



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 25 March 2015 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:29 P.M., 25 March 2015). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

Questions marked thus **[R]** indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.

Questions with identification numbers of **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Domestic Violence: North West

Mark Hendrick:

[\[228086\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many dedicated staff there are to deal with domestic violence cases at each Crown Prosecution Service office in the North West.

Mr Robert Buckland:

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) North West has two main offices based in Preston and Greater Manchester. In addition there are two smaller offices at Barrow and Cumbria.

CPS North West has 230 prosecutors of varying grades who have received comprehensive domestic violence training. These staff are split between Preston and Manchester.

There are 9 Specialist Domestic Violence Co-ordinators in Greater Manchester and 9 Specialist Domestic Violence Prosecutors who prosecute the Specialist Domestic Violence Courts in Cumbria and Lancashire.

■ EU Countries

Miss Anne McIntosh:

[\[228351\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, when he last met one of his counterparts from an EU member state; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robert Buckland:

The Attorney General last met with EU counterparts during the Global Law Summit, which took place in London between 23 – 25 February 2015. Matters discussed included countering violent extremism, domestic prosecution policy and broader criminal justice issues.

■ Staff

Gloria De Piero:

[\[227952\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many and what proportion of employees in the Law Officers Departments identify as (a) white or white British, (b) Asian or Asian British, (c) Black or Black British, (d) mixed or multiple ethnic group and (e) another ethnicity.

Mr Robert Buckland:

It is not compulsory for staff to declare their ethnicity and the following table therefore only provides details on the number of staff in the Law Officers' Departments who have chosen to declare their ethnicity, and the proportions these represent of the overall workforce.

	TREASURY SOLICITOR'S DEPARTMENT (TSOL) *		SERIOUS FRAUD OFFICE		CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Asian/Asian British	122	6.1%	29	7.3%	471	7.4%
Black/Black British	97	4.8%	17	4.3%	351	5.5%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic	53	2.6%	15	3.8%	142	2.2%
White/White British	883	44.2%	194	48.9%	4478	70.9%
Other Ethnic Background	31	1.5%	8	2%	72	1.1%

* TSol data also covers the staff of the Attorney General's Office and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.

BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

■ Adult Education

Angela Smith: [227916]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how many adults were enrolled on (a) Level 4, (b) Level 5 and (c) Level 6 courses in England in each of the last five years.

Greg Clark:

[Holding answer 23 March 2015]: The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects and publishes statistics on students enrolled at UK Higher Education Providers.

Table 1b of the Statistical First Release 'Higher Education Enrolments and Qualifications Obtained in the UK 2013/14' provides the number of enrolments at both Higher Education Institutions and Further Education Colleges by qualification aim.

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/sfr210>

Information on how higher education qualification aims are ascribed to the National Vocational Qualification Levels is available at the following link:

https://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_studrec&task=show_file&mnl=13051&href=a^ ^COURSEAIM.html

■ Adult Education: Hackney

Meg Hillier: [\[227859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, with reference to the Skills Funding Letter 2015 to 2016, if he will make an assessment of the potential effects of the change in adult skills funding between 2014-15 and 2015-16 on (a) students and (b) colleges in Hackney South and Shoreditch constituency.

Meg Hillier: [\[227860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what assessment he has made of the effects of changes in adult skills funding since 2010 on (a) students and (b) colleges in Hackney South and Shoreditch constituency.

Nick Boles:

[Holding answer 23 March 2015]: The skills funding agency allocates funding in response to learner demand and in accordance with Government priorities, including the importance of growing apprenticeships.

Allocations for colleges in Hackney South and Shoreditch constituency since 2010 can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2005-to-2013>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2013-to-2014>

Allocations for 2015/16 have recently been shared with colleges and providers. They will be published on the Skills Funding Agency website as a matter of course.

■ Adult Education: Lancashire

Andrew Stephenson: [\[228059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what steps his Department is taking to address the adult skills gap in Pendle and East Lancashire.

Nick Boles:

We are reforming the further education (FE) and skills system so that it is increasingly responsive to local needs, particularly focused on Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), and driven by the needs of local growth opportunities. LEPs are responsible for identifying local skills priorities working in partnership with key players across their local economies. Growth Deals enable them to align investment in skills capital to their key growth priorities. For example, Nelson and Colne College has successfully secured investment of £1.4m for an Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Centre. Since December 2011 Government funding has also supported capital projects at the FE Colleges of Accrington and Rossendale, Blackburn, and Burnley. Greater devolution has enabled a Lancashire LEP scheme to support 4,000 employees aged 19 and over in small and medium-sized businesses to develop the skills that will give those businesses the confidence to grow. In addition, 610 adults started apprenticeships in Pendle in 2013/14

and 7,780 in Lancashire as a whole. 6,150 adults participated in FE and Learning in 2013/14 in Pendle and 74,840 in Lancashire.

■ Economic Growth: South West

Sir Nick Harvey:

[\[225427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what recent steps his Department has taken to increase economic growth in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset.

Greg Clark:

The Heart of the South West and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are the local bodies responsible for driving economic growth opportunities in Devon, Somerset and Cornwall. As partnerships between business and local authorities, the LEPs drew up Strategic Economic Plans in spring 2014.

The Heart of the South West LEP (representing Devon and Somerset) prioritised three aims in its Strategic Economic Plan: using the area's distinctive assets to create higher value growth and better jobs; stimulating jobs and growth across the whole economy and all sectors, and creating the conditions for growth through better infrastructure and services.

The Government agreed a Growth Deal with the LEP in July 2014 to provide £130.3m of Local Growth Fund investment between 2015 and 2021, which has enabled the LEP to secure an additional £140m of investment from local partners and the private sector. These funds will provide new transport infrastructure, open up sites for housing and employment growth, and drive investment in skills to support existing and growing industries in the area. In January 2015, the Government agreed a £65.2m expansion to the Heart of the south West's Growth Deal.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP Strategic Economic Plan set out its aims to exploit new and emerging markets where they had identified a competitive advantage; to improve business productivity and competitiveness; and to enhance economic growth through targeted infrastructure, housing and skills programmes.

In July 2014, the Government agreed a Growth Deal with Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP in which provides £48.9m of investment between 2015 and 2021. This has been matched by an additional £150m of investment from local and private sector sources to deliver new transport and housing infrastructure, better business engagement in schools, and targeted support for high growth sectors such as marine energy. In January 2015 the Government agreed an £11.3m expansion to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly LEP's Growth Deal.

■ Local Enterprise Partnerships

Mr Chuka Umunna:

[\[225678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what proportion of regional growth fund monies allocated to local enterprise partnerships have been drawn down in each bidding and in each region since those funds were established.

Greg Clark:

[Holding answer 3 March 2015]: 90% of the funds allocated to Local Enterprise Partnerships from the Regional Growth Fund will have been drawn by 31 March 2015. A further 10% is expected to be drawn down in the next financial year.

% DRAWN DOWN	ROUND 1	ROUND 2	ROUND 3	ROUND 4	EXCