**United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland**

**Statement**

**42nd Universal Periodic Review – Benin**

**Thursday 26th January 2023**

Thank you, Madame Vice-President,

I would like to bid a warm welcome to the Minister of Benin and its delegation.

And you are quite right to be proud of the role your country plays in this council. We very much welcome the participation of opposition parties in legislative elections this month. However, we remain concerned by continued political tensions in the country and we encourage the government to engage in dialogue and further strengthen democratic processes ahead of presidential elections.

We also urge Benin to protect civic space, including freedom of expression and media freedom.

We recommend Benin:

1. Takes steps to strengthen the credibility of electoral processes, including guaranteeing the full participation of opposition parties in those Presdential elections.
2. Upholds the rights of journalists to report freely and without fear of reprisal.
3. To ensure that acts of violence against LGBT+ people are promptly investigated and that those responsible brought to justice.

Thank you.