 Institute for Public Policy Research report, *A Long Division*, by Jonathan Clifton and others states that,

“the problem is not just that a group of the poorest pupils fail to reach a basic level of education ... Rather, there is a clear and consistent link between deprivation and academic achievement wherever you are on the scale”.

The overriding problem, then, is not bad education in itself, but greater and greater deprivation, which is something that league tables by themselves will not analyse but will in many cases reconfirm.

The comments in his blog of Peter Brant, head of policy at the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, about bright working-class children believing that they will not fit in at university, which were reported last week in the *Daily Telegraph*, made me feel how much social mobility has become an end justifying the means, and how badly we need an education system that is understood to be geared to all individual needs, rather than trying to create a normalising effect within society. It is not the gap between educational outcomes that we should primarily be attempting to close but the gap between rich and poor.

More specifically, I believe that good education should be broad-based education for all students, particularly up to age 16, and also—this may be a high ideal but it is worth fighting for—that every pupil deserves an education that is beneficial to them individually, which, ideally, means as much choice as possible, particularly at secondary school level, including vocational training, which, as the noble Lord, Lord Baker, pointed out, has been so successful in Germany.

On the point about a properly broad-based education, it is for that reason that I would support STEM becoming STEAM. This is one of the major recommendations of last year’s Culture, Media and Sport Committee report, *Supporting the Creative Economy*, and is supported by Maria Miller, who made this clear in her speech at the British Library in January. Is the message getting through to the DfE that art and design subjects should have the same level of support in the core curriculum as STEM subjects, and is the department giving this serious thought? Having said that, though, and having listened earlier to the passionate and convincing arguments from the noble Baroness, Lady Coussins, in favour of greater take-up of foreign languages, I wonder if there is not an excellent case to be made on strong cultural and economic grounds for extending STEM to STELAM, where L could stand for languages and A for art and design.

Choice, however, is also important. I want to take the opportunity to expand a little on the issue of discount codes, which I raised with the Minister in an Oral Question last month. The arts education community is very pleased with the decision to separate dance from drama at GCSE level so that they do not now count together as a single unit towards the performance tables. However, the GCSE art and design subjects, many of which carry the same code, JA2, need to be looked at as well. The Council for Subject Associations states that it is,

“unreasonable and illogical to assume that the differences between an endorsed Photography GCSE and Fine Art GCSE are of little significance”.

It seems fundamentally unfair that these two subjects, alongside others including textile design, should have the same code when the perhaps more closely related mathematics and statistics have different ones.

The National Society for Education in Art and Design says—the Minister may be particularly interested in this as the evidence that he is seeking—that:

“We have had teachers telling us that some art courses will no longer run in their schools, or that different art courses are put in one option block so that students can only pick one when previously they could pick two”.

It seems entirely logical that because of the enormous influence of performance tables, there will be a tendency for schools quite quickly to seek to mirror the performance criteria themselves to achieve the best outcomes in those tables. I hope that the Minister will review the GCSE codes for art and design subjects, and perhaps agree to meeting with interested parties on this issue.

3.33 pm

Baroness Berridge (Con): My Lords, I, too, thank the Minister for this wide-ranging debate and particularly for its focus on social mobility. I am not an expert in

[BARONESS BERRIDGE]

the field of social mobility; I am a case study. I am so fiercely proud of the state education that I received that my title, The Vale of Catmose, was the name of my state comprehensive school. It is now called Catmose College, and in its 2012 Ofsted inspection it received “outstanding” in all four categories as well as overall. I warned your Lordships—I am fiercely proud.

I am the first generation of my family to go to university, and sometimes I still pinch myself to think that from a great-grandmother in service, to a mother who worked the most punishing shifts in a local factory, to my being on the Conservative Benches in the House of Lords is quite a journey. However, I am sure that I am not alone in becoming more and more grateful as time goes by for all the education that I received. A quick glance around the globe, particularly at girls’ education, should make us all appreciate the level of primary and secondary education available in this country at no cost to the child. Such education is pivotal and is the key foundation stone of all social mobility.

I have to agree with the noble Lord, Lord Sutherland, and the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, that I have some unease myself with the term “social mobility”, as education is important for all human flourishing, and social mobility has somehow come to imply rising up some kind of economic ladder or even a class system. I have appreciated the Government’s focus on vocational education and apprenticeships, as I believe that good education will mean that someone at Eton who wants to be a plumber will be encouraged just as much as a budding brain surgeon in Brixton.

However, education enables children to be socially mobile in this limited sense, and the OECD report in 2010 marked us as the worst among the developed countries. Secondary education is particularly important to social mobility as this is when exposure to the workplace begins, particularly through work experience placements. It is so often a teacher who acts as a talent scout, spotting the gifts of their pupils, opening up horizons and offering them advice. When I began, at 16, to enjoy the more extensive freedom that existed at a sixth-form college, I was advised by a teacher that if I stopped skipping lessons I might get to a land called Oxbridge.

Before global technology brought the world to your smartphone, many rural children needed the world opening up for them. I recently had my nephew Kyle in for a week’s work experience. He lives in deepest rural Derbyshire, and he commented that he had never met so many people from different countries before. None of his friends did anything like as adventurous as coming to London for a week, but I could not help wondering how to ensure that such work experience was opened up more equally to children. Your first work experience placement is often the first rung on the ladder of your CV. As a former lawyer, I was interested to note the recent comments of the Supreme Court judge, the noble and learned Baroness, Lady Hale, about the “startling leap” in the proportion of privately educated and Oxbridge lawyers now entering the profession. She said:

“One of the causes of this, apart from ... the networks that their parents have, is the”,

preponderance,

“of work experience and internships in today’s recruitment criteria”.

So although primary and secondary education is one factor in social mobility, it is not the only one. Law is not alone as a profession in this regard; fashion, the creative industries, the media and of course politics all suffer from this. It is through the Twitter campaign, Intern Aware, and friends who work at the BBC that I have been told that you can no longer get work experience at the BBC through knowing someone who works there; everyone goes through a central system and is selected on merit. Could this be a model to be adopted for all public institutions? I understand that some commercial firms, such as Deloitte, are also adopting that strategy. Would it not be possible for the wonderful Peers’ outreach scheme somehow to connect that to the work experience placements offered in your Lordships’ House? I do not just mean with Peers ourselves, as I have outlined.

Recently I was on a train to Cambridge when I stumbled across two 18 year-olds, who were clearly going for the day, sitting opposite me. Obviously, their parents were on the opposite side of the carriage, being embarrassing. They got into a conversation and one of them happened to mention that she had been here to do work experience. At an appropriate juncture I interjected into the conversation and asked for some feedback about that, and inquired where she had been. She mentioned some department to do with seals that I had never heard of. She had had a wonderful time, which I thought was great. I asked her, “How did you happen upon your placement?”. She replied: “My daddy knows the person who runs the department”. When the taxpayer is paying to keep the lights on and to keep the place running, I wonder whether we should be looking at a more objective system of selection.

Secondary education will also be aided to enhance social mobility with what I consider to be this Government’s most radical and exciting policy: to get rid of the divide, however one wants to term it, between private and public schools. However, I believe that this change and partnership began under the previous Government with the significant change to the Charities Act so that no longer is education presumed to be a charitable benefit. One has to produce some evidence to receive gift aid.

I am pleased to note the comments of the noble Baroness, Lady Tyler, that schools have much to learn from each other. I commend Future First, which was mentioned by the noble Baroness, Lady Massey, which is bringing in something that private schools have been good at: keeping in touch with your alumni. The state system has lost much by not keeping records and not calling on the experience of those who have been through the system, which Future First seeks to introduce.

I grew up in Oakham, a small market town where, in relation to this divide, there is a context to look at. Oakham is dominated by one private school, but has a state comprehensive school. Over the years, when people have asked, “Where did you go to school?”, and I have answered, “Oakham”, they have immediately leapt to the assumption that I went to the private

school. Back when I was being educated, there was complete separation. It was not safe for us to play sport against each other. We went to different bakeries at lunchtime, and we were instructed to use different newsagents. I know that things are changing, but the Minister would do well to look at geographical—

Lord Phillips of Sudbury (LD): I hate to interrupt the noble Baroness, but I cannot resist asking her whether she is aware that Oakham School and Uppingham School were founded by Archdeacon Robert Johnson in the 1580s for poor boys and poor girls.

Baroness Berridge: Yes, I am aware of that. Indeed, when Oakham was a grammar school my father passed the 11-plus to go there. I say that that was when I grew up. I believe the context is changing, but there are sometimes particular geographical issues which matter to children growing up in such small areas. There can be that divide between children at the private school and children at the state school. It perhaps does not matter if you live in London.

Most encouraging for this fiercely proud state-educated Baroness is that it seems that the daughters of the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister will follow in my footsteps.

Will the Minister outline how we are going to sort out the key problem of work experience placements on the “mummy and daddy know” basis? As I have outlined, I confess to my involvement in that system.

3.42 pm

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch (Lab): My Lords, I am grateful to the Minister for tabling this debate today and to all noble Lords who have contributed to what has been a wide-reaching and thoughtful debate. I have to confess to being a little surprised that the Government chose to have a major debate on social mobility because, putting it kindly, I would not have thought that this issue was their strongest suit. After all, the latest evidence shows that, if anything, the education attainment gap is widening.

However, many noble Lords have quite rightly made the point that a proper assessment of the influences on social mobility requires a rather longer term perspective and is rather more challenging than a simple statistical snapshot would imply. This point is echoed by John Goldthorpe, an eminent professor at Nuffield College, Oxford, who has argued that the rate of relative social mobility, which measures the chances of a given person escaping their class origins, has not changed for a century. I am grateful to my noble friend Lord Graham for reminding us of some of the problems that he experienced over that century and which continue to exist today.

Of course, what has happened is that the structure of the labour market has changed, with a rapid growth in white-collar, middle-class employment, which, when combined with a change in women’s employment opportunities, created an upward curve in relative mobility, which unfortunately has now tapered off. It is a challenging issue. In this context, we need to be

realistic about what government can achieve through education policy alone, but this does not mean that we should not be ambitious.

The previous Labour Government were certainly ambitious and, like my noble friend Lady Taylor, I am very proud of the changes we made to tackle the attainment gap, improve standards and raise aspirations. For example, we spearheaded a relentless focus on raising the status and quality of the teaching profession, delivering the best generation of teachers ever. In 2007, there were 42,400 more teachers than there were in 1997. We invested in Teach First, attracting a new generation of education leaders and teachers with a social mission, bringing the brightest and the best into the most challenging classrooms. The pioneering sponsored-academy programme of my noble friend Lord Adonis transformed schools that for decades had let down the most vulnerable. In the period 1999 to 2008, literacy and numeracy improved, and schools with the highest proportion of free school meals saw a 36% improvement in the number of pupils achieving five good GCSEs. We created the London Challenge, which has been widely credited with turning around many of the London schools and creating the narrowest attainment gap in the country. Reflecting on the point made by my noble friend Lady Massey, we created a network of children’s centres and Sure Start centres to address inequality at the very earliest point, from birth through early years.

All these measures, and many others, were aimed at reducing educational inequality, and we are proud of what was achieved. Our success has been confirmed in a recent LSE evaluation of our time in office, although we are, of course, still committed to reflecting on and learning what more we could and should have done and would do in future.

You would have thought that an incoming Secretary of State committed to addressing social mobility would have taken time to look at the research and learn from the evidence, but, as we know, that is not his style. Instead, there was a ceremonial ripping up of most what had gone before, to be replaced with a glossy new set of untested policies in pursuit of greater social mobility. So, how are they doing so far? Well, we know from Alan Milburn’s social mobility commission report of October 2013 that the Government are missing their targets by a long way. For example, he said that the,

“ambition to end child poverty that the previous government set is going to be missed by a considerable margin, possibly by as much as 2 million children in relative poverty”.

On education, his report finds that:

“The most deprived areas still have 30 per cent fewer good schools and get fewer good teachers than the least deprived. Schools in London are improving most but other places are falling behind for disadvantaged students, including parts of Middle England”.

Meanwhile, other statistics show that under this Government nearly a million young people are not in education, employment or training; and the number of people starting an apprenticeship fell in 2012-13 for the first time since 2005-06. This has been compounded by the Government’s decision to scrap the education maintenance allowance, to sideline constantly vocational education and to create a schools-based careers service

[BARONESS JONES OF WHITCHURCH]

which is widely acknowledged not to be fit for purpose. That very much echoes the concerns raised by the noble Lord, Lord Shipley. In terms of access to higher education, a 2012 report shows that young people from the richest fifth of families are still three times more likely to go to university than the poorest fifth.

What are we to make of the Government's flagship policies? Of course, we welcome the additional funding that the pupil premium has delivered, but Ministers should not spend too much time patting themselves on the back. The recent report from Demos shows that the attainment gap widened in 72 out of 152 local authorities last year. In 66 areas, the gap was larger than it was two years earlier, before the pupil premium was introduced. This problem is highlighted by the recent Ofsted report which showed schools using the money inconsistently, often to plug holes in other budgets.

Meanwhile, the Government's obsession with their flagship free schools programme has distracted attention and resources away from the most important thing, a theme which we have heard consistently today: the importance of the quality of teaching. That has led, for example, to West Sussex County Council being forced to put aside £285,000 to ensure that pupils from the failed Discovery free school in Crawley can continue their education back in the state system.

The new education landscape is also leading to greater social segregation, with middle-class parents better equipped to play the game. This includes the financial resource to move house to high-performing catchment areas, to buy additional tutoring or to pay for additional travel. In the words of David Laws, the Education Minister, there is nothing wrong with the sharp-elbowed middle classes dominating the system and pushy parents and those who pay for private education are worth emulating. Well, in contrast to that view, we remain absolutely committed to improving access to good high-quality education for everyone. We will build our policies on evidence, not dogma.

I thank the Minister for his statement on school funding. We will, of course, take time to scrutinise the detail and will want to address the concerns of the Institute for Fiscal Studies that, among the winners and losers, it may be that those in the most deprived areas will lose out disproportionately. We will also want to ensure that it properly addresses the 250,000 extra school places needed as a result of demographic changes, an issue on which the Government have so far shown considerable complacency. We hope to return to that debate at a later point.

Looking forward to a future Labour Government, we recognise that the importance of early-years education would be underlined by expanding free childcare for three and four year-olds to 25 hours a week as part of a wrap-around early years and childcare package. In contrast to the Government's obsession with school structures, we will concentrate on raising the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers have, or are working towards, qualified teacher status. Teachers will have to be revalidated on an ongoing basis and will have new career routes to keep the best teachers in the classroom. We will take steps to repair the morale of teachers, which has fallen so far through the constant

criticism by this Government. Echoing the significant points made by the noble Lord, Lord Baker, we will create the tech bacc, a rigorous and accredited vocational qualification, on a par with academic qualifications, that will command the respect of employers. We will give young people hope again by eliminating long-term youth unemployment by introducing a compulsory job guarantee for young people, combined with a proper expansion of apprenticeships, including to young people leaving school.

As I said at the outset, there is only so much that an education policy can contribute to improving social mobility. Unlike the opening contribution from the Minister, I think that this debate has got to the heart of what needs to be done. Key themes have been repeated time and time again, such as the vital importance of early years provision; the many pathways to success, not just the academic route; the need for better careers advice; the importance of soft skills, of character, resilience, self-confidence and self-belief, and of communication skills; the need for schools to educate rounded and grounded pupils, not just those drilled to excel in exam factories.

I hope that when the Minister responds, he will be able to demonstrate a little more reflection and a little less certainty, taking on board the many wise points that have been made in the debate today and recognising that we all still have a lot to learn about what truly impacts on social mobility, a cause that I know we all want to address. I look forward to hearing his response.

3.53 pm

Lord Nash: My Lords, it has been a privilege to participate in today's debate, and I am grateful to all noble Lords for their valuable and insightful contributions. This has been a fascinating and instructive discussion, which has demonstrated once again the range of experience, knowledge and passion that this Chamber offers. I would like to join the ranks of noble Lords who said that they are of the first generation in their family to go to university. However, my grandfather was the professor of oil engineering at Birmingham University, although he got there via night school while working for years on an oil rig. How likely is that to happen today?

I will attempt to deal with noble Lords' points in order, but so that I can perhaps end on a rather happier note, I will start by addressing some of the points made by the noble Baroness, Lady Jones. I disagree with the noble Baroness that the attainment gap is widening; it has narrowed for pupil premium pupils in primary schools from 17% to 13% under this Government, and is narrowing in secondary schools. I do not wish to say that the Labour Party did not try with its educational reforms, some of which noble Lords will know I am a great fan of. However, between 2000 and 2009 on the OECD tables we fell from eighth to 28th in maths, fourth to 16th in science, and seventh to 27th in literacy, while other countries in eastern Europe and the Far East overtook us. Under this Government we have come off the bottom by a few points in maths and literacy, but we still have a very long way to go. Among our school leavers we now have the lowest level of NEETs for many years.

As far as free schools are concerned, we have closed one and a half of them. The total number of pupils in those one and a half free schools was 200. The closure of those schools is very significant to those pupils and their parents, and we are working closely with the relevant local authorities to ensure that they find alternative places. In the case of Discovery virtually all of them have. However, those children's places represent 0.1% of the total 150,000 free school places we have created to deal with the shortage of places we inherited.

So far as unqualified teachers are concerned, I am delighted that we are having this discussion. It is such a red herring, and if that is the best criticism we are going to get, I am delighted. That shows that we are truly reaching a consensus on the future of our education system. The number of unqualified teachers has fallen under this Government from over 18,000 to just under 15,000. It is not true to say that there are more unqualified teachers in academies and free schools; it is only a couple of per cent, and many of those are drama teachers working part-time, support teachers or teachers on their way to qualifications.

I agree entirely with my noble friend Lord Storey, the noble Baroness, Lady Tyler, and other noble Lords that a person's background should not decide their life chances. My noble friend Lord Storey made a brilliant analysis of early years and primary education based on his extensive experience for many years as a primary head in Liverpool. He identified the importance of early identification and the lack of words that pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds experience. That is why we are putting such an emphasis on early years and primary education. There has been far too much focus on GCSEs, and we all, particularly parents, need to appreciate that it is in primary years that things can go so badly wrong or so right.

I agree entirely with the noble Baroness, Lady Coussins, about languages, particularly about the wider benefits of studying a language. That is why we are making such teaching mandatory at key stage 2. I am grateful for her comments about the increased take-up of languages, particularly for less privileged pupils. I will commit to study in detail the Language Trends survey to which she refers, particularly as regards the point she made about take-up, and to consider further what we can do to improve language take-up. We continue to highlight the importance of recruiting high-quality linguists in teaching through our extensive bursary programme, and of course academies now have the freedom to recruit from a much wider field and can bring in native speakers of a language to enthuse and inspire children's learning, even where they do not hold qualified teacher status. Through the free schools programme we have opened the Bilingual Primary School in Brighton, which delivers the curriculum in both English and Spanish, and the Judith Kerr Primary School in Southwark, where the curriculum is delivered in both English and German.

The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Newcastle spoke eloquently and movingly about the success of the Northumberland Church of England Academy. I agree entirely with him about the importance of links with business, professions, the forces and the wider world. All schools should provide their pupils with a

direct line of sight to the workplace. That was also mentioned by my noble friends Lady Garden and Lord Shipley, and other noble Lords.

All good schools should involve their local businesses and professional communities to give young people a broad experience of the careers open to them, opening doors, as the noble Baroness, Lady Taylor, said. I have been incredibly heartened to see many examples of that developing across the country; for example, Business Class, a programme organised through Business in the Community, brings schools and businesses together. There are now just under 300 partnerships in 59 clusters across the UK, under which pupils gain access to work experience, work placements and careers-focused activities, while businesses have the opportunity to influence the curriculum and skills being taught in schools.

There is also Inspiring the Future, Speakers for Schools, Barclays Life Skills and, in my own school, a huge Raising Aspirations programme involving businesses and charities. I have seen with my own eyes the dramatic effect it can have on pupils who come from incredibly narrow backgrounds to see and mix with people from work. We have two people full-time employed on this programme; I believe that all schools should have at least one person full-time on the programme. The noble Baroness, Lady Jones, took me to the Morpeth School in Tower Hamlets recently, where there is a highly successful "speed dating" career service. Tomorrow, I shall be in Leeds, visiting Make the Grade, another organisation that provides schools with a bespoke programme for employability and skills. The remit of the National Careers Service will be expanded to encourage links with businesses.

The noble Lord, Lord Baker, spoke passionately about the UTC programme, and I pay tribute to his relentless determination in this regard. He mentioned NEETs. Our destination measures will, I hope, result in the NEET percentage for schools becoming an increasingly big driver of parents' choice and school behaviour.

The noble Baroness, Lady Massey, talked about entrenched elitism and the concentration of power in a few hands. It seems odd to some that a party that is sometimes—although it may be rather exaggerated—criticised for being run by a bunch of toffs is so concerned about the future of the most disadvantaged, but we are. Indeed, compared to the home circumstances of many of these young people, we are all toffs, and I know that we all share a concern to make sure that the playing field is levelled. Private school students are 55 times more likely to win a place at Oxbridge and 22 times more likely to go to a top-rank university than students at state schools on free school meals. The life chances of a child are still far too determined by their background, and that is unacceptable.

The noble Baroness mentioned mentoring programmes, of which there are many good examples such as Chance UK, Mosaic and the mayor's mentoring programme in my own school. We have a large mentoring programme and a separate one to mentor those boys and girls in gangs. The noble Baroness asked whether the Government will survey mentoring and support schemes, and I undertake to look at that.

[LORD NASH]

We have discussed PSHE at great length, and I am greatly looking forward to speaking at the PSHE Association's annual conference on 26 June.

My noble friend Lady Garden, and the noble Lord, Lord Northbourne, spoke about the impact that poor parenting can have on a child's life chances. The parenting classes trial known as CANparent is running until spring this year and is delivering high-quality parenting classes benefiting parents from all backgrounds. It aims to test how a market in parenting classes can be established and to remove the stigma from attending such classes, which often puts off young parents in particular. We want all families to be able to access and benefit from parenting classes if they choose, creating a culture of seeking help and strength from parenting classes to be the norm. Parents who attend good parenting classes find that they can be life-changing. I was intrigued by the suggestion from the noble Baroness, Lady Taylor, that books should be put in the baby bags that new parents receive. That is certainly something that I shall look at.

My noble friend Lady Garden talked about schools advertising the number of pupils that go on to apprenticeships, and I certainly hope that our new destination measures will encourage this.

The noble Lord, Lord Northbourne, talked about hope and the very early years of children. He mentioned a number of initiatives. Of course, we are also doing a huge amount of work in our programme on families with multiple problems. The noble Lord also mentioned soft skills in secondary schools; I have sent a message at every opportunity about the importance of this and that all schools should have this right at the forefront of what they do. As my noble friend Lady Perry said, good teachers and academy sponsors get this big time—the importance of confidence and inspiration. I do not know a single successful person who does not have that essential confidence and a positive attitude.

My noble friend Lady Tyler reminded us that character and resilience are other important features of a rounded education that are too often overlooked, and that they can be learnt. I am a great believer in characteristics such as learnt optimism. Schools play an important role in providing character-building activities for their pupils, and we encourage all schools to have those programmes. I shall consider the point that she made about taking more cognisance of these. I am also delighted to hear about her recommendations about teachers being involved in extracurricular activities and that character-building skills should be incorporated in ITT and sharing facilities with private providers.

The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Winchester made some observations about School Direct. In 2013-14, School Direct attracted more applications per place than any other training route, with three applications for every place compared with 1.8 for provider-led provision. It is a struggle to recruit for some of the shortage subjects but this has also been the case for other types of places. All School Direct places are delivered in partnership with an accredited ITT partner and 71% of places have been allocated to schools working with a university provider. The expansion of School Direct has provided opportunities for universities to maintain, or even increase, their ITT market share.

The quality of ITT training is, however, very patchy. We believe that we need to create other training options, and that competition will improve the situation. Those institutions which do provide good-quality ITT should have nothing to fear from competition. Those that do not—and they exist—need to raise their game, but we believe in a mixed economy in teacher training and greater research into the effects of education measures, which is why, for instance, we have funded, with some £100 million, the education endowment fund.

My noble friend Lady Perry made some very kind remarks about the success of the academies programme and paid tribute to the chain of my noble friend Lord Harris. She mentioned that there are now many other successful chains, including Ark, Greenwood Dale, Outwood Grange, REAch2 and Aldridge.

I was delighted to hear the noble Baroness, Lady Taylor, mention that we are moving towards more of a consensus on education. She talked about an overemphasis on structures. I agree that we can talk too much about structures; the key is what happens in the classroom. However, I believe it was Tony Blair who said that you have to free up the structure to get the autonomy for schools to deliver. The noble Baroness mentioned failure. Of course, there are failures in the academy system. We have, in fact, issued 41 pre-warning notices to academies that are failing in their achievement, but 25 of those concern academies approved by the previous Government. I see no point in highlighting that because it is still a very small percentage. Overall, the performance of academies and academy chains far outstrips that of other schools.

The noble Baroness, Lady Taylor, mentioned the 16 to 19 free school we have approved led by Bolton Wanderers Football Club, which will be a continuation of the excellent work it is doing with young people in its community. I was interested to hear first hand about its work when I met the club with the noble Baroness last year.

My noble friend Lord Lingfield spoke about the institute for further education, which he described so eloquently. It is a fantastic way of helping FE institutions celebrate their success, build their reputation and status and gain recognition for what they have achieved in their communities. I look forward to its formal launch later in the year.

My noble friend Lord Addington spoke with his customary eloquence about the problems encountered by children with hidden disabilities such as dyslexia. The Children and Families Bill—which is, as of today, an Act, I am delighted to say—makes it clear that schools and colleges must use their best endeavours to secure support for pupils with special educational needs. We have taken steps to improve teachers' skills in recognising and supporting young people with dyslexia and other types of SEN. We support systemic synthetic phonics, which has been shown to be effective for teaching dyslexic pupils to read and write. We have supported 3,200 teachers to obtain specialist qualifications in dyslexia and, since 2009, the Government, and the previous Government, have funded the training of more than 10,000 new SENCOs. We are also developing specialist resources for initial teacher training and new advanced-level online modules on areas including

dyslexia, autism and speech and language skills. Reasonable adjustments must also be made for examinations and assessments. As a result of my noble friend's powerful intervention during the passage of the Children and Families Bill, we now have this incorporated in the Act. I hope that this will now happen.

The noble Baroness, Lady Uddin, talked powerfully about autism. Transition to adulthood is something that many young people with autism find particularly difficult. They will benefit in particular from the change to a zero to 25 system and the opportunity to keep their education, health and care plan in place as they transfer from school to college. I will look carefully at the other points the noble Baroness made.

My noble friend Lord True made an impressive point about the danger of adults involved in education putting their interests, dogma and prejudices ahead of those of children—something which we are eradicating but which, sadly, still exists in increasingly isolated pockets of failure. I reiterate my support for clusters of secondaries and primary schools coming together in local multiacademy trusts. So far as the role of local authorities is concerned, we are of course involving them extensively in our targeted, basic-needs programme.

The noble Lords, Lord Graham and Lord Sutherland, spoke powerfully about their experiences, and I will look for the statistics that the noble Lord, Lord Graham, is after.

My noble friend Lord Lexden spoke with great knowledge based on his experience of the independent sector, which has a long history of increasing social mobility through bursaries, scholarships and collaboration with the state sector. Indeed, in 2013 Independent Schools Council schools provided more than £300 million in fee discounts for pupils, which benefited almost 40,000 children. This is something that I absolutely applaud and welcome. I know that the independent/state schools partnerships programme has been particularly successful—notably at King's Wimbledon and in Southwark, which have had remarkable improvement in the achievement of the state schools involved. I know from my experience as a trustee of the Eastside Young Leaders Academy in Newham, where we have sent more than 15 children—15 black boys who were right on the edge of exclusion—under full bursaries to schools such as Rugby, Wellington and Eton—how powerful this can be. However, we are not currently looking to initiate an open-access scheme. Our priority is to invest our resources in making sure that all state schools provide an excellent education for their pupils, which, in the end, will be the greatest means of achieving much higher levels of social mobility and ensuring that every child fulfils their potential. However, we wish to encourage ever greater co-operation between the independent and state sectors.

I know that the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, was particularly concerned about discount codes for the arts subjects. I should like to reassure him that we take this very seriously. A recent review of discount codes for dance and drama has led to our decision to separate them, meaning that they will be counted separately in performance tables, as he knows. We are also taking evidence on the decision to discount art and design

GCSE with art and design and photography GCSE. We will review this decision in the light of that evidence, and I would be delighted to meet the noble Earl to discuss that further.

My noble friend Lady Berridge is right about inspiring children to aspire to university and work experience, and make sure that this is not a province of only Daddy and Mummy's friends. I look forward to introducing her to David Johnston, who runs the Social Mobility Foundation, which organises work experience and other connections between state school pupils, business and other outlets.

I am delighted to say that that I sense an emerging consensus across the House and all parties as to the future of our education system, which is so important, bearing in mind that the future of our children and of our country depends on this.

I conclude on the subject of teachers. As the noble Baroness, Lady Greenfield, said, there is no substitute for good teachers. There has never been a more important time in the recent history of our country to be involved in education. We must continue to raise the status of teaching because of the importance of education to our children and our country's future. Teachers are performing the most important job in our country at this time. I thank them most warmly, as I thank all noble Lords who have participated in this excellent debate.

Motion agreed.

Regenerative Medicine: S&T Committee Report

Motion to Take Note

4.13 pm

Moved by Lord Patel

To move that this House takes note of the Report of the Science and Technology Committee on regenerative medicine (1st Report, HL Paper 23).

Lord Patel (CB): My Lords, I invite noble Lords who have just taken part in the education debate to stay, if they want to enrich their education. However, while they make a decision on that, I am pleased to introduce this debate on the Science and Technology Committee's inquiry into regenerative medicine.

Our chairman of the committee and of the inquiry, the noble Lord, Lord Krebs, could not be here but, on behalf of the committee, I thank him for his brilliant chairmanship. I also thank our special adviser, Professor Fiona Watt FRS. The committee was well and expertly advised by her. I also thank our clerk, Mr Chris Atkinson, all the staff of the committee and all its members, some of whom are taking part in this debate. I thank all noble Lords who are taking part, particularly the Minister, the noble Earl, Lord Howe, and the noble Lord, Lord Hunt, on the Opposition Front Bench.

I declare my relevant interests. I am a professor and chancellor of the University of Dundee, a fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences and of the Royal

[LORD PATEL]

Society of Edinburgh, and I have previously chaired various stem cell committees in the United Kingdom.

Regenerative medicine is an umbrella term for the medical specialty of the regeneration of human tissue, organs and cells. It has the potential to treat or cure disease. Possible treatments range from curing neurological disorders to eventually repairing hearts. Our inquiry sought to pinpoint the UK's strengths in regenerative medicine, identify barriers to translation and commercialisation—in the case of commercialisation, primarily dealing with treatments in the healthcare market—and recommend solutions.

The UK has an enviable potential resource in the National Health Service, with access to hundreds of thousands of patients in one system and a strong science base in this field. The Government have also been paying significant attention to developing this field. Together, these factors could combine to benefit patient well-being and the health of the UK economy. Basic science translation and commercialisation in this field are being well supported in other countries. However, there are growing concerns that, despite positive progress so far, the UK could fall behind in this area and miss out on opportunities to translate basic science into commercially viable treatments as the science develops. The opportunity cannot be missed. The UK could and should be a world leader in this field.

It is for that purpose that the committee chose to limit its inquiry to the regulatory framework for the translation of science and commercialisation. The key areas of inquiry were the research base, the application of science, barriers to translation, barriers to commercialisation and international comparison. The call for evidence was issued in July 2012. The committee was informed by a seminar held prior to our inquiry at King's College, and during the inquiry some members of the committee visited the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine in San Francisco, often referred to as CIRRM, for three days of intensive seminars and discussions. CIRRM is an impressive organisation and, in many aspects, is quite special—in its inception, its funding and its delivery and scale—and is likely to deliver regenerative treatments in the near future.

We published our inquiry report and the voluminous evidence in July 2013 in HL Paper 23, and I now turn to the report and its findings and recommendations. The term “regenerative medicine” is used to refer to methods to replace or regenerate human cells, tissues or organs in order to restore or establish normal function. This includes cell therapies, tissue engineering, gene therapy and biomedical engineering, as well as more traditional treatments involving pharmaceuticals, biologics and devices.

Perhaps I may give some examples. Bone marrow transplantation, which is well understood by many, is the original stem cell therapy. Another is the use of pancreatic islet transplantation for certain types of difficult-to-control glycaemia in type 1 diabetes. Another is the use of skin cells to treat burns. Less well known perhaps is the use of gene therapy to treat lipoprotein lipase deficiency and autologous cell therapy to treat cartilage defects in knees. Treatments likely to be

available in the next four or five years are those that support the body's own regeneration and repair mechanisms. Others are treatments using cells, including embryonic stem cells, for certain eye conditions, such as retinitis pigmentosa and age-related macular degeneration, which affects 30% of the population over the age of 60. The hope is that eventually there will be treatments for Parkinson's disease, cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and cures for diseases for which we currently have no treatment.

Through their various publications on regenerative medicine and life science strategy, and funding for research, the Government have recognised the potential of regenerative medicine and life sciences generally to improve both health and the UK economy. This is valued, and our report says that we value the Government's support. The UK has a strong science base, reflected in the number of much-cited publications, multiple academic centres of excellence and the three Nobel laureates of recent times: Sir Martin Evans, who is still working in the field of cell biology, Sir Robert Edwards and Sir John Gurdon.

The UK currently has nearly 40 early-phase clinical trials involving stem cells. There are more than 76 projects funded in basic science and early-phase trials. So far, it is good news. However, when it comes to translation, the theme that permeated our inquiry was that of uncertainty. Those who gave evidence asked for proportionate regulation and a clearer path from bench to bedside. The current system was described as a sort of great frustration. We make recommendations for improvement. Similar comments were made about clinical trials, despite the recognition that the NHS affords the best environment for clinical trials. The Government need to address the issue to make the UK more effective.

The Cell Therapy Catapult reported delays in starting trials, and similar comments were made by others. Furthermore, the delivery of regenerative medicine treatments, particularly involving living cells, produces challenges for manufacture and delivery on a large scale. If the UK is to be competitive and be attractive to companies from outside, both investing in the UK and using UK facilities, the Government need to support and invest in infrastructure development. The committee recognised that setting up the Cell Therapy Catapult has significant potential but to achieve it, alternative funding channels will need to be explored.

We make some suggestions. We make several recommendations for evaluation and pricing of treatments and look to NICE to devise suitable models, including value-based pricing. Covering all the areas, we make 24 recommendations to help ensure that the potential of regenerative medicine is realised. To bring it all together, we asked that an expert working group be set up with an independent chair. On the whole, we welcome the Government's positive response to our report and hope that they will ensure that the recommendations will be taken forward. However, I do have some questions.

What progress has been made to ensure that the regulatory process for clinical trials is simplified? What plans do the Government have to encourage investment in large-scale manufacturing facilities for regenerative medicine products? What action has UKTI taken to

improve the chances of the UK being the location of the development and manufacture of regenerative medicine therapies?

Although the Government did not accept our recommendation of an independent chair for the expert working group, they accepted the establishment of such a group, and we are pleased that Sir Michael Rowlands is to chair it. What terms of reference have been given to Sir Michael's committee, and when is it expected to report?

In conclusion, regenerative medicine has the potential not only to save lives but, with the NHS as a resource, also to support the UK economy. We can be the world's centre for developing regenerative medicine. I commend the report and beg to move.

4.23 pm

The Earl of Selborne (Con): My Lords, the whole House will be grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Patel, who speaks with great authority on the subject and was a fellow member of the committee. He speaks as a very distinguished professor in this area; I speak as a layman, but one who learnt a lot during the course of this inquiry into a fascinating area of very fast-moving technology and science.

This is a highly appropriate subject for a Select Committee report. Where science moves so fast, the regulatory framework will inevitably lag behind and it is a challenge for Administrations to ensure that there is the appropriate regulatory framework and fiscal support for what everyone will recognise has enormous potential. The technology has enormous potential in the longer term to produce new treatments for the plethora of diseases mentioned in paragraph 18 of the report, which lists Parkinson's disease, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. I am sure that many people will wish to add to that list.

In the shorter term, a number of treatments can be seen coming over the horizon or are indeed almost available. One example, in paragraph 15, is a therapy which seeks to reverse the damage caused by a stroke. Given an ageing population—which is common to pretty well every developed economy—given that healthcare as practised at present with the tools available to us is forecast to require ever larger proportions of our economic resources and given the international interest, let alone our own national interest, in novel and innovative treatments that may have great economic and social benefits, there will be enormous rewards to those countries that put in place successful policies to promote these opportunities.

As the noble Lord, Lord Patel, reminded us, we have a strong science base at present and we need alongside it a suitable regulatory framework which gives confidence to patients, investors and, of course, the scientists and those conducting trials. We will need to ensure that public funds can complement funding from other sources, such as charities and commercial interests. We will have to negotiate the so-called valley of death, which is the difficulty, so often experienced in this country, in commercialising research findings. That is being addressed by the Cell Therapy Catapult, about which more anon. We will have to ensure that we make best use of those advantages derived from

the National Health Service. The noble Lord, Lord Patel, reminded us that we have the great advantage of access to much valuable data on a scale not available to some of our competitors.

The Government have identified regenerative medicine as one of their eight great transforming technologies. Other reports, as well as our own, have alerted the Government to the critical importance of identifying barriers to development. The Government's own report of July 2011, *Taking Stock of Regenerative Medicine in the United Kingdom* identified,

“steep technological, regulatory and strategic barriers to realising regenerative medicine's significant potential”.

Our report emphasised the frustration that some scientists and clinicians have experienced negotiating the various regulatory hurdles. The Government response recognised the need for regulatory simplification in the long term and help to get through the existing minefield—perhaps I should call it labyrinth—in the shorter term. The establishment of the Regenerative Medicine Expert Group, tasked with developing a regenerative medicine delivery readiness strategy and action plan, is certainly a positive response to the report and is to be welcomed. However, at the risk of seeming grudging in my praise for the Government's response, I draw attention to the rapidly changing international competition for recognition as a global leader. We refer in our report to the high level of investment in the United States and to the rapid progress in countries such as China and India.

Since we published our report, Japan passed legislation in November last year that revised its pharmaceutical affairs law, with the intention of establishing Japan as a global leader in regenerative medicine while continuing to protect patient safety and confidence. Last month at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Japanese Prime Minister made it clear that this legislation redefines the regulatory framework and gives the opportunity for new therapies to move more rapidly from an early-stage clinical trial towards conditional approval, which enables the product to be brought to market and therefore to obtain reimbursement for the product in an accelerated manner. In the light of such responses from our competitors, it may well prove necessary to look more fundamentally at our own regulatory framework, as indeed we recommended.

On pages 42 and 43 we say that we will revisit the regulatory aspect of the inquiry to ensure that progress has been made. I am absolutely sure that it will be essential to monitor progress, although we all hope that the Regenerative Medicine Expert Group can facilitate simplification without, at least for the present, the need for further legislation.

I want to say a word in support of the catapult centres in general and the Cell Therapy Catapult centre in particular. For years we have complained in this country that we allow others to reap the rewards of commercialising scientific research. The previous Administration are to be congratulated on asking Hermann Hauser to make recommendations on how we should address this long-standing problem. He concluded that what was missing from the United Kingdom's innovation landscape was a network of centres working at the commercialisation stage of

[THE EARL OF SELBORNE]

technology, matching scientific research to industrial needs. His recommendation was that we should follow the model of the Fraunhofer institutes in Germany.

One of the seven new catapult centres is the Cell Therapy Catapult established in 2012 through the Technology Strategy Board and is designed to create a world leading cell therapy industry in the United Kingdom through innovation and collaboration. It is early days and we do not yet know how successful the centre will be—we will not know, probably, for a decade or so—but meanwhile we should allow the centre to build up its dedicated cell therapy teams, bringing together scientists, investors, manufacturing interests, regulatory experts and other interested parties from around the world. We must resist all temptation to interfere or change—it will need a good long period for bedding down—but it must be a highly appropriate subject for a catapult centre.

What is now needed is continuity of funding and support from us all. This catapult centre is exactly what is needed if we are going to emerge in the next decade as a global leader in this exciting sector.

4.31 pm

Lord Turnberg (Lab): My Lords, I am delighted to reiterate the remarks of the noble Lord, Lord Patel, in congratulating the noble Lord, Lord Krebs, on chairing our Select Committee so ably, and on the support of his expert adviser and secretariat. I also commend the noble Lord, Lord Patel, for introducing this topic and for explaining so clearly the enormous potential of regenerative medicine to cure diseases that are hitherto incurable, and for pointing out the considerable benefit we have from our expert scientific base in the UK.

I express my interests as scientific adviser to the Association of Medical Research Charities, many of whose members have strong interests and involvement in regenerative medicine.

It is worth noting that our report was produced last summer after taking evidence for more than a year and that things have moved on since then. It is a rapidly moving field and some things have changed for the better while others have been thrown into starker relief. There have been more advances in the science; clinical applications are being developed; the mood in the investment community, oddly enough, has improved—I am told that there is a greater appetite among venture capitalists to take the risks needed to invest in the field; and there is some hope that we will see some of the recommendations of our report being put into action.

However, I want to focus on only three aspects: the complex regulatory framework; the MHRA and MEA approval processes; and our capacity to manufacture and scale up production.

First, on the regulatory framework, I hope to build on the words of the noble Earl, Lord Selborne, and I know that the noble Lord, Lord Willis, will also take up the cudgels on regulation. Under the regulatory framework, a researcher or a small biotech company wanting to take a discovery forward for further development in a clinical trial or commercialisation will be faced with no fewer than 11 regulatory bodies

that they may have to apply to. This morass of bodies, with a mix of acronyms from the HFEA to the HTA, from GTAC to the MHRA, from the EMA to the HRA—to say nothing of having to jump through the hoops of NICE—is extremely confusing, and not only to the novice. The UK has many more regulators than virtually any other country in the world, and certainly more than the USA, which seems to have one.

Our recommendations focus on the need to take a grip of this complexity and suggest that the Health Research Authority should expand its current role in streamlining the regulatory process. The HRA is doing an admirable job within its limited resources. It is under the expert guidance of Professor Jonathan Montgomery, and in a pilot study that it has already carried out, it has demonstrated that it could do much more. The authority has shown that it could provide a sort of one-stop shop for researchers so that a single application made to the HRA would be fed through a gateway for approval by the authority where it has the competence to do so or distributed to those other bodies that need to give their approval. This would be a remarkable achievement if it could be done and would transform the atmosphere for researchers. However, of course, it requires more funding for the HRA. It would not need vast sums, and could indeed be achieved with a modest investment, while the gains made, both financially and in saving wasted time, would be enormous. My first question for the noble Earl is whether he will examine whether there is some way to find the modest extra money needed. I know that a bid from the authority has gone in to the department, and it would be helpful if he could tell us how far it has got.

I turn now to the processes by which new treatments are assessed by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. Here the timescale is almost always very long, and sometimes it can several years and involve large and expensive phase III trials. However, for treatments such as those using regenerative medicines, stem cells and the like, such a lengthy process is quite inappropriate. This has been recognised in Japan and the USA, where a much more flexible approach has been taken. In Japan, as the noble Earl, Lord Selborne, mentioned, the law has recently been changed so that approval for regenerative medicines can be based on phase II trial evidence alone, without the need for phase III trials. In the USA, the FDA has introduced what is called a breakthrough therapy designation that provides a similar phase II-only requirement. I know that the MHRA recognises the need for something similar here, and it would be extremely helpful if the noble Earl could indicate how far the expert group set up by the MHRA has progressed in its efforts to develop an adaptive licensing system to speed up approval of these types of innovative treatment. The Government are paying much more attention to the need for innovation in healthcare, and certainly those in the field would find the efforts of the MHRA encouraging. It would allow us to keep up with our rivals around the world.

Finally, I come to another concern. Our report described a reluctance among venture capitalists to invest in biotech in general and in regenerative medicine in particular, and I mentioned earlier that the situation here may be changing. The so-called valley of death

between invention and commercialisation may not be as deep as we thought, even though we remain way behind the more adventurous investors in the USA. However, as prospects for investors are now improving and more cell-based therapies appear to be coming on stream, the problem of the lack of manufacturing capacity to take these advances to the market has been shown to be much more obviously rate-limiting than had been thought. We have drawn attention to this problem in several of our recommendations and we have had supportive responses from the Government and others, but much more needs to be done. Our ability to scale up the production of these highly specialised treatments so that they can become available to large numbers of patients is sorely lacking. I feel that the UK Regenerative Medicine Platform, which has been asked to take this on and which could have had all this in hand, has been just a touch complacent. In this light, can the noble Earl tell us how far the Ministerial Industry Strategy Group, which met in November, got with its discussions on manufacturing capacity? What recommendations, if any, emerged as a result of that meeting?

I note that the Cell Therapy Catapult is gathering evidence on capacity, but that alone will not solve the problem if we do not offer some inducement to those who need to build up our manufacturing capacity. It is also the case that the resources available to the catapult are limited and will only go a little way in offering this inducement. Is there any prospect that the Technology Strategy Board will offer more support for this purpose? Will the UKTI Life Science Investment Organisation play a role in helping fill this gap? It will certainly be offering advice and information to potential investors overseas. What practical encouragement will it be able to offer companies that they will be supported if they come here?

The potential for regenerative medicine to transform healthcare in the next few decades is enormous. We must take advantage of the lead we have in basic research and convert it into therapies for patients and economic benefits for the UK. There are encouraging signs, and the Government are clearly aware of the importance of investing in this area, but there is much that remains to be done. In particular, we must make sure that we have a regulatory environment that is efficient and fit for purpose, that we keep up with the competition with a responsive and speedy approval system, and that we are well prepared with the capacity to manufacture to scale these potentially remarkable treatments.

4.41 pm

Lord Willis of Knaresborough (LD): My Lords, as a member of the committee that produced this report, it is a pleasure for me, too, to speak in this debate. I thank the noble Lord, Lord Patel, for the way in which he introduced it and for the very expert advice and guidance he gave to members of the committee throughout the inquiry. It was like having your own personal adviser at your side. In particular, I echo his comments about Professor Fiona Watt, who I thought was an outstanding adviser to the committee. Her standing in the international community gave the report real aplomb when it was produced.

Having sat as chair of the Science and Technology Select Committee in the House of Commons, and now as member of this committee in your Lordships' House, I have to say that, although most of our inquiries are interesting—some more so than others, which I find quite difficult—this one afforded us the opportunity to examine an area of medical science that promises significant breakthroughs in the way in which we treat patients with a wide range of medical conditions, where there are currently no effective treatments or no treatments at all. Faced with that sort of scenario, you can understand the huge hope that regenerative medicine gives to tens of thousands of people around our nation.

Equally, the NHS is faced with a funding crisis that will get worse as each year goes by, as an ageing population with multiple long-term morbidities makes increased demands on a decreasing real-terms budget. The need to introduce disruptive technologies into the NHS to treat patients therefore becomes ever more urgent and there are two drivers for supporting regenerative medicine.

The stark evidence contained in the report showing the increase in the number of people with long-term conditions—diabetes up by 25% in the five years to 2011, chronic kidney failure up by 45% over five years and dementia up by 25%—is really sobering. The escalation of these figures over the next five, 10 and 15 years will put a huge burden on our health service but also on the Exchequer. The King's Fund estimates that by 2070, 20% of the UK's GDP will be spent managing long-term conditions. That is simply not affordable, nor is it acceptable, unless we can introduce some new disruptive technologies to address the situation.

Will regenerative medicine change this landscape? Probably, but not in the short term. Our report makes the point very forcefully that this is not a short-term fix—this is a long journey. Many of the technologies that the noble Lord, Lord Patel, spoke of in his introduction will not come about within five, 10 or 15 years, but could take even longer than that. However, it is important that efforts by our researchers, funders, regulators, manufacturers, government departments and industry have a clear steer. For me, the central theme of this report is certainty—in terms of the regulatory framework and the funding framework and, irrespective of which Government are in power, that we are going in a particular direction and we are going to keep to it.

The report assessed where we are at present, recognised the global competition and suggested ways in which we could move swiftly and effectively to get promising technologies into clinics. Global competition is strong and that is good. We are aware that in Japan, Germany, South Korea and, particularly, the US, there is a recognition that regenerative medicine has huge potential both for domestic use and in terms of its wider economic impact. Research shows that by 2050, 37% of US GDP will be needed for health and healthcare at current rates of growth. That is totally unsustainable, so the emphasis is on finding solutions because the US cannot afford not to, and I think that is the situation in the UK.

[LORD WILLIS OF KNARESBOROUGH]

It was interesting that when we were in California, so great was the reputation of our research base that American researchers—even in CIRM, with \$3 billion over 15 years at its disposal—were looking to UK research groups to add to their expertise. Indeed, our Professor Fiona Watt was revered among the researchers that we met.

To be fair, the Government have played their cards well—as did the previous Government, who recognised that this was an emerging destination. Allocating £180 million to the biomedical catalyst fund, the biomedical research centres and units established at leading universities with an £800 million investment, research councils continuing to fund very basic research, and the establishment of the Regenerative Medicine Platform to address technical and scientific discoveries are all going in the right direction. The UK Stem Cell Bank gives us a unique advantage, as does our NHS database. The establishment of the Cell Therapy Catapult, which we have just heard about, with a vision for global leadership, are all things that the Government rightly deserve credit for.

I suspect that our resources will never match those of our competitors, particularly the US, but it is interesting that other sectors, particularly the charitable sector, are beginning to shift their funding into regenerative medicine. The Association of Medical Research Charities, which I chair and of which the noble Lord, Lord Turnberg, is the science adviser, spends 15% of its R&D budget—remember, we raise £1.3 billion every year—on regenerative medicine research. That was in 2011; it has probably gone up since then. It is not surprising that Research Councils UK, the MS Society, the British Heart Foundation, Fight for Sight, the Alzheimer's Society and, of course, the Wellcome Trust all see regenerative medicine as the real hope for their future as they struggle to find treatments for the most hard-to-reach diseases.

However, if we are to get regenerative medicine treatments into clinics, we have to address the issue of cost. There is, I am sad to say, a somewhat complacent air about the Government's response to our various recommendations about costing novel treatments. This is a not inconsiderable issue; it is the very essence of getting early treatment for patients. It will not be the NHS or the British Government who actually fund putting the treatments into clinics; it will be the private sector, and we have to make it sustainable and attractive in order for private investment to take those things past the valley of death and into phase 3 trials and patients.

That is why the point in our report about looking at value-based pricing is crucial. Yes, we were perhaps naive to say that within one year we would like to have a report on what the Government are doing on value-based pricing, but the principle is right, and I hope that when the Minister responds he will say when we can expect to see a review and whether regenerative medicine technologies will be part of it.

In their response to the report the Government have been partly helpful, but there is a long way to go. The noble Lord, Lord Turnberg, and the noble Earl, Lord Selborne, have said many of the things that I wanted to say, so I shall not repeat them. UK regulation

is rightly prized and valued across the world as being the yardstick by which other countries judge their regulatory frameworks. We are rightly proud of that, but I remain to be convinced that, despite the great efforts which the Government have made to make the regulatory framework less complex, it is fit for purpose.

Let us remember that our regulatory framework has grown rather like Topsy; it has been built in parts to respond to new developments in science and medicine. Regenerative medicine needs a bespoke regulatory framework to drive it through. We cannot go on saying that we have a complicated regulatory system and that somebody will help you with it. I found it quite depressing when representatives from the MHRA came to our committee and said, "Well, it's very complicated science. Therefore, you need very complicated regulation". That does not follow. With complicated science, you have to be able to drive through that science and have essential regulation which is easy to follow, because many companies and research groups that develop these technologies will not be the large pharma companies of yesterday but small groups with relatively small budgets that need an awful lot of hand-holding. To have, as the noble Lord, Lord Turnberg, said, up to 11 regulatory frameworks to go through—and sometimes you have to go back over the hurdle as well—to satisfy Europe as part of the deal means that we have got to help.

Our proposal that there should be a particular group that looks at regulation was turned down; the Government said that they wanted instead a Regenerative Medicine Expert Group. To be fair, one of the three main strands of that will be a work stream on regulation and licensing. I welcome that; it is a reasonable response. Getting Mike Rawlins to chair that is an excellent move. But who will the expert group report to? I understood that the HRA was going to be the authority which looked at all that, yet what we now have is another expert group with another remit in terms of streamlining regulation. When the HRA comes up with a groundbreaking scheme to bring together ethics permissions and local NHS permissions, and it has sat on a desk at the Department of Health since October awaiting an answer when everybody else feels that it is the right way forward, I genuinely feel that we are missing a trick. When the Minister responds, I hope that he will respond to the question that I have asked today. This is an excellent report. I give the Government at least seven out of 10 for their response, but at the bottom of their report, I would always say, "Could do better".

4.53 pm

Baroness Greenfield (CB): I add my voice to those of the other noble Lords in congratulating the noble Lord, Lord Patel, on bringing attention to this timely and important report. He and others have already spoken eloquently on the wider issues surrounding stem cell research, so I shall restrict my comments to my own particular area: diseases of the central nervous system.

While other conditions such as heart disease and cancer are devastating, we all fear in particular the disorders that destroy our brains. The report discusses the wonderful prospect that in the next five years

treatments are likely to be available for stroke and multiple sclerosis. However, only under a section on longer-term possibilities is Parkinson's disease mentioned.

The neurodegenerative diseases of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's target the very essence of what it means to be human: what it means to move freely, to smile, to think, to speak and to have memories—indeed, to be a unique individual. The problem is that, as yet, we do not know why key brain areas in each case embark on the initial cycle of self-destruction or why it occurs only in certain brain regions and not in others. Because we do not currently understand the basic mechanisms, we cannot get to the root of the problem. The best that we can do is to combat the symptoms.

As brain cells die, they release less and less of their essential chemical messengers. Current strategies, therefore, are to offset the dwindling level of those naturally occurring chemicals with drugs, but here the problems are several-fold. First, as with all drugs, the treatment will permeate into areas of the brain and body where it is not needed and hence cause side-effects. For example, with Parkinson's disease, treatment with the drug in current use, L-dopa, will supply the necessary chemical messenger, dopamine, to the area of devastation, but will also raise levels of the same chemical elsewhere in the brain, and this can often result in psychotic side-effects, with disturbing hallucinations. Even when such treatment offers temporary alleviation of the patient's basic condition—or slowing down of the deterioration, as in the case of the anti-Alzheimer's drug Aricept—it has proved hard to convince organisations such as NICE that the costs are worthwhile.

The situation is made even worse when we consider how many more of us are going to need such treatment in the future. Today, nearly a million people suffer from Alzheimer's or Parkinson's or both, and that number is expected to double by 2050. The total cost of caring for one person with dementia can be up to £30,000 per patient per year—plus the additional costs caused by loss of earnings.

Even more sobering, beyond the mere economics, is the human cost. For every person suffering from either Parkinson's or Alzheimer's, let us say there are 10 people who care about that individual. Hence, as the number in the UK reaches almost 2 million by the middle of this century, almost 20 million lives could be affected by those devastating disorders.

So there is a huge and growing need: a need that is currently unmet. Stem cell therapy offers an exciting and realistic alternative. The rationale is completely different from that of conventional treatments. The idea is not to treat the symptoms, but to harness regenerative biological mechanisms so that new cells are created. That would be a real cure. It would not be merely replacing the chemicals that are lost as a result of cell death, but actually replacing the neurons themselves.

Some cases of Parkinson's disease have been successfully treated using human foetal cells; however, such tissue is hard to obtain, and the ideal would be switch to human embryonic stem cells. Those cells are derived from very early embryos, at the stage when the embryo is a microscopic ball just a few days old and consisting of only one to 200 cells. Not only are they immortal, they can produce every type of cell in the

body. By introducing such cells into the appropriate environment within the brain, they will actually become the brain cells that have been lost.

There are, inevitably, potential downsides. As a neuroscientist, I am unable to comment with any authority on the ethical or financial issues, so I will restrict my caveats to technical issues. The first would be immune rejection of the new cells. However, that can be overcome by immunotolerising patients or even by immunosuppression. Such therapies have side-effects, but the risk-benefit ratio compared to that with conventional drugs is greatly shifted in favour of the positive.

A further problem is that stem cells could proliferate out of control in the brain and therefore become a tumour. However, to date, there is no clinical evidence that that has occurred with stem cell therapy and, in any event, it could be circumvented by biochemical chicanery—for example, manipulating stem cells so that they divide at a few degrees hotter than would normally be the case in the living brain.

Another issue is that implanted stem cells may produce excessive amounts of chemical messenger compared to normal levels. In principle, however, once stem cells have repopulated the brain, they should behave like their naturally occurring predecessors and release chemicals within the normal range as and when they are stimulated and interacting in their normal brain environment. In any event, conventional drugs already produce excessive amounts of chemical messenger, but that can be controlled by current treatments.

Finally, we must be careful not to conflate Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases. They are very different conditions and are differentially tractable to stem cell therapy. Parkinson's disease is much more localised in the brain than Alzheimer's, and therefore it will be much easier to locate where the stem cells should be placed. However, there is often a co-pathology—patients presenting with both Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases—so in these cases perhaps the alleviation of the movement symptoms of Parkinson's may help in the patient's quality of life, not least because we know that the better that people can move physically, the more that they can sustain a good blood supply to the brain.

There is now a growing body of evidence that physical exercise can enhance the natural growth of brain cells, a phenomenon known as neurogenesis, as well as the proliferation of blood vessels, therefore bringing more oxygen to the brain, which improves its functioning. There are even some claims that Alzheimer's disease could be less prevalent in those who exercise routinely. So a treatment for patients suffering from both Alzheimer's and Parkinson's that enabled them to move more freely might in the long term be more generally beneficial.

Some might say that introducing the cells into the brain would be problematic, but the brain surgery required is modest. Modern stereotactic surgery is performed under local anaesthetic, with only a small hole made in the skull and a fine needle introduced—a bit like drilling for oil using precise three-dimensional co-ordinates. The area targeted can then be localised.

[BARONESS GREENFIELD]

In summary, we have reason to be confident that, although not without risks or difficulties, stem cell therapy could be a chance to harness the nervous system's natural mechanisms to regenerate itself. In the case of neurodegenerative disorders, though, much more research needs to be done.

I commend the authors of the report for increasing the chances that we will,

“facilitate the translation of scientific knowledge into clinical practice and encourage its commercial exploitation.”.

Still, far more money needs to be devoted to research into the use of stem cells in brain disease, which at present is a poor relation to heart disease and cancer. If these recommendations are implemented, the horizons could be very bright, not just for those with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, who are currently condemned to a highly disabled life and an even bleaker future, but for everyone who cares about them.

5 pm

Baroness Sharp of Guildford (LD): My Lords, as a member of the committee, I thank the noble Lord, Lord Patel, for his excellent introduction to the debate. I repeat the thanks to the noble Lord, Lord Krebs, who cannot be with us today, who was an excellent chairman, and to Professor Fiona Watt, our specialist adviser.

Working on this report took me back to the 1980s when, in my position in the science policy research unit at the University of Sussex, I was an alien social scientist sitting in as a fly on the wall on an experiment in university/industry collaboration called the Protein Engineering Club, which was an attempt to assist the process of carrying science from the laboratory through to industrialisation and commercialisation. Then, as now with regenerative medicine, there were great hopes about what might be achieved. As we were working with proteins and antibodies, we hoped, for example, that regulation would get easier rather than more difficult because we were working with biological entities rather than chemical entities that were alien to the body.

There was also hope that the rise of the venture capital industry in the United States would rapidly spread to the United Kingdom—there was some indication that it was coming—and that this would lead to a wholesale change in the process of coping with, as they put it, the valley of the shadow of death—the process of financing commercialisation—with a wave of new firms that would be well funded, developed and built up, either contracting to or, as in many cases, being bought up by larger firms.

Looking back on it, the work that was done then has been very much the foundation of the current range of biotechnology medicines that are now coming on to the market, but it was 25 to 30 years ago. It has taken a very long time to get many of these medicines on to the market, and indeed some of them are still working their way on to it. The regulatory process, far from getting easier, has if anything become considerably more difficult and complex. The financing is no easier; venture capital waxes and wanes, largely with the macroeconomy. Big pharma itself has waxed and waned.

The sort of work that was being done in the Protein Engineering Club has in many senses provided an underpinning for the technology for the two big British pharmaceutical companies, GlaxoSmithKline and AstraZeneca, in their current success. Nevertheless, there have been many ups and downs in the process.

The lesson that comes through clearly in the report is that there are great hopes for these new medicines but much hype. In paragraph 19, we talk about the possibility of regenerative medicine that may provide treatments for long-term, chronic diseases, such as Parkinson's, cardiovascular disease and diabetes, but we also say:

“Many submissions to the inquiry offered a ‘health warning’, however, that public expectations must be managed as many of these treatments are relatively far from delivery to the wider public”.

As my noble friend Lord Willis said, regenerative medicine is not a short-term fix.

Our report identified the four main challenges to be overcome. Other noble Lords have spoken at some length about some of the issues. One is the science itself. As the noble Earl, Lord Selborne, said, it is moving under our feet. It is a highly innovative area where new ideas are bubbling up and being tested all the time. In no sense is the science stabilised. It is an extremely stimulating environment, but because things do not stand still, it is always a matter of the science moving forward and innovation having to adapt to the new developments that are taking place. The regulatory framework is increasingly complex—perhaps unnecessarily complex, as my noble friend Lord Willis suggested. We were hoping that an expert group could be set up which would manage to find some way to simplify it. Scale up—the shift from the laboratory to larger scale production—is also a considerable problem. There are always completely unforeseen difficulties in such processes. Cells do not behave on a larger scale as they do in a laboratory dish. Finally, there is the business model. It is very important that there should be patient capital. One is looking at 25 years, a whole generation, for such medicines to come on to the market. There has to be capital that is prepared to put its money down and wait for results.

On the whole it seems to me, as it does to others, that the processes the Government have put in place have been appropriate. As my noble friend Lord Willis said, the Government have played their cards well. They have designated regenerative medicine as one of the eight great technologies and have concentrated on the life sciences with the emphasis on investment in the research base, where we have a considerable comparative advantage. In November 2011, they produced their strategy for the life sciences, reinforcing what they call the “life sciences ecosystem”, and, in particular, bringing together R&D in the National Health Service and academic research supported by the research councils and seeking to exploit what other countries see as the UK's unique advantage in having a unified health service as a platform for assessing the effectiveness of treatments.

Building on this, and into this, indeed, is the Technology Strategy Board. Its April 2012 report *A Strategy for UK Regenerative Medicine* dealt with the translation from research into commercialisation and concentrated

in particular on the regulatory framework, manufacturing and industrial collaboration. Alongside the TSB initiatives is the Cell Therapy Catapult, which was originally a technology and innovation centre, to help develop an emerging industry to be a precursor to what could be a £10 billion industry. The catapult is working on a five-year plan pulling academic and industry plans together and ensuring a voice for this new technology within government here and within Europe.

All of this is very positive, except when we come to what is happening in California. The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine—CIRM—has been raising \$3 billion in 30-year bonds. The National Institutes of Health is spending \$1.3 billion on regenerative medicine. In the UK, TSB is spending £16.25 million over the next three years; approximately £5.5 million a year. Catapult has core funding of £70 million over five years—£14 million a year core funding—and is hoping that the third sector will add another £10 million, and industry another £10 million, making somewhere in the region of £35 million a year. However, much of that is still a matter of hope, although both sectors are beginning to put more money into this area. Putting it all together, we are looking at something in the region of £70 million to £100 million a year for this sector, compared with the \$3 billion that the Californians have raised through 30-year bonds.

Our recommendation 13 to the Government was that the ESRC and the Technology Strategy Board should do an evaluation of innovative funding models. The Government must, we said, put their money where their mouth is: we cannot expect the goose to lay golden eggs unless we feed it. The UK public spending and accounting framework is, to my mind, quite unduly risk-averse and focused on the short term in many senses. The centralisation of all capital funding via the Treasury cuts out intermediate authorities as raisers of capital. This compares with the United States where states, such as California, come in and can raise money for innovation. In Germany, the Länder, again, can go the capital market and raise money for innovation and then work in conjunction with the Landesbank. There is no encouragement here by the Government of highly-concentrated funding mechanisms at a regional level. The response of the Government to this recommendation was non-committal at best. They said:

“The TSB and Research Councils will respond to the recommendation to evaluate innovative funding models for late stage clinical development”.

Indeed, the TSB and the research councils welcomed the idea. The Government’s response continued:

“The Government is confident that regenerative medicine has enormous potential which is why we invest in the research base through the Research Councils and support commercialisation through the TSB. We cannot commit to adopting policy recommendations on regenerative medicine that might emerge from an Economic and Social Research Council ... and TSB study ... although we will consider any recommendations of such a study”.

As I say, that is non-committal at best. Unless we are prepared to think big in the way that California does, we shall end up—as we did in some senses with protein engineering—with positive but relatively little gains from this new technology while others grab the really big gains.

5.13 pm

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Lab): My Lords, I very much welcome the debate and I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Patel, on securing it and commend him, the noble Lord, Lord Krebs, and the committee members for the quality of the report itself. I declare my interests as chair of an NHS foundation trust, president of GS1 and consultant and trainer with Cumberlege Connections.

This subject is of considerable interest to me. I am sure that the noble Earl, Lord Howe, will remember our great debate on the order allowing the extension of embryonic stem cell research over 10 years ago, when your Lordships’ House debated the matter for over seven hours. We agreed to it subject to the establishment of a Select Committee. I think that we played our part in laying some of the foundations for the progress that has subsequently been made.

The report itself is a powerful one. It very helpfully points out the many strengths the UK has in regenerative medicine—strengths we always hoped we would be able to take advantage of—but it also points out some of the issues around private investment, regulation, translation and how we are to take forward developments that look particularly promising as far as patient treatments are concerned.

Overall I welcome the Government’s response, which has been positive. However, it leaves four specific questions, which I will put to the noble Earl. They concern: regulation; the funding of research and development; and manufacturing capacity. I will then look a little further down the line towards the role of the National Health Service and the uptake of such new medicines and developments.

Both the noble Lords, Lord Willis and Lord Turnberg, spoke particularly eloquently about the issue of regulations and the problem we may have because of the number of regulatory bodies involved in regulation. The committee itself wanted to give a stronger role to the HRA; that is an important point on which we look forward to a perhaps more considered response from the Government. However, I was particularly interested in the point raised by my noble friend Lord Turnberg about the issue of clinical trials and the approach of the MHRA as compared to regulators in Japan and the US. That is the issue in Japan, for example. My noble friend cited that approval can be based around phase 2 trials and that what is needed is the adoption of what my noble friend called an adaptive licensing system. I am well aware of that issue.

I believe that the MHRA is a very good agency that does very good work. However, I am not yet convinced that it sufficiently recognises the urgency of making changes to its own approach. I understand that this is difficult, and I have no doubt that it has to work within the context of European directives in that area. However, can the noble Earl give us some assurance that the MHRA and the other regulatory bodies recognise that this country has a big stake in regenerative medicine? We cannot allow overbureaucratic regulatory procedures to get in the way of that.

I know that we have debated regulation on many occasions, and I wonder whether the noble Earl might

[LORD HUNT OF KINGS HEATH]

consider taking a more proactive role himself—because I think he has responsibility in this area—to knock heads together between the different regulatory bodies. We have huge potential here; it would be a very great pity to lose it because our regulatory bodies were not able to keep up with the science.

Can the noble Earl respond to the issue of research investment? We will never be able to match the kind of investment that the US makes. However, we have clearly shown that we can produce very good results with investment at UK levels. Hearing the sums—the noble Baroness, Lady Sharp, very helpfully went through them—I think that they are pitiful compared to the kind of sums that need to be invested. I would like to hear some more about how the Government think that they, the medical charities and other sources can increase our effort in this area.

Manufacturing capacity has been raised as an issue. I welcome the Regenerative Medicine Expert Group, but I saw no reference in the work streams to the issue of manufacturing capacity. Can the noble Earl say a little more about how the Government think they ought to be able to encourage more manufacturing capacity in the UK?

Finally, I will ask the noble Earl about uptake by the National Health Service, which again is an issue that we have debated and which will become a big problem in the future. We know that the NHS, wonderful though it is, is very conservative as regards uptake of new medicines and treatments. The reason NICE was created was to encourage the NHS to do better. Yet in a recent report, as regards technology appraisals, which clinical commissioning groups are by law duty-bound to fund, it is clear that the take-up varies 20-fold for some important new technologies in England. We cannot allow the caution of the NHS over the uptake of new medicines to get in the way of making the most of regenerative medicines. I would be interested in the Minister's view of how we can get the NHS to play a much stronger role.

The Regenerative Medicine Expert Group is very much to be welcomed. All of us respect highly Sir Mike Rawlins, who is an excellent choice as chairman, and I note that the group is expected to conclude its work by the end of 2014. It would be very helpful to the House if the Minister could be clear with us that the Government will take the report seriously and, on the back of it, will be prepared to reconsider some of the points that they have made in answer to the excellent report of your Lordships' House.

5.20 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health (Earl Howe) (Con): My Lords, first, I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Patel, on securing this debate and congratulate the Select Committee on Science and Technology, chaired by the noble Lord, Lord Krebs, on its excellent work in highlighting the important issues associated with the development of the regenerative medicine sector in the UK. The Government welcome the committee's report and recommendations and agree that it is very important that the translation and commercialisation of research in this area in the UK is enabled.

As noble Lords recognised, regenerative medicines have enormous potential to treat and cure diseases, including in areas where no cure yet exists, to improve the quality of people's lives and generate significant economic benefits for the UK. The Government remain committed to developing this important field of medicine, which we recognise as one of the UK's eight great technologies. As the noble Lord, Lord Patel, acknowledged, the UK, with its strong science base, research funding and regulatory frameworks, and access to patients provided by the NHS, retains a strong international position to support the successful commercial translation of regenerative medicines. That said, more can be done to support and enhance the development of regenerative medicines in the UK.

I am grateful to the committee for the recommendations that it made on ways in which this area of medical science can be better supported. The actions that the Government are taking are set out in detail in our response to the report, but I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a number of areas of important activity.

The Government are continuing to invest to support translational health research on regenerative medicines, and this remains a high priority. A number of noble Lords, including the noble Lord, Lord Patel, asked for some reassurance that the NHS was ready for regenerative medicine clinical trials. As he knows, the Department of Health's National Institute for Health Research—the NIHR—funds infrastructure in the NHS for translational research in regenerative medicine, in particular, as my noble friend Lord Willis, mentioned, through biomedical research centres and units. These are established in leading NHS and university partnerships to drive progress on innovation and translational research in biomedicine into NHS practice. In 2011, the Government announced £800 million of NIHR funding for five years from April 2012 for 11 biomedical research centres and 20 biomedical research units. As part of this, the NIHR is investing more than £9 million annually in research programmes within its BRCs and BRUs that involve significant cutting-edge translational research in regenerative medicine across a range of disease areas.

This approach is already bearing fruit. For example, scientists at the NIHR biomedical research centre at Guy's and St Thomas's, and King's College London have, for the first time, identified the unique properties of two different types of skin cells, including those responsible for repairing skin wounds. This research could pave the way for new and effective treatments to repair injured skin and reduce the impact of ageing on skin.

In addition to these centres and units, the NIHR funds infrastructure for regenerative medicine studies through its clinical research facilities and the Clinical Research Network. The Government's response to the committee's report highlighted work to implement changes to the organisational structure of the Clinical Research Network to take effect from 1 April, and I can report that these changes are on target.

The noble Baroness, Lady Greenfield, in her highly informative speech, spoke about the development of regenerative medicines to treat neurodegenerative diseases, including dementia. The Government have established

the new National Institute for Health Research Dementia Translational Research Collaboration to pull discoveries from basic science into real benefits for patients. This brings together resources within the NIHR biomedical research centres and units.

As part of the collaboration, the NIHR Queen's Square Dementia Biomedical Research Unit recently held a workshop on the use of stem cells in dementia and other neurological diseases, without—as the noble Baroness emphasised—conflating very distinct conditions. In addition, the NIHR Clinical Research Network will be responsible for delivering clinical research studies across a full breadth of specialties, which will include dementia and neurodegenerative diseases. Studies in regenerative medicine will be supported within the relevant speciality.

Regenerative medicine research has also benefited from the Regenerative Medicine Platform, the Technology Strategy Board and the Biomedical Catalyst, which have made significant investments in this area. Furthermore, noting the committee's observation that there are a large number of different research and development funders, I am pleased to report, particularly to my noble friend Lady Sharp, that a single, interactive research "funding portal" is in development. We anticipate that it will be rolled out this spring. This portal will support researchers across academia and industry to identify and access relevant funding opportunities. As noble Lords have suggested, there should be a clear pathway from development to delivery of regenerative medicines in the NHS. This will aid the growth of this sector so that effective regenerative medicines become readily available and provide benefits to patients.

The healthcare system in the UK has already been delivering regenerative medicines successfully for decades, as shown through stem cell or tissue transplantation and through medicines such as erythropoietin. As the noble Lord, Lord Patel, pointed out, it is important to remember the breadth of the therapies that fall under a regenerative medicine definition, ranging from well established bone marrow transplantation procedures through to those at early-stage research. Each regenerative medicine product that is developed will differ by its mode of action, cost and therapeutic application.

My noble friend Lord Selborne referred to some new therapies appearing over the horizon. For new innovative therapies we are implementing recommendations from the *Innovation, Health and Wealth* report to spread innovation quickly and at scale throughout the NHS to improve outcomes and quality for patients and the NHS. I recognise fully the concern of the noble Lord, Lord Hunt, about the pace of uptake in the NHS of NICE-approved medicines; it is a concern that I share.

NHS England's Commissioning through Evaluation programme provides an opportunity to strengthen the information we have available to inform commissioning policy for procedures or treatments that show significant future promise, but for which the evidence base on clinical and cost-effectiveness is currently insufficient to support routine commissioning. This is particularly important for rarer or smaller-volume treatments, such as some regenerative medicine treatments, where randomised controlled research evidence may be less readily available. We have also asked NICE to develop multiple-technology appraisal guidance on autologous

chondrocyte implantation, a regenerative medicine for repairing symptomatic articular cartilage defects of the knee.

As noble Lords mentioned, in order to develop an NHS pathway for regenerative medicines, we have established a Regenerative Medicine Expert Group, as recommended by the committee, to develop an NHS regenerative medicine delivery readiness strategy and action plan. We are pleased that Professor Sir Michael Rawlins has agreed to chair this group, which is of a multidisciplinary nature with all the key stakeholder groups represented within the membership, including NHS England, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, regulators, industry, researchers, patient representatives, NHS Blood and Transplant, the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service, the Welsh Blood Service and the Cell Therapy Catapult.

The noble Lord, Lord Patel, asked about the group's terms of reference. These can be found on its website, which is located on the Department of Health's website. However, in essence, we have tasked the group with considering all the important elements of the pathway of regenerative medicines into the NHS, including licensing and regulation of a product, evaluation, commissioning and reimbursement, as well as practicalities such as manufacturing and distribution. I can tell the noble Lord that the group has been asked to report to the Secretary of State by the end of this calendar year, and its work is well under way. It will deliver an NHS regenerative medicines delivery-readiness strategy and action plan.

I am sure that the noble Lord, Lord Turnberg, will be glad to know that as well as NHS delivery we have also tasked the Regenerative Medicine Expert Group with looking at the regulatory system for regenerative medicines. My noble friend Lord Selborne referred to this, as did my noble friend Lady Sharp and other noble Lords. The Government recognise, as did the committee, that regulation in this area may act to stifle innovation and thus that we should endeavour to simplify systems to provide support for those developing regenerative medicines to navigate regulatory pathways. With these aims in mind, the main regulatory bodies are working closely with one another to streamline the regulatory system and provide support to help guide applicants with regulatory submissions—for example, the Health Research Authority is undertaking work to streamline research approvals and has a new website to guide researchers. Also, we can look to the joint working of the MHRA and the Human Tissue Authority as a result of the McCracken report recommendation on the regulation of tissue for applications aimed at developing regenerative medicines. I hope that those initiatives will be of particular comfort to my noble friend Lord Willis.

I should like to emphasise to him, to my noble friend Lady Sharp and to the noble Lord, Lord Hunt, that the Government remain committed to streamlining research approvals.

Lord Willis of Knaresborough: Before my noble friend leaves that point, I asked specifically—as did the noble Lord, Lord Turnberg—when a decision will be made on the initiative of the Health Research Authority to bring together and streamline NHS approvals

[LORD WILLIS OF KNARESBOROUGH]
and local ethics approvals. The decision has been awaited since October.

Earl Howe: My noble friend anticipates some news that I was about to convey. He is right: the Health Research Authority is the organisation created to deliver the streamlining of research approvals. It has completed its feasibility study. The results demonstrated that NHS R&D assessments could be integrated with elements of research ethics committee review into a single HRA assessment for the approval of all research in the NHS. Department of Health officials are scrutinising the business case submitted by the HRA as part of standard governance processes, and approval of the case is subject to the proposals demonstrating value for money. Consideration of the business case is well advanced and we would anticipate that this process will conclude shortly.

The noble Lords, Lord Patel, Lord Turnberg and Lord Hunt, asked me about support for manufacturing, in particular as regards large-scale trials. The Cell Therapy Catapult has recently completed its survey of regenerative medicine manufacturing capacity in the UK, and an appraisal of national capability is planned on an annual basis to keep abreast of the evolving needs of the area and to ensure that the UK remains globally competitive. The 2013 survey and analyses that the Cell Therapy Catapult compiled have been shared with stakeholders. The key findings of the survey, including a demand forecast, have been shared at various meetings in the UK, including at the Regenerative Medicine Expert Group, and at meetings of the advanced therapeutic products manufacturing community and will be published shortly. The survey output, along with analysis of demand, was used to make a proposal to BIS for further investment to fill the cell manufacturing gap and support late-stage clinical trials. The investment proposal is currently being assessed.

The noble Lord, Lord Patel, asked what action UKTI has taken to improve the chances of the UK being a location for the development and manufacture of regenerative medicine therapies. UKTI has consulted extensively with UK stakeholders and has developed a new UK regenerative medicine sector proposition, which was launched in December 2013 at the World Stem Cell Summit in San Diego. Training on the materials has been rolled out to a number of its overseas teams, with more training to follow in the coming months.

The noble Lord, Lord Hunt, made some criticism of the MHRA in the context of progress on adaptive licensing. This issue was also raised by the noble Lord, Lord Turnberg. The MHRA has been involved with a discussion group at the European Medicines Agency in developing guidance, case studies and draft calls for expressions of interest to go out this year. One has to remember that work on adaptive licensing must be conducted within the context of European law. We had hoped that this would be issued last year but there has been a delay, as the European Commission has wanted to be satisfied that proposals can be accommodated in the existing regulatory flexibilities. I can tell the noble Lord, Lord Hunt, that we continue to be actively involved in pushing the EMA in bringing this work forward, and I have been personally involved in overseeing that.

Distinct from the concept of adaptive licensing is the early access to medicines scheme. This is designed to enable earlier UK patient access to highly promising medicinal products before they are licensed. This is expected to be announced very soon. It will operate within the current regulatory structure, and is voluntary and non-statutory. The MHRA will provide a scientific opinion on promising new medicines that will treat, diagnose or prevent life-threatening or seriously debilitating conditions without adequate treatment options before the medicines are licensed. Further details will be announced in the near future.

My noble friend Lord Willis asked about NICE's value-assessment process. NICE, in consultation with stakeholders, keeps its methodologies under review to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. Our priority is to make sure that we get the best possible results for all NHS patients with the resources that we have, which means using taxpayers' money responsibly and getting good value for money. We have asked NICE to look at how drugs are assessed so that patients can get the treatments that they need at the best value for the NHS and so that the price that the NHS pays is more closely linked to the value that a medicine brings. NICE will carry out a full public consultation before implementing any changes. I would just add that NICE is a key member of the Regenerative Medicine Expert Group, which will look at and provide recommendations on the evaluation and commissioning of these novel medicines and their adoption in the NHS.

My noble friend Lord Selborne and the noble Lord, Lord Turnberg, referred to developments in Japan. We are aware of the Japanese plans, and the report on the approach is being considered by the expert group. As noble Lords have mentioned, the Japanese Government are exploring ways in which the regulatory process there might be changed to support earlier evaluation of the clinical effectiveness and adoption of regenerative medicines within their health system following evidence of safety. Earlier this year, a Department of Health official, along with Foreign Office officials, attended a conference in Japan where the plans were discussed. The details have yet to be worked out but a watching brief will be maintained with the contacts that were made. A report of the conference has been made available to the expert group for consideration.

The Government look forward to receiving the Regenerative Medicine Expert Group's strategy and action plan. We anticipate that this will provide a platform to help ensure that the UK will be in the lead in realising the exciting medical and commercial potential of these cutting-edge treatments.

Lord Patel: My Lords, I thank the noble Earl for his detailed response and all other noble Lords who have taken part in this debate. It has been a very good debate, which went wider than the inquiry report. I look forward to another debate when the report of the expert working group comes out; we will know then whether progress has been made.

Motion agreed.

House adjourned at 5.41 pm.

Written Statements

Thursday 13 March 2014

Armed Forces' Pay Review Body: Annual Report

Statement

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence (Lord Astor of Hever) (Con): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Philip Hammond) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The 2014 Report of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB) has now been published. I wish to express my thanks to the Chairman and members of the Review Body for their Report.

In line with the Government's 2011 Autumn Statement, which announced that public sector pay awards will average one per cent for each of the two years following the public sector pay freeze, the AFPRB has recommended an increase of one per cent to base Armed Forces salaries for 2014-15. In addition, the AFPRB has recommended a one per cent increase to Compensatory Allowances and Recruitment and Retention Payment categories, except for Mountain Leaders, Parachute Jumping Instructor, Aeromedical and Escort Duty where there is no increase, and the lowest rate for Nursing, which is frozen this year prior to being phased out by April 2016. The AFPRB has also recommended an increase to food and accommodation charges, together with a number of targeted measures, including two additional levels of Longer Separation Allowance.

The AFPRB's recommendations are to be accepted in full and will become effective from 1 April 2014, except where the AFPRB report indicates otherwise.

Copies of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body Report are available in the Vote Office.

Armed Forces: Service Complaints

Statement

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence (Lord Astor of Hever): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Philip Hammond) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

A fair, effective and efficient system for handling complaints is an important part of our delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant, and it has rightly been the focus of considerable public debate. I am grateful to the Defence Select Committee for the close attention which they have given to this subject, and their constructive recommendations. I am particularly indebted to Dr Susan Atkins, the Service Complaints Commissioner (SCC), not only for her work in the context of the current system, but also for her advice and engagement on how we can do better. Many Service complaints are dealt with promptly and successfully. However it is generally recognised that the current system can only

operate effectively across the Armed Forces by devoting a level of resources which is not sustainable in the longer term.

My Rt Hon Friend the then Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans (Mark Francois) informed the Select Committee last year that my Department was engaged in discussions with Dr Atkins on alternative models for handling complaints, and on the reform of the role of the Commissioner. I am pleased to tell the House that this work has produced the outline of a new model for the Service Complaints system which we believe offers important advantages over the system introduced by the Armed Forces Act 2006.

The central feature of the new model is that the Service Complaints Commissioner would, in the future, have the power to consider whether a Service complaint has been handled properly, once it has completed its normal internal stages. This is in contrast to the current arrangements under which the SCC cannot become involved in the handling of an individual complaint, other than to monitor its progress through the system. In the new model, where the Commissioner finds no evidence of maladministration, a complaint would remain closed. However, if the Commissioner considers that there has been maladministration in the handling of a complaint, he or she would make recommendations, formally to the Defence Council, for the complaint to be reopened and reconsidered. The Defence Council would remain responsible for the decisions taken in response to the SCC's recommendations, thus maintaining the authority of the chain of command, but the SCC would be informed of those decisions and the reasons for them.

This aspect of the new model should lead to a higher proportion of complaints being decided more quickly. Complainants will gain a new right to apply to the independent Commissioner, if they believe that the handling of their complaint has been subject to maladministration, instead of having the right to pursue further appeals within the internal complaints process. The Commissioner will, in turn, be able to concentrate his or her attention on the cases of potential maladministration, including those which may have systemic implications.

The Commissioner would also have a new role at an earlier stage of the complaints procedure. Where a decision is made not to allow a complaint to be considered within the Service complaints system, because it is out of time or excluded on other grounds, a Service person could ask the SCC to determine whether that decision was correct. At the same time, the Commissioner will maintain the vital role which Dr Atkins performs today, of offering an alternative route for a Service man or woman, who does not wish to approach the chain of command directly, to have their concerns fed into the system. This remains an important safeguard, especially where allegations of bullying or harassment are involved. Finally, the requirement for an annual report to be laid before Parliament would continue, taking account of the new functions of the SCC.

The proposals I have outlined above represent a significant change to the way that Service Complaints are handled, and in particular to the role of the Commissioner.

As a result, I have decided that this new role would be better reflected in a change in the title of the Commissioner's post to the 'Service Complaints Ombudsman'.

Changes of this nature will require amendment to the Armed Forces Act, and an early opportunity will be sought to introduce the necessary legislation once detailed work, in which the Commissioner will again be engaged, is complete.

In today's Armed Forces, there is a strong commitment to ensuring that complaints from Service personnel are taken seriously and handled fairly. No Service man or woman should lack confidence in seeking redress through the current system. However we can do better, and, in particular, I believe we can resolve complaints more quickly. I believe that the approach I have outlined will strengthen the chain of command, support the interests of complainants, and enhance the contribution of the future Service Complaints Ombudsman.

Building Regulations

Statement

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government (Baroness Stowell of Beeston) (Con): My hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Stephen Williams) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement

New homes need to be high quality, accessible and sustainable. To achieve this, the Government is today setting out a roadmap delivering a radically simplified system for setting standards in the design and construction of new homes by the end of this Parliament. This represents the outcome of a significant and ambitious drive to reduce the regulatory burden on the housing industry, and will save money and time for industry and authorities. The roadmap will involve consolidating essential requirements into a national framework centered on the Building Regulations, reducing substantially the number of technical standards applying to the construction of new homes.

These changes will hugely improve the situation for all involved in this sector, by rationalising and simplifying the many overlapping and confusing standards currently in operation. We are also able to do this whilst improving quality, safeguarding environmental protections, and protections for disabled people. We consulted on the Housing Standards Review proposals in the second half of last year, which set out proposals to rationalise the proliferation of housing related standards, guidance and codes above those required by Building Regulations. The Government is today also publishing the summary analysis of the responses to the 2013 Housing Standards Review consultation.

Taking account of the responses to the consultation, an outcome of the housing and construction red tape challenge, the Government has decided that the most sensible way forward is for any necessary technical standards as far as possible to be consolidated into the Building Regulations and the accompanying Approved Documents, and to make significant progress on this over the rest of this Parliament. A note is being placed

in the Library of the House, setting out how the Government intends to proceed with each of the standards examined in the consultation

The Government recognises that it is not always possible or desirable to require a single national standard for all new development, and that local discretion is in some circumstances sensible. To facilitate this, the consultation proposed the introduction of new powers in the Building Act which would enable different levels of performance where these were necessary to meet certain local circumstances. These requirements would be triggered by conditions set in a Local Plan, subject to the normal plan making process of evidencing need and testing viability. So today I can announce we are introducing measures to ensure that the system includes new flexibility to respond to local circumstances where needed.

There are significant benefits to this arrangement. Building Regulations apply nationally across England and provide a clear and consistent set of requirements for home builders to meet, and for building control bodies to apply. Checking compliance will in the future be undertaken through building control, removing the current maze of compliance regimes and systems and reducing costs not only to developers but to local authorities. The Government will work with local authority building control bodies and Approved Inspectors on putting this approach into practice.

Setting requirements solely in Building Regulations will help to provide the certainty needed to ensure that home builders know what they need to do, and can deliver high quality new homes which meet local community's needs. Implementing this approach will reduce over 100 standards to fewer than 10, and will provide significant cost savings for industry.

The Government will press ahead with the work to consolidate necessary standards into the Regulations during this Parliament. Draft regulations and technical standards will be published in the summer, with necessary statutory regulations and supporting approved documents coming into force at the turn of the year. The Government has also today tabled amendments to the Deregulation Bill currently before the House, to make necessary changes to existing legislation to enable this approach.

The consultation made clear the Government's intention that planning authorities should only use the standards emerging from the review process. The Government will issue a statement later this year when the new standards are published, which will explain how this policy will be implemented.

This means that many of the requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes will be consolidated into Building Regulations, which would require substantial changes to the content of the current Code, as well as a reconsideration of its role. In the light of this, the Government thinks that the current Code will need to be wound down to coincide with the changes incorporating the new standards coming into force. The Government will make further announcements on the transitional arrangements, and the handling of legacy developments being built out to current Code requirements. The Government is also interested in hearing from industry as to the value of elements of the Code being taken forward on a voluntary basis.

City Deals

Statement

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (LD): My right honourable friend the Minister of State, Cabinet Office (Greg Clark) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Following the successful completion of the first wave of City deals in July 2012 with the 'Core Cities', the Government committed to work with a further 20 Cities and their wider areas to negotiate a second wave of City Deals in October 2012.

I can today inform the House that the Government, local businesses, universities and civic leaders from Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire have reached agreement on a City Deal.

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire City Deal is built around a flagship proposal for the UK's first at-scale, low carbon, heat network system. This will support Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire's world famous advanced manufacturing and applied materials sectors and the emerging energy and renewable growth sector.

The City Deal will also provide local and incoming businesses with support to develop the next generation of products and materials; bring employers and education providers together to ensure residents have the skills and training they and local businesses need to drive the economy forward; and prioritise local sites for new and existing business to expand into, along with strengthened local planning and development policies.

Business and civic leaders in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire estimate that the City Deal will generate 45 GWh of heat energy and achieve energy efficiency savings of 49,000 tonnes of CO₂ per annum; make available over 100 hectares of employment land each with its own enabling energy project; deliver 3,900 additional apprenticeships and 1,100 traineeships for young people aged 16-23; provide support and advice to 1,300 businesses. Local authorities and businesses believe that these measures can help create up to 23,000 jobs over the next decade.

EU: Environment Council

Statement

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Lord De Mauley) (Con): My Right Hon Friend the Secretary of State (Owen Paterson) has today made the following statement:

My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Ed Davey) and I represented the UK at the European Environment Council meeting in Brussels on 3 March. Paul Wheelhouse, Minister for Environment and Climate Change in the Scottish Government, and Alun Davies, Minister for Natural Resources and Food in the Welsh Government, also attended.

After adopting the agenda for the meeting, Environment Ministers discussed the framework for climate and energy in the period 2020 to 2030. The UK was joined by numerous Member States, including

Germany and France, in supporting a call for an agreement at the European Council in March. The majority of Member States endorsed a greenhouse gas target of at least 40% with the UK and Sweden calling for a prospective target of 50% in the context of an ambitious agreement. Edward Davey clarified that the UK could support a binding EU renewables target of 27% providing it could never become binding on Member States nor be translated into national targets via EU level action. Several Member States welcomed the Commission's proposal for reform of the Emissions Trading System, with the UK and Denmark calling for reform to be preceded by cancellation of allowances. Some Ministers called for more information and discussion on burden sharing.

Outside of Council, Edward Davey joined the Green Growth Group in co-signing a letter along with twelve other ministers from the Group, including those from France, Germany, Italy and Spain. The statement called for the European Council in March: to agree on the core elements of a climate and energy framework for 2030; to agree a domestic greenhouse gas target of at least 40%; an EU-level renewable energy target of at least 27% (which should not be translated into binding national targets); and asked the Council to consider the use of high quality international carbon credits in the context of increasing climate ambition.

The Council considered a Presidency compromise text on the proposal to allow Member States to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of GMOs in all or part of their territory. Most Member States, including the UK, supported re-opening discussions on the basis of the Presidency's compromise although several noted they would like to see further technical revisions before possible agreement. I stressed that the EU was falling behind the rest of the world in terms of utilising GMOs. I recognised the difficulty for other Member States and wanted to ensure there was legally-sound flexibility for countries or regions to opt-out of cultivating GM crops if they so wished. The Presidency confirmed that a technical discussion of its compromise proposal would now be taken forward.

There was an exchange of views on greening the European Semester. The UK, supported by Lithuania, favoured fostering greater green jobs and resource efficiency but underlined sensitivities around discussing taxation policy in Environment Council. The UK was clear that any decisions on tax should be taken by finance ministers in ECOFIN. Most Member States supported greening the semester including a shift to 'green taxation' and strengthening the role of Environment Ministers. Some advocated greater focus on resource efficiency and the need for indicators and targets. France underlined the costs of inaction while others pointed to the lack of access to finance as a barrier to the uptake of green technology which also had a disproportionate impact on innovative SMEs.

Under other business, the Commission emphasised the urgency of agreeing the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period before the 2015 Conference of the Parties. Edward Davey highlighted that agreeing the amendment to the Monitoring

Mechanism Regulation under the European Parliament's mandate risked making mistakes due to the lack of consideration.

The Commission presented its air quality package and noted that poor air quality was the main cause of early mortality in Europe's urban areas and the economic damage caused through lost workdays and healthcare costs.

The Commission also introduced a communication on tackling illegal wildlife trafficking noting that the trade was a multi-billion Euro business and the EU remained a transit point for wildlife products. The UK provided an update on the recent London Conference including the launch of the Elephant Protection Initiative. On shale gas, the Commission explained their aim to ensure extraction and exploitation would command support and confidence in all stakeholders. The UK, Poland and Romania stressed the current legislative framework was adequate and questioned the implication that the Commission would bring forward legislation in 18 months' time. The Commission said the review clause allowed the Commission to take action if Member States failed to fulfil their promises. A number of Member States supported the establishment of a sub-group to deal with key problems in the review of the large combustion plant Best Available Techniques Reference Document.

Over lunch, ministers discussed the Soil Framework Directive. The UK and a majority of Member States supported the withdrawal of the current text preferring non-binding measures.

EU: Foreign Affairs Council and General Affairs Council

Statement

The Senior Minister of State, Department for Communities and Local Government & Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Warsi) (Con): My right Honourable Friend, the Minister for Europe (Mr David Lidington), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs will attend the Foreign Affairs Council on 17 March, and I will attend the General Affairs Council on 18 March. The Foreign Affairs Council will be chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Baroness Ashton of Upholland, and the General Affairs Council will be chaired by the Greek Presidency. The meetings will be held in Brussels.

Foreign Affairs Council

Introduction – Iran

Baroness Ashton is expected to provide a short update in her introduction to the FAC on the Iran nuclear talks and on her visit to Tehran on 8-10 March. The first round of negotiations between the E3+3 and Iran on the comprehensive solution was on 18-20 February in Vienna, chaired by Baroness Ashton and Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif. The E3+3 and Iran will meet again on 18-20 March.

Ukraine

Ministers will discuss the latest developments in Ukraine. We expect the discussion to focus on the next steps to be taken following the Heads of State and Government meeting held on 6 March. The Prime Minister set out the UK's position in his statement to the House of Commons on Monday 10 March (10 March 2014, Official Report, column 25).

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Ministers will discuss the latest developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), focussing on the EU's response to the recent protests. Ministers will consider how the EU can encourage Bosnian leaders to address the socio-economic grievances of their population, and how best to offer support to BiH to implement the wide range of reforms needed to progress on its EU path. The UK will emphasise the right to peaceful protest, and the importance of BiH's leadership responding rapidly and comprehensively to the population's legitimate demands for change. The UK will underline that we remain committed to working in partnership with BiH's leaders to deliver substantial reform.

Middle East Peace Process

Ministers will discuss the latest developments in the Middle East Peace Process, and the prospects for the Special Privileged Partnership as set out in the FAC Conclusions in December 2013. The UK will encourage EU partners, in particular Baroness Ashton, to emphasise publicly the benefits that could be obtained from the Special Privileged Partnership, supplying more detail on the proposed content of the package, and setting out a positive vision of a shared future with deep cultural, political and economic links.

Syria

The discussion at the Foreign Affairs Council will take place two days after the third anniversary of the uprising. The discussion will focus on the latest developments, including the agreement of the UN Security Council Resolution 2139 on humanitarian access. The UK will focus on the need to reinvigorate the political process, to implement the Resolution, and to increase pressure on the Syrian regime, Russia and Iran to behave constructively.

EU-Africa Summit

Ministers will discuss preparations for the EU-Africa Summit in Brussels on 2-3 April, in particular progress on proposed Summit outcomes. The UK will reiterate our commitment to Africa, and underline the increasing importance of the EU-Africa relationship and welcome the opportunity that the Summit presents to reinforce this.

Energy Diplomacy

Ministers are expected to discuss greater integration of energy security considerations in foreign policy objectives. The UK will note how events in Ukraine highlight the significance of energy issues and the need for an international approach to energy security. The discussion will explore areas in which the EEAS might support and complement action by Member States and international energy organisations.

General Affairs Council

The General Affairs Council (GAC) on 18 March will focus on: the preparation of the 20 and 21 March European Council; and the European Semester. A further possible agenda item is the presentation of a Commission Communication on the Rule of Law Mechanism.

The Preparation of the 20 and 21 March European Council

The GAC will prepare the 20 and 21 March European Council, which the Prime Minister will attend. The March European Council agenda is expected to include: the European Semester; Industrial Policy; the Energy and Climate 2030 Package; and EU-Africa relations including the preparations for the EU-Africa Summit to be held on 2 and 3 April.

Following on from the 6 March Emergency European Council, there may also be further discussion of the EU's response to events in Ukraine.

UK priorities for the European Council are likely to be: securing substantive conclusions on the Climate and Energy 2030 Package; and agreeing firm actions to boost industrial growth, as highlighted in the Prime Minister's speech in Davos.

The European Semester

The GAC will consider the synthesis report on the 2014 Semester exercise. This is a policy discussion and there are no anticipated outputs at this stage. We welcome the focus of the Annual Growth Survey on jobs and growth and emphasise that the Semester should not be diluted by the inclusion of other agendas.

EU: Transport Council

Statement

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Baroness Kramer) (LD): My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Robert Goodwill) has made the following Ministerial Statement:

I will attend the first Transport Council under the Greek Presidency (the Presidency) taking place in Brussels on Friday 14 March.

The Presidency is aiming for a general approach on a proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Agency for railways and repealing Regulation (EC) no 881/2004 (part of the 4th Railway package). This is an important piece of legislation that will serve to further enhance the operation of the Single European Rail Area. The UK's position on the recast Regulation is to ensure that it reflects the agreements reached in the general approach texts on the recast Railway Interoperability and Railway Safety Directives. The European Railway Agency must have the necessary powers to ensure that the framework created by these proposals can operate effectively. All UK interests and objectives are maintained by the Presidency's text. I therefore fully support this proposal and the adoption of a general approach by the Council.

I anticipate that the Council will adopt its position on a proposal for a Council Regulation establishing the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking. The UK welcomes the Shift2Rail proposal as we share the vision of

reducing costs and increasing capacity and reliability through research and innovation. We fully support the close involvement of the rail industry in this new Joint Undertaking and the increased emphasis on the needs of passengers and freight customers.

There will be a policy debate on the Commission Communication entitled "Together towards a competitive and resource-efficient urban mobility". This Communication provides a helpful framework to support and promote competitive and resource-efficient urban mobility at a national and regional level. The key issue is to retain flexibility in this matter, not prescription. Most of the aims and measures are already being delivered in the UK through devolved local measures and national initiatives. It is important, therefore, that this Communication is limited to a non-regulatory framework.

Under Any Other Business, the Presidency will provide information on several legislative proposals. Firstly, a proposal for a Regulation on the establishment of rules and procedures with regard to the introduction of noise-related operating restrictions at Union airports. Secondly, a proposal for a Regulation on Community-fleet capacity policy to promote inland waterway transport. Finally, a proposal for a Directive on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure (Clean power). The French delegation will provide information on the modernised aviation navigation system based on a combined use of GPS and Galileo. The Commission will provide information on the outcome of the EU-ASEAN Aviation Summit held in Singapore on 11-12 February and the Estonian delegation will provide information on state aid provisions for air carriers.

Higher Education: Funding

Statement

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): My Rt Hon Friend the Minister of State for Universities and Science (David Willetts) has today made the following statement.

I am today confirming the student support package for higher education students undertaking a course of study in the academic year beginning September 2015.

Tuition charges and loans

For all new full-time students and eligible continuing full-time students who started their courses on or after 1 September 2012, maximum tuition charges and maximum tuition loans will be maintained in 2015/16 at the £6,000 and £9,000 levels which apply in 2014/15.

For continuing full-time students who started their courses before September 2012, maximum tuition charges and maximum tuition loans will be maintained in 2015/16 at the £3,465 level which applies in 2014/15.

For all new part-time students in 2015/16, and eligible continuing part-time students who started their courses on or after 1 September 2012, maximum tuition charges and maximum tuition loans will also be maintained at the £4,500 and £6,750 levels which apply in 2014/15.

Maintenance Grant

The Government announced in the 2013 Spending Review in June 2013 that the maximum Maintenance Grant for students attending full-time courses in 2015/16

would be maintained at the same levels which apply in 2014/15. This means for new students and eligible continuing students who started their courses on or after 1 September 2012, the maximum grant in 2015/16 will remain at £3,387. For continuing students who started their courses before 1 September 2012, the maximum grant in 2015/16 will remain at £3,110.

Loans for living costs

Eligible students attending full-time courses will be entitled to more overall support for their living costs in 2015/16 than in 2014/15. Maximum loans for living costs for new and continuing full-time students will be increased by forecast inflation for 2015/16, 3.34%.

For new students and eligible continuing students who started attending their courses on or after 1 September 2012, who are living away from home and studying outside London, the maximum loan for living costs will be increased to £5,740. I can confirm that the equivalent loan rates for students living away from home and studying in London will be £8,009; for those living in the parental home during their studies, £4,565; and for those studying overseas as part of their UK course, £6,820.

For eligible full-time students who started attending their courses before 1 September 2012 and are living away from home while studying outside London, the maximum loan for living costs will be increased to £5,167. The equivalent loan rates for students living away from home and studying in London will be £7,230; for those living in the parental home during their studies, £4,005; and for those studying overseas as part of their UK course, £6,151.

Dependants' grants

The Government is committed to supporting students with caring responsibilities. I am therefore announcing today that means tested dependants' grants for full-time students attending their courses will be increased by forecast inflation for 2015/16.

The maximum Adult Dependants' Grant will be increased by 3.34% to £2,757 in 2015/16.

The maximum Childcare Grant payable in 2015/16, which covers 85% of actual childcare costs, will be increased by 3.34% in 2015/16 to £155.24 per week for one child only and to £266.15 per week for two or more children.

The maximum Parents' Learning Allowance payable in 2015/16 will be increased by 3.34% to £1,573.

Part-time grants and loans

For those students who started part-time and full-time distance learning courses before 1 September 2012 and who are continuing their courses in 2015/16, maximum fee and course grants will be maintained at the levels that apply for 2014/15. Maximum fee grants will be maintained at £1,285, depending on the intensity of study of the course. Maximum course grants will be maintained at £280.

Income thresholds

Household income thresholds for grants for tuition and living costs, and loans for living costs, will be maintained at 2014/15 levels for 2015/16.

Disabled Students' Allowances

Lastly today, I can confirm that maximum grants for full-time, part-time and postgraduate students with disabilities will be maintained at 2014/15 levels in 2015/16.

Regulations

I expect to lay Regulations implementing changes to student support for 2015/16 later this year. More details of the 2015/16 student support package will be published by my Department in due course.

Immigration Rules

Statement

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Taylor of Holbeach) (Con): My hon Friend the Minister for Immigration and Security (James Brokenshire) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

My Rt Hon Friend the Home Secretary is today laying before the House a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules as set out below.

The Government is making a package of changes to Points-Based System work routes to improve flexibility for applicants and help to boost economic growth.

This includes expanding the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) category to include leading talent in the digital technology sector, who are endorsed by Tech City UK, as well as making it easier for applicants in this category to apply from overseas, and to count time spent in other immigration categories towards qualifying for settlement.

I am responding to feedback from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) participating in the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) scheme by removing the ring-fencing of places for MBA graduates and the current restrictions on participants' graduation dates. This will make the scheme more flexible and simpler to operate.

In Tier 2, the main work route for those with a skilled job offer, I am improving flexibility for employers and migrants by allowing applications to be granted for up to five years at a time, rather than a maximum of three years at a time as at present. I am also today laying amending regulations which will ensure that changes to Tier 2 requirements are also applied to Croatian nationals.

I am adding Oman, Qatar and United Arab Emirates to the list of countries whose nationals benefit from different documentary requirements and ending the exemption from the genuineness test that applies to nationals on this list when applying for a Tier 4 visa.

I am also making scheduled updates to salary and maintenance fund requirements, as well as a number of other minor changes to Points-Based System categories. The maintenance fund changes will take effect for applications made from 1 July.

I am creating a new category for overseas government sponsored language teachers under the Tier 5 Government Authorised Exchange route. This will enable government sponsored teachers to share knowledge and awareness of foreign languages and cultures in the UK. The first

of these schemes will support a Mandarin teaching scheme designed to foster good cultural relations between the UK and China.

I am making changes to the curtailment provisions in Part 9 of the Immigration Rules (General Grounds for Refusal) to support the Home Office in its work to take robust action against those who attempt to abuse the immigration system and ensure that migrants do not retain leave to which they are no longer entitled. In particular, I will:

incorporate the grounds in section 10(1)(b) and (c) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 in preparation for the changes made by the Immigration Bill

enable leave to be curtailed where a Points-Based System sponsor notifies the Home Office that a migrant's period of study or work is due to end earlier than had been originally planned when leave to enter or remain was granted

make further minor changes to ensure that the wording and the intentions of the rules are clear and consistent.

I am making changes to the visit visa requirement for Bahraini nationals. Bahraini nationals who hold diplomatic and special passports issued by Bahrain when travelling to the UK for the purpose of a general visit will no longer have to obtain a visit visa to travel to the UK.

The Government keeps visa regimes under constant review to ensure that the UK has the right visa requirements set in the right places, aligned to risk. Today I am laying changes to the Immigration Rules to require all Venezuelan nationals to obtain a visa before visiting the UK. UK Visas and Immigration continues to be focussed on delivering an excellent customer service and ensuring that the UK maintains a competitive visa system that can innovate in order to ensure that Britain succeeds in the global race.

In order to comply with the Supreme Court's judgment in *Munir*, we are incorporating into the Immigration Rules discretionary policies for civilian employees of NATO and the Australian Department of Defence, and employees of firms under contract to NATO.

I am making minor changes and clarifications to the Immigration Rules relating to family life. These mainly reflect feedback from caseworkers and legal practitioners on the operation of the rules.

I am also clarifying the knowledge of language and life provisions which apply for settlement applications by partners and children of members of HM Forces.

NHS Pay Review Body and Doctors and Dentists Pay Review Body

Statement

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health (Earl Howe) (Con): My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health (Jeremy Hunt) has made the following written ministerial statement.

I am responding on behalf of my Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister to the 28th Report of the NHS Pay Review Body (NHSPRB) and to the 42nd Report of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB). The reports have been laid before Parliament today (Cm 8831 and Cm 8832). Copies of the reports are available to hon Members from the Vote Office and to noble Lords from the Printed Paper Office.

NHS PAY REVIEW BODY

We thank the NHS Pay Review Body for its 28th report and note its recommendations and observations.

We are clear that in the wake of the public inquiry into Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust, our first priority must be to ensure that the NHS can afford to employ the right number of frontline staff needed to ensure the safe, effective and compassionate care that patients have a right to expect.

The NHSPRB's recommendations for a 1% consolidated rise for all staff, on top of automatic increments, are unaffordable and would risk the quality of patient care. Without a pay rise, incremental pay increases already commit nearly £1 billion every year for all NHS employees and add 2% each year to the NHS pay bill for Agenda for Change staff. The PRB proposals suggest a pay rise that would risk reductions in front line staff that could lead to unsafe patient care. It is not possible to maintain appropriate numbers of front line staff, give a general pay rise of 1% and pay for incremental progression.

The Government is therefore adopting an approach by which all staff will receive at least an additional 1% of their basic pay next year. All staff who are not eligible to receive incremental pay will be given a 1% non-consolidated payment in 2014/15. Other staff will receive an increase of at least 1% through incremental progression.

It is our intention that in 2015/16 the same approach will apply and staff who are not eligible to receive incremental pay will receive a non-consolidated payment of 2% of pay, whilst other staff receive incremental progression. As this will be a two year pay award, the NHSPRB will not be asked to make recommendations on a pay award for Agenda for Change staff in the 2015 pay round.

NHS staff are dedicated and hard working and the Government would prefer all NHS staff to receive a consolidated 1% increase. This would be affordable if incremental progression was frozen for one year in 2015/16. If the NHS Trade Unions were prepared to agree to this then the Government would be prepared to reconsider the position and make a consolidated award as other public sector workforces are receiving.

The Government agrees with NHSPRB's observation that a thorough review is required of the Agenda for Change pay structure, including the operation of incremental scales, so that it might better support the challenges facing the NHS in terms of both patient care and affordability.

We note its offer to look into this, given an appropriate remit and evidence and we will consider whether to ask them to look at contract reform issues in next year's report.

REVIEW BODY ON DOCTORS' AND DENTISTS' REMUNERATION

We thank the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration for its 42nd report, note its recommendations and observations, and:

- in respect of General Medical Practitioners (GMPs), we accept its recommendation for an increase of 1% to general medical practitioners' income after allowing for movement in their expenses, equating to an uplift of 0.28% to the overall value of general medical services contract payments for 2014-15; and

- in respect of General Dental Practitioners (GDPs), we accept its recommendation for an increase of 1% to general dental practitioners' income after allowing for movement in their expenses, but abate the increase in the general dental service contract for GDP staff costs from the recommended 2.5% to 1%. This results in an overall uplift of 1.6% to be applied to gross earnings for independent dental contractors for 2014-15.

In respect of employed doctors and dentists, we are clear that in the wake of the public inquiry into Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust, our first priority must be to ensure that the NHS can afford to employ the right number of frontline staff needed to ensure the safe, effective and compassionate care that patients have a right to expect.

The DDRB's recommendations for a 1% consolidated rise for all staff, on top of automatic increments, are unaffordable and would risk the quality of patient care. Without a pay rise, incremental pay increases already commit nearly £1 billion every year for all NHS employees and add 2% each year to the NHS pay bill for employed doctors and dentists. The DDRB proposals suggest a pay rise that would risk reductions in front line staff that could lead to unsafe patient care. It is not possible to maintain appropriate numbers of front line staff, give a general pay rise of 1% and pay for incremental progression.

The Government is therefore adopting an approach by which all staff will receive at least an additional 1% of their basic pay next year. All staff who are not eligible to receive incremental pay will be given a 1% non-consolidated payment in 2014/15. Other staff will receive an increase of at least 1% through incremental progression.

It is our intention that in 2015/16 the same approach will apply and staff who are not eligible to receive incremental pay will receive a non-consolidated payment of 2% of pay, whilst other staff receive incremental progression. As this will be a two year pay award, the DDRB will not be asked to make recommendations on a pay award for employed doctors and dentists in the 2015 pay round.

NHS staff are dedicated and hard-working and the Government would prefer all NHS staff to receive a consolidated 1% increase. This would be affordable if incremental progression was frozen for one year in 2015/16. If the NHS Trade Unions were prepared to agree to this then the Government would be prepared to reconsider the position and make a consolidated award as other public sector workforces are receiving.

We note that the DDRB would welcome a proactive and systematic approach to considering contractual issues at an appropriate stage of the consultant and doctors in training negotiations and we will consider whether to make this part of their remit for the 2015 pay round.

Passports

Statement

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Taylor of Holbeach) (Con): My hon Friend the Immigration and Security Minister (James Brokenshire) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Her Majesty's Passport Office is committed to delivering better value for money for our customers.

In keeping with this commitment, I am pleased to announce that from 7th April the passport fee for customers applying for a UK passport overseas will be reduced by £45 for adults and £28.50 for children. The new fees are as follows:

Adult 32 page passport £83.00

Child 32 page passport £53.00

Jumbo 48 page passport £91.00 (Child and Adult)

This reduction comes as a result of efficiency savings made over the last three years by bringing back the processing and issuing of overseas passports to the UK, whilst maintaining the highest levels of security and customer service.

This reduction follows the 2012 decrease in fee by £5 for all UK citizens applying within the UK.

Pensions

Statement

The Commercial Secretary to the Treasury (Lord Deighton) (Con): My right honourable friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Danny Alexander) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The UK faces a substantial long term challenge to ensure the public finances remain sustainable and the Government has therefore taken much needed action to address the pressures from an ageing population. This includes a package of reforms to public service pensions including a move to 'career average' schemes, and changes to the Normal Pension Age for public service workers. Reforms to public service pension schemes are forecast to save £430bn by 61-62, while also ensuring that the pensions offered to public service workers remain among the very best available.

The next stage in this programme of reform is to ensure that the costs of the public service schemes are properly measured and remain sustainable in the long term. To achieve this, the Treasury has this week made directions and laid regulations on valuations of public service pension schemes and the employer cost cap, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

These Directions formalise the basis of the full actuarial valuations of the schemes that are currently being carried out to measure scheme costs. This is the first time valuations have been carried out for a number of years and the first time that schemes have been valued simultaneously and according to the same rigorous, principled and transparent approach.

The final results for the NHS, Teachers and Civil Service schemes will be published later in the spring. But it is already clear that these will show the level of contributions paid by employers have not been sufficient to meet the full long term costs of these schemes. If current rates were allowed to continue the shortfall would be nearly £1 billion a year across the teachers, civil service and NHS schemes.

The Government is therefore taking corrective action, and will introduce new higher employer contribution rates for these schemes from 2015. This will ensure that the contributions paid by public service employers reflect the full costs of the schemes, including the costs of the deficits that have arisen since previous valuations.

This will not have any impact on existing pensioners, on member benefits, or on the contributions paid by employees in those schemes. Instead it will ensure that pension costs are properly met by employers and do not fall as an additional cost to the taxpayer.

Actuarial reports published by these three schemes and the Police Pension Scheme (E&W) will confirm the final contribution rates to be paid by each scheme. The remaining public service schemes are expected to complete their valuations later in the year.

Alongside this action to ensure that pension costs are properly accounted for in the short term, the Government is also determined to ensure that cost are controlled in the long term, and that there is a fair balance of risks between scheme members and the taxpayer. Accordingly, as required by the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, the Government will establish employer cost caps in the new public service pension schemes. This will provide backstop protection for the taxpayer, and ensure that the risks associated with pension provision are shared with scheme members. The Treasury directions and regulations provide the framework for the operation of the cost cap mechanism.

The Treasury has published additional documentation on the valuations and the operation of the employer cost cap to provide additional guidance on the Government's policy. It has also published the outcomes of consultation with the Government Actuary. These are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-service-pensions-actuarial-valuations-and-the-employer-cost-cap-mechanism> and I will arrange for copies to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

I am also today publishing directions which set out the requirements for the provision of Benefit Information Statements in the new Public Service Pension Schemes. Under the Public Service Pensions Act all new schemes will be required to issue annual benefit statements to members setting out the pension rights they have accrued. The attached directions set the requirements for these statements. These short directions largely mirror requirements set by DWP for wider pension schemes.

Prison Service Pay Review Body

Statement

The Minister of State, Ministry of Justice (Lord Faulks) (Con): My right honourable friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice (Jeremy Wright): has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

'The thirteenth report of the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) (Cm 8825) has been laid before Parliament today. The report makes recommendations on the pay for Governing Governors and other operational managers, prison officers and related support grades in England and Wales in 2014/15. Copies are available in the Vote Office and the Printed Paper Office.

I am grateful to the Chair and members of the PSPRB for their hard work in producing these recommendations.

The recommendations for 2014/15 will be implemented in full. The cost of the award will be met from within the delegated budget allocation for the National Offender Management Service and will progress important pay reforms previously endorsed by HM Treasury and the PSPRB'.

Review Body on Senior Salaries

Statement

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord Hill of Oareford) (Con): My Rt Hon. friend the Prime Minister has made the following statement to the House of Commons:

The 36th report of the Review Body on Senior Salaries (SSRB) is being published today. This makes recommendations about the pay of the Senior Civil Service (SCS), Senior Military Officers, the Judiciary, Very Senior NHS Managers and Police and Crime Commissioners. Copies have been placed in the Vote Office, the Printed Paper Office and the Libraries of both Houses. I am grateful to the chairman and members of the review body for their work on this year's report.

Whilst we are mindful of the need to ensure that we are able to recruit, retain and motivate staff with the right skills and experience, it is important that senior public servants continue to show leadership in the exercise of pay restraint.

Senior Civil Service

The Government has accepted the Pay Review Bodies (PRB) recommendations to introduce a new reward principle and to take a more mandatory approach towards exit interviews which will provide valuable information to inform reward and wider workforce strategy. The Government has also accepted the recommendations on raising minimum salaries for SCS Pay Bands 1, 2 and 3 which will reduce overlaps between delegated grades and SCS1 and across SCS pay bands.

The Government has not accepted the recommendation to give SCS a uniform pay increase to all staff (except the bottom 10% of performers) and the recommendation to restore the previous caps on the size of individual

non-consolidated performance awards. These recommendations do not give departments the flexibility they require to tailor reward arrangements that meet their own business needs.

This package of proposals for 2014/15 strikes the right balance between necessary pay restraint and the need to recruit and retain people of the right calibre. It gives departments flexibility to target pay increases within the 1o/o average award, enable them to reward outstanding performance and help them to recruit and retain people in business critical roles.

Ministers will consider the PRB's recommendations for raising the minima of the Permanent Secretary pay tiers taking account of the views of the Permanent Secretary Remuneration Committee as part of its consideration of the 2014/15 pay award for Permanent Secretaries.

Senior Military Officers

The Government has accepted the recommendation of a 1% increase to base military salaries for all 2, 3 and 4-Star officers with effect from 1 April 2014.

The Government has accepted the recommendation that there is no change to current pay arrangements for Medical and Dental Officers.

The Government has accepted the recommendation that for future pay rounds the MOD further develops its database on Army officers with the potential to serve in the senior ranks and expands it to cover each of the services.

Judiciary

The Government has accepted the Review Body's recommendation that the salaries of the judiciary should be increased by 1 per cent. Due to the continuing fiscal challenge and broader public sector pay policy it has not been appropriate to respond to the SSRB's latest recommendations about the major review. The Government notes the proposals and while it will not be able to respond at this time, the proposals will be considered in partnership with the judiciary as we develop a broader judicial strategy.

Very Senior NHS Managers

The SSRB has recommended that the pay of very senior managers be increased by 1%. The Government is not able to accept this recommendation. We believe that as system leaders, very senior managers must set an example of pay restraint and also that their pay should be subject to greater restraint than that of staff delivering front-line NHS services. In the view of the Government, this can be achieved only by a zero pay award in 2014/15.

I am also grateful to the SSRB for their other observations on the pay system for very senior managers and in particular welcome their support for the review of the VSM pay framework the Department of Health will undertake in 2014 in partnership with its arms-length bodies.

Police and Crime Commissioners

The Government has accepted the recommendation that the rates of pay for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) should remain unchanged for 2014/15.

The Government has not accepted the recommendation that the Home Office should review the rules and guidance relating to PCC expenses. However, we will continue to work with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners to ensure PCC expense arrangements are clear.

Other Review Body Reports for 2013-14

Separate statements from the Secretaries of State for Justice, Health and Defence will also be laid today on the reports of the Prison Service Pay Review Body, the Doctors' and Dentists' Review Body, the NHS Pay Review Body and the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body in respect of pay for the relevant workforces for 2014-15. The Government's response to those reports is consistent with the need for senior public servants to show leadership in the exercise of pay restraint.

Sport: FIFA World Cup 2014

Statement

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (Lord Taylor of Holbeach) (Con): My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Theresa May) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Today I am publishing a consultation on whether to make a national order to relax licensing hours during the FIFA World Cup in June and July 2014 or whether to leave this as a local decision using the existing temporary event notice system. Any relaxation of licensing hours nationally during the FIFA World Cup would relate to the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises and the provision of late night refreshment in licensed premises at specified dates and times only.

Section 172 of the Licensing Act 2003 allows the Secretary of State to make an order relaxing opening hours for licensed premises to mark occasions of "exceptional international, national or local significance". A "licensing hours order" can be used to relax licensing hours in licensed premises (any premises authorised by a premises licence or club premises certificate to carry on licensable activities) during a period of up to four days. An order may apply to all licensed premises in England and Wales, or only to premises in one or more specified areas. It is also possible to set different licensing hours on different days during the relaxation period.

The Government is mindful of the need to strike a balance between the risks that late night drinking can lead to increased crime and disorder and public nuisance and reducing the burden on those wishing to celebrate the FIFA World Cup. The consultation is therefore considering a number of issues, including the principle of relaxing licensing hours nationally during the World Cup, the dates and geographical extent that any licensing hours order might cover.

A copy of the consultation document will be placed in the House Library.

Sri Lanka *Statement*

The Senior Minister of State, Department for Communities and Local Government & Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Warsi) (Con): My right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (William Hague), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

During the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Sri Lanka last year, the Prime Minister called on the Sri Lankan government to launch a credible domestic process to ensure accountability for alleged violations and abuses of international humanitarian and human rights law on both sides during the conflict. The Prime Minister said that if the Sri Lankan government did not take this step, we would use our position on the UN Human Rights Council to seek an internal investigation.

In the intervening months, we have pressed the Sri Lankan government to set up a domestic process to investigate these allegations and ensure accountability. However, no credible domestic accountability processes have been set up to date in Sri Lanka. As a result, the time has now come for international action on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka.

The UK is therefore working in support of a strong resolution which calls for an international investigation, which will be voted on by the end of this month at the UN Human Rights Council.

A draft resolution was jointly tabled at the UN HRC by the UK, US, Mauritius, Macedonia and Montenegro, on Monday 3 March. The draft resolution calls for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to lead the international investigation, and to report back by March 2015. Further discussions on the text will take place this month.

The adoption of the resolution is not a foregone conclusion. Ahead of the vote, the Prime Minister and I, and other Foreign & Commonwealth Office Ministers, have been in contact with a wide range of UN HRC member states to encourage them to support a strong resolution that calls for an international investigation. In doing so, we have drawn attention to the assessment of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights who points to the need for this investigation, as progress on accountability in Sri Lanka has been, in her words, "limited and piecemeal". The Commissioner has also highlighted concerns on other human rights issues, including the undermining of independent institutions such as the judiciary in Sri Lanka, a "significant" surge in attacks on religious minorities and impunity for those committing serious human rights abuses. In the remaining days before the vote we will continue to urge UN HRC members to support this action, and maintain our close contact with NGOs and civil society.

We welcome the offer of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to assist in an international investigation, which would be a significant step forward in ensuring that the Sri Lankan people will know the truth behind events during the conflict.

We are confident that the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, together with Special Procedures, can provide a full and comprehensive investigation.

It is important to recognise that, as a country and a people, Sri Lanka has enormous potential, with the opportunity to become a strong and prosperous nation, if the Sri Lankan government addresses these vital issues. The UK has previously welcomed progress in Sri Lanka in areas including demining (on which the Prime Minister last year announced a further £2.1 million of UK funding), reconstruction of former conflict affected areas and the reintegration of child soldiers. Such progress should not be overlooked.

But it is also important that this progress is matched by substantive progress on reconciliation, human rights and accountability. It is clear that Sri Lanka still has a long way to go in this respect, in order to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation. Accountability plays an important part in the reconciliation process, and must not be ignored. This is intended to be a resolution which will help to address the legitimate concerns of all communities.

Vehicle Registration and Licensing: Northern Ireland

Statement

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Baroness Kramer) (LD): My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Stephen Hammond) has made the following Ministerial Statement:

Motorists in Northern Ireland have not had access to the same range and level of vehicle registration and licensing services as their counterparts in the rest of the UK. In previous statements we have announced the Department's intention to address this issue. This led to a consultation on the future of vehicle registration and licensing services in Northern Ireland being carried out between July and September 2013.

I am today announcing that following a review of the responses to the consultation, I have decided in consultation with my Ministerial colleagues that the full range of vehicle registration and licensing services will be available to motorists in Northern Ireland from July 2014. This will entail the centralisation of transactions at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in Swansea. The changes will for the first time allow motorists in Northern Ireland to take advantage of automated vehicle licensing, either online or by telephone. Northern Ireland motorists will also have access to additional face-to-face services at around 175 Post Office branches. The changes will also ensure that Northern Ireland motorists can immediately access new services, including direct debits for vehicle excise duty and enhanced online services, which will be introduced later this year. As well as improving services to Northern Ireland motorists, the changes will save £12m every year.

These changes mean that the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) will no longer deliver vehicle registration and licensing services to Northern Ireland motorists.

We recognise the potential impact of this change. We have considered carefully the responses we received as a result of consultation and this proposal includes additional support both for customers and for staff. The DVA's local offices will now remain open to support vehicle registration and licensing services until the end of 2014 while the new services bed in. The DVA's office in Coleraine will provide a similar service. While I recognise that the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland has said that they will try to avoid redundancies and where these are unavoidable, to aim to minimise the amount of compulsory redundancies as a result of this decision, my Department will work with officials there to support any staff who need to learn new skills to secure alternative employment.

I am publishing a package of documents to accompany this statement which assess the impacts of the changes being made and summarise the responses to the consultation. These documents provide more detail of the future services that will be available to Northern Ireland motorists and will be published on GOV.UK and in the Libraries of both Houses.

I am committed to improving the services motorists in Northern Ireland receive, and supporting customers and staff through these changes. The DVLA will work with customers, stakeholders and staff to support the transition to the new service channels. Finally, I would like to place on record my thanks to DVA staff for their hard work in delivering vehicle registration and licensing services to Northern Ireland motorists over the years.

Written Answers

Thursday 13 March 2014

Abortion

Questions

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Earl Howe on 26 February (WA 259), whether they will now answer question HL 5467. [HL5652]

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Earl Howe on 26 February (WA 259), whether representations have been made to the British Pregnancy Advisory Service regarding the accuracy of the information they provided on the subject of gender selective abortion. [HL5654]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health (Earl Howe) (Con): Abortion on the grounds of gender alone is illegal. The 1967 Abortion Act states that two practitioners have to be "of the opinion, formed in good faith" that the woman has grounds for an abortion according to the criteria set out in that Act.

The Department has made this position clear to all providers, including the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, and will do so again in the forthcoming further guidance.

Armed Forces: Sexual Abuse

Question

Asked by **Lord Lester of Herne Hill**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take to ensure that allegations of sexual abuse in the army are properly investigated to ensure compliance with Articles 3 and 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights. [HL5755]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence (Lord Astor of Hever) (Con): The Armed Forces Act (2006) requires that all allegations of service offences, including those with a sexual element, are appropriately investigated.

Where an allegation is made or an incident comes to light, a Commanding Officer, at the outset, must consider whether they are under a statutory duty to ensure that the Service police are made aware of the matter. If a Commanding Officer becomes aware of an allegation or circumstances which would indicate to a reasonable person that an offence listed in Schedule 2 to the Act, which covers nearly all sexual offences, has or may have been committed by a person under his command, the Commanding Officer must ensure that the Service police are made aware as soon as reasonably practicable.

There are four sexual offences (sexual assault, exposure, voyeurism or sexual activity in a public lavatory) which are not listed in Schedule 2. As to these, a Commanding Officer is under a duty under section 116 of the

Armed Forces Act to ensure that allegation or evidence is investigated appropriately. Guidance to Commanding Officers is also provided in the Manual of Service Law that, in respect of the four offences, the Commanding Officer should take legal advice to assist him in making the most appropriate decision on who should investigate. There is now an explicit presumption that the Service police should normally be involved in those cases. Moreover, Commanding Officers have been directed that they must take legal advice in respect of any allegations of sexual misconduct.

Investigations by the Service police will comply with the relevant provisions of the Armed Forces Act 2006, subordinate legislation under the Act and other applicable legislation, such as the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (Application to the Armed Forces) Order 2009.

Benefits

Question

Asked by **Lord German**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the cost to the Exchequer of eligible claimants exporting unemployment benefits from the United Kingdom to other European Economic Area (EEA) countries; and of the amount of equivalent benefits imported into the country from the EEA when people come to the United Kingdom to look for work. [HL5839]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions (Lord Freud) (Con): Only contributions based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) is exportable. The Department collects information on the numbers of claimants exporting contributory JSA to European Economic Area (EEA) countries but the actual costs are not recorded separately. Those people exporting their contribution-based unemployment benefit must have made their claim in the UK before leaving and the cost to the Exchequer for the maximum three months they can export their benefit would be the same as if they had remained on the benefit in the UK. In the UK they would be able to claim contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance for up to six months and may be entitled to claim other benefits, such as Housing Benefit, which are not exportable to the EEA.

The Department does not record the amount of the equivalent benefit imported as that is paid by the exporting country directly to the claimant.

Businesses: Opt-out Class Actions

Questions

Asked by **Lord Ashcroft**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to the impact that introducing opt-out class actions in the United Kingdom will have on businesses, investment and the economic recovery. [HL5666]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Viscount Younger of Leckie) (Con): The Government has undertaken a full impact assessment when developing the private actions policy. The impact assessment¹ concluded the reforms to the private actions regime will benefit the UK economy by more than £800 million over ten years. Additionally, a strong private actions regime acts as an effective deterrent for breaches of competition law thereby benefitting compliant businesses.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69124/13-502-private-actions-in-competition-law-a-consultation-on-options-for-reform-final-impact.pdf

Asked by Lord Ashcroft

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they intend to facilitate class action litigation by introducing an opt-out mechanism for competition claims.

[HL5667]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: A collective action regime has existed in competition law in the UK since 2002, but it is not delivering redress to consumers. In the twelve years since the regime was introduced, there has been only one case in which fewer than 0.1% people eligible signed up. In addition, the evidence submitted to the Government's consultation Private actions in competition law: a consultation on options for reform highlighted that consumers and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) have difficulty in obtaining redress for breaches of competition law. The Consumer Rights Bill reforms the private actions regime. The introduction of an opt-out regime is one of a range of measures aimed at facilitating redress to consumers and SMEs, with safeguards to ensure cases are targeted on those genuinely harmed by anti-competitive practices.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/31528/12-742-private-actions-in-competition-law-consultation.pdf

Asked by Lord Ashcroft

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to clarify whether the prohibition on the use of damages-based agreements in opt-out collective proceedings in Schedule 7 to the Draft Consumer Rights Bill will cover third-party litigation funding agreements.

[HL5668]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Consumer Rights Bill makes clear that any damages-based agreements are not permitted in opt-out collective proceedings. This would include any pre-agreed arrangements whereby third parties would be entitled to an agreed percentage of the damages.

Civil Service: Senior Posts

Question

Asked by Lord Willis of Knaresborough

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many senior civil servants in the Ministry of Defence are female; and how many were educated privately.

[HL5795]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence (Lord Astor of Hever) (Con): As at 1 March 2014, there were 60 female senior civil servants (SCS) in the Ministry of Defence. This figure includes those employed in Trading Funds and on loan from other Government Departments (OGDs), but excludes those on loan to OGDs, and those on Special Unpaid Leave or Maternity Leave.

Details of members of the SCS who are privately educated are not held.

Companies: Malpractice and Negligence

Question

Asked by Lord Lea of Crondall

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to hold corporate executives personally liable for the payment of a proportion of fines levied against their organisation for corporate malpractice or negligence.

[HL5682]

The Minister of State, Ministry of Justice (Lord Faulks) (Con): The Government has no plans to hold corporate executives personally liable for the payment of fines levied against their organisation for corporate malpractice or negligence.

Competition and Markets Authority

Question

Asked by Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they will ensure that the incoming Competition and Markets Authority can take issues of sustainability into account when looking into competition issues.

[HL5691]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Viscount Younger of Leckie) (Con): In October 2013 the Government published its strategic steer to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). In the Steer, the Government stated that:

“The Government considers that the central task of the CMA will be to ensure that the forces of competition are fully harnessed to support the return to strong and sustained growth.”

The Performance Management Framework document of January 2014, which the Government agreed with the CMA, sets out how it is expected that the CMA will meet its objectives. The framework can be viewed at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/274146/bis-14-559-competition-and-markets-authority-performance-management-framework.pdf

Copyright

Question

Asked by *Lord Clement-Jones*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they consider that the proposed exceptions to copyright can be introduced through the medium of section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972; and whether that assessment is based on independent legal advice. [HL5740]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Viscount Younger of Leckie) (Con): Having carried out a thorough legal assessment, the Government is of the view that the proposed exceptions to copyright can be introduced via Section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972.

EU: Taxation

Question

Asked by *Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much they have spent to date on their legal cases against the European Commission in respect of (1) the Financial Transaction Tax, and (2) the bankers' bonus cap. [HL5851]

The Commercial Secretary to the Treasury (Lord Deighton) (Con): The Government launched legal challenges to the decision authorising enhanced co-operation in the area of a Financial Transaction Tax (against the European Council) in April 2013, and to the bonus cap and related provisions in the EU capital requirements directive 4 and capital requirements regulation (against the European Parliament and Council) in September 2013. These cases are ongoing and figures for the costs of external legal advice will be made available once they have concluded.

Executive Agencies

Question

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees were recruited by Companies House in 2013; and, of that number, how many were graduates. [HL5716]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Companies House recruited eight employees in 2013 and three of these were graduates.

Exports

Question

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills or its predecessor Department has granted export licences to Chemring Defence allowing it to export its products to Sudan since 2005. [HL5702]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Viscount Younger of Leckie) (Con): Two Licences have been issued to Chemring EOD Limited since 2005. The licences issued were both Standard Individual Export Licences and the goods details are as follows:

- 1) licence granted in September 2008 for: military firing sets;
- 2) licence granted in November 2009 for: components for military firing sets; military firing sets.

Both licences were granted for demining operations by a humanitarian organisation.

FTSE 100 and FTSE 250: Directors

Question

Asked by *Lord Oakeshott of Seagrove Bay*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the numbers and percentages of female and male executive directors in (1) FTSE-100, and (2) FTSE-250 companies for each of the years for which statistics are available from 1997 until the present. [HL5739]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Viscount Younger of Leckie) (Con): We have the statistics for the following years.

FTSE 100

<i>Year</i>	<i>No of women executive directors</i>	<i>Percentage of total executive directors</i>	<i>No of companies with no female executive</i>
2013	18	5.8%	83
2012	20	6.6%	83
2011	(02/11/11) 16	6.1%	84
2010	18	5.5%	84
2009	17	5.2%	85
2008	17	4.8%	84
2007	13	3.6%	89
2006	15	3.8%	87
2005	14	3.4%	89
2004	17	4.1%	87
2003	17	3.7%	87
2002	15	3.0%	88

FTSE 250

<i>Year</i>	<i>No of women executive directors</i>	<i>Percentage of total executive directors</i>	<i>No of companies with no female executive</i>
2007	29	3.9%	231
2008	27	3.9%	227
2009	25	3.8%	227
2010	27	4.2%	226
2011	(02/11/11) 27	4.4%	226

The figures were obtained from Cranfield School of Management.

Government Departments: Staff

Question

Asked by **Lord Mendelsohn**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many staff are currently employed for more than 50 per cent of their working week to support the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in his role as Accounting Officer; and what are their job titles. [HL5804]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Viscount Younger of Leckie) (Con): The Permanent Secretary of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in his role as Accounting Officer, is supported by a Senior Management Team of eight Director Generals, who each lead a management group. Their individual titles include:

- Director General, Economics and Markets
- Director General, Business and Local Growth
- Director General, People and Strategy
- Director General, Finance and Commercial
- Chief Executive, Shareholder Executive
- Director General, Legal, Enterprise and Skills
- Director General, Knowledge and Innovation
- Acting Chief Executive, UK Trade & Investment

The Director General of F&C, who is most closely involved in supporting the Permanent Secretary in his role as Accounting Officer, is supported by approximately 129* finance staff who spend some of their working week in this area.

*Source : Admin Consolidation & Analysis System

House of Lords: Official Report

Question

Asked by **Lord Marlesford**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Directors of the Middle East Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office first saw the Official Report of the House of Lords debate on developments in Syria and the Middle East held on 27 February; and what arrangements are in place in that Department to ensure that relevant parliamentary debates are brought to the attention of the appropriate officials. [HL5801]

The Senior Minister of State, Department for Communities and Local Government & Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Warsi) (Con): Arrangements are in place to draw the attention of officials to parliamentary debates so that relevant follow up actions are taken. Officials will consider how to ensure that the Official Report is appropriately and widely disseminated, including at Director level.

Housing: Possession Orders

Questions

Asked by **Lord Carlile of Berriew**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the availability of bailiffs; and whether they are taking any steps to assist landlords with possession orders in regaining possession of their property within a reasonable time period. [HL5707]

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on landlords with possession orders of delays in enforcing those orders, particularly those landlords living abroad who wish to return to the United Kingdom to live, or to sell their property. [HL5708]

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce any delays which landlords with possession orders face in obtaining the relevant documentation from the courts. [HL5709]

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of cuts in the Ministry of Justice budget and staff on cases where landlords have obtained possession orders; and what steps they are taking to remedy any negative impact. [HL5710]

The Minister of State, Ministry of Justice (Lord Faulks) (Con): Landlords seeking to regain possession of property can pursue two routes through the County Court. For shorthold tenancy there is an accelerated process which aims to provide a court hearing within 2 weeks. For all other possession claims there is a standard process which aims to ensure a court hearing takes place within 8 weeks. Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) aim to issue court orders to both parties within five days of the hearing.

These processes are available to all landlords of property located in England and Wales including those who reside abroad; however, an address for service within England and Wales must always be provided.

Once a court order is made it is open to the landlord to enforce the order by issuing a warrant of possession. HMCTS does not hold information on the average time taken by county court bailiffs to execute a warrant of possession. Each possession case has individual characteristics which prevent general timeliness expectations being set. However HMCTS seeks to enforce warrants as soon as is reasonable and without delay.

County Court bailiff workload is made up of a number of areas of work with possession warrants being just one. HMCTS keeps overall workload and resource under constant review and strives to continually improve the service delivered to the court user.

The Ministry of Justice publishes quarterly data on the number of re-possession achieved by County Court Bailiffs. This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/court-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2013>

In response to the recent Communities and Local Government Select Committee review of the Private Rented Sector the Department for Communities and

Local Government has established a working group to ensure that the interests of both landlords and tenants are protected and that there is a fair eviction process in the private rented sector. The working group's membership includes landlords, tenants and other property professionals. Ministers will shortly be considering emerging findings from the working group discussions.

Internet: Broadband

Question

Asked by **Lord Berkeley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, with reference to their announcement on 24 February of an extra £250 million funding allocation to extend superfast broadband coverage, what is the percentage coverage in Cornwall at present; what will the percentage be after the allocated £2.96 million is spent; what is the funding allocation for the Isles of Scilly; and when people there will be connected to superfast broadband. [HL5629]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Con): The current Superfast Cornwall broadband project is not part of the Government's original £530m intervention programme, because there was already an established broadband support programme there. We have, however, made available £2.96m funding from the £250m to extend coverage in Cornwall beyond that currently expected by Superfast Cornwall. The Government's funding will have to be matched by local sources. Superfast Cornwall will be responsible for the local delivery of the project, including determining the split of funding between Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The Government is in further discussion with Superfast Cornwall regarding the coverage that can be achieved. The Government expects delivery to be complete by the end of 2017 at the latest.

John Anthony Downey

Question

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether new evidence emerged between 1989 and 2013 which led to the decision to seek to prosecute Mr John Downey in connection with the Hyde Park bombing of 1982. [HL5820]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Wales Office (Baroness Randerson) (LD): The analysis of evidence is a matter for the police.

Justice: On-the-Run Individuals

Question

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they consulted, or sought and received the agreement of, the Justice Minister for Northern Ireland in relation to the terms of reference of the review into the operation of the "on the run" administrative scheme. [HL5818]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Wales Office (Baroness Randerson) (LD): Mr Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland did not consult the Justice Minister for Northern Ireland in relation to the terms of reference for the judge-led review into the operation and extent of the administrative scheme for dealing with so called "on-the-runs". The Justice Minister was however, alerted to the impending announcement shortly before it was made on the 27 February.

Local Authorities

Question

Asked by **Lord Storey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what names they have suggested, recommended, and given to combined local authorities since their introduction.

[HL5675]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government (Baroness Stowell of Beeston) (Con): There is currently one combined authority—the Greater Manchester Combined Authority—which was established in 2011 following the Government's consultation on the proposed establishment of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

We expect shortly to lay draft Orders for Parliamentary consideration on establishing further combined authorities.

The issues relating to the legal name of the combined authorities was addressed in the government response to the consultations on three of the proposed bodies. I have placed a copy in the Library of the House.

The Government will publish its response shortly on the consultation to establish a combined authority for Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear.

It is up to a local authority to determine its branding or any short hand title.

National Insurance

Question

Asked by **Lord Tyler**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will ensure that HM Revenue and Customs form CA5403 is available to fill in and submit online prior to the roll-out of Individual Electoral Registration. [HL5689]

The Commercial Secretary to the Treasury (Lord Deighton) (Con): HMRC offer a range of forms including the CA5403 via their website that customers can download, fill in and return.

HMRC are developing HTML versions that can be submitted online. Testing with users for a variety of HMRC forms will start from April 2014. HMRC expects the CA5403 to be in the first tranche to be delivered as soon as they have tested and proven the service.

HMRC are expecting all appropriate forms to be digital by the end of 2014/15.

Non-departmental Government Bodies: Staff

Questions

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees were recruited by ACAS in 2013; and, of that number, how many were graduates. [HL5712]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Viscount Younger of Leckie) (Con): The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service recruited 69 employees in 2013. Of these, 36 were graduates.

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees were recruited by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in 2013; and, of that number, how many were graduates. [HL5713]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: From 1 January to 31 December 2013 the Arts and Humanities Research Council recruited four people, three of whom had a degree.

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees were recruited by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council in 2013; and, of that number, how many were graduates. [HL5714]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: From 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013, Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) recruited 137 employees, of whom 98 are graduates.

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees were recruited by Capital for Enterprise Ltd in 2013; and, of that number, how many were graduates. [HL5715]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: In 2013, Capital for Enterprise Ltd recruited 23 employees, of which 14 were graduates.

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees were recruited by the Competition Commission in 2013; and, of that number, how many were graduates. [HL5717]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Competition Commission employed 43 staff in 2013. 40 of these were graduates.

19 staff were employed on a permanent basis. All of these were graduates.

24 staff were employed on a fixed-term basis. 21 of these were graduates.

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees were recruited by the Competition Service in 2013; and, of that number, how many were graduates. [HL5728]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Competition Service recruited two employees in 2013. One of those was a graduate.

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees were recruited by the Construction Industry Training Board in 2013; and, of that number, how many were graduates. [HL5729]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: In 2013 the Construction Industry Training Board recruited 207 employees, of these 50 were graduates.

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees were recruited by Consumer Focus or Consumer Futures in 2013; and, of that number, how many were graduates. [HL5730]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: In 2013 Consumer Futures recruited 20 employees, of whom 17 were graduates. These employees were recruited to either permanent or fixed-term contracts to fill posts that had become vacant.

Since 1 January 2014 they have recruited a further 4 employees, 3 of whom were graduates.

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees were recruited by the Economic and Social Research Council in 2013; and, of that number, how many were graduates. [HL5731]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: From 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) recruited 28 employees, all of whom were graduates.

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees were recruited by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council in 2013; and, of that number, how many were graduates. [HL5732]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: From 1 January to 31 December 2013, the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council recruited twenty-one people, twenty of whom had a degree.

Asked by *Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many employees were recruited by the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board in 2013; and, of that number, how many were graduates. [HL5733]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: In 2013 the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board recruited nine employees. Of these, three were graduates.

Public Houses

Question

Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to help promote public houses.

[HL5764]

Lord Popat (Con): The Government has introduced a number of measures to help pubs. In Budget 2013 the Government announced the end of the beer duty escalator and cut beer duty, so that the tax on a typical pint of beer is now 4p lower than if we had done nothing. At Autumn Statement 2013, we announced a major business rates package which will benefit small businesses, including pubs. As major employers of young people they will also benefit from the abolition of employer National Insurance contributions for under-21s earning below £813 per week from April 2015.

The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that local planning policies and decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of facilities such as pubs. We are also helping pubs to become more sustainable through our funding for Pub is the Hub, which is helping pubs to diversify into new service provision. Our funding towards a co-operative pubs telephone advice line operated by the Plunkett Foundation is supporting communities to take over their local pub as a co-operative. Through the Community Right to Bid, we are giving community organisations in England a better chance to save their local pub by nominating valued assets within their community, stopping the clock for six months on any potential sale and allowing them the chance to raise funds in order to bring the pub into community ownership.

The Government has also consulted on proposals to establish a statutory Code of Practice and an independent Adjudicator, which are aimed at supporting pub tenants.

Questions for Written Answer

Question

Asked by **Lord Jopling**

To ask the Leader of the House what discussions he has had with Ministers in the Ministry of Justice with regard to the 13 questions asked of that department out of the 27 which remained unanswered after 10 working days on 27 February. [HL5681]

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord Hill of Oareford) (Con): Of the 13 questions to the Ministry of Justice that remained unanswered after 10 working days on 27 February, all but one have now been answered.

I take the matter of late answers to Questions for Written Answer very seriously. My office reviews the 'Questions unanswered after 10 working days' in House of Lords Business every day. As soon as a question appears in this section of House of Lords Business,

my office contacts the relevant department's Parliamentary Team, and they remain in contact with the Parliamentary Team and the Minister's Private Office until the question is answered.

I have also recently taken the opportunity to discuss the need for timely answers with members of the front bench in this House.

Research: Academic Research

Question

Asked by **Lord Stevens of Kirkwhelpington**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to maintain excellence in academic research in United Kingdom universities through block grant funding for research and the work of the research councils. [HL5736]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Viscount Younger of Leckie) (Con): The Government has maintained science and research resource funding at £4.6 billion per year within a ring-fence throughout this Parliament, with additional research capital investment. This supports excellence across the UK research base including academic research in UK universities. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) has also announced additional allocations of over £1.5bn since 2010 through fiscal events, and in the 2013 Spending Review also announced a long term commitment to provide £1.1bn of science capital funding, rising with inflation, to 2021. A consultation will be issued in due course on how to make the best use of this opportunity. This will inform the development of a Science Capital Roadmap, which will be central to the Government's Science and Innovation Strategy, to be published with the Autumn Statement 2014.

In December 2013, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) published the latest International Comparative Performance of the UK Research Base, which benchmarks UK performance against key competitor countries on inputs- and outputs-related metrics. This found that whilst the UK as a whole spent less on Research and development (R&D) as share of GDP than most comparator countries, it produced the highest quality research. Notably, it pointed out that with 0.9% of the world population, 3.2% of R&D expenditure and 4.1% of researchers, the UK accounted for 6.4% of publications, 11.6% of citations and 15.9% of highly-cited publications.

Sport: Water Polo and Synchronised Swimming

Question

Asked by **Lord Donoghue**

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the women's Olympic team sports of water polo and synchronised swimming have had their financial support withdrawn by UK Sport. [HL5612]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Con): UK Sport funding decisions are based on its Investment Principles, which are:

1. Our performance mandate is sustained success in Olympic and Paralympic sport.
2. We only invest in World Class Programmes run by, or on behalf of a UK National Governing Body (UK NGB) with International Federation (IF) authorised access to major international competitions.
3. We will only invest in sports bodies which demonstrate the required standards of leadership, governance, financial management and administration
4. We strive to make four-year investments to cover the complete Olympic/Paralympic cycle, but base these on an eight-year high performance development model.
5. UK Sport World Class Programme investment is a privilege not a right
6. Our investment decisions reflect future medal potential using an approach which links resources directly to athlete places.
7. Our objectives for investing in Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic World Class Programmes are the same. Where appropriate, the approach adopted to achieve these objectives reflects the different domains.
8. Sports will be required to co-fund sport specific budgets for their World Class Programmes from income streams such as commercial activity, sponsorship or membership contributions.
9. We will provide core funding to the Home Country Sport Institutes (HCSIs), in proportion to the location of UK Sport-supported athletes, to ensure the long-term development of world-class Sports Science and Sports Medicine (SSSM) practitioners and services
10. We will centrally fund support programmes or services focused on universal need or specialist expertise when there is evidence this could improve performance across Olympic and Paralympic sports.

The full document can be found here:

<http://www.uk sport.gov.uk/pages/investment-principles/>

UK Sport has offered each sport the opportunity to make representations to their Board in March 2014.

Sudan

Questions

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the UK Trade and Investment Defence and Security Organisation has promoted the sale of United Kingdom defence, crowd management, crowd control, law enforcement and security products to Sudan since 2005. [HL5703]

The Minister of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills & Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Livingston of Parkhead) (Con): UK Trade and Investment Defence & Security Organisation does not support sales of defence and security equipment to Sudan in accordance with United Nations and EU arms embargoes in force applying to the promotion and export of military or dual-use goods. We have no record of any support being given since 2005, other than alerting UK companies to the embargo. Details of the embargoes and sanctions on Sudan can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/arms-embargo-on-sudan>.

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the United Kingdom's total contribution to the cost of the 2010 Sudanese elections, including support given to the United Nations Development Programme; whether they consider that a credible and transparent election process can take place in 2015 in Sudan in the light of the government of Sudan's policy of closing down or suspending media and confiscation of newspapers; and in what ways they plan to support the 2015 Sudanese elections. [HL5704]

Baroness Northover (LD): The UK gave £9.55m through the United Nations Development Programme to the 2010 elections in Sudan. The UK gave a further £2.3m to the 2010 Sudanese elections via international NGOs, universities and consultancies. These included the Carter Centre, the BBC World Service Trust, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Adam Smith International, GTZ, and Afhad University in Khartoum.

A credible and transparent election process in 2015 Sudan will not be possible without substantive political reforms. Many of the restrictions highlighted by observers during the 2010 election remain. No decision has been made on UK support to the 2015 election and we would only consider support if minimum conditions around the enabling environment and free and fair elections were in place.

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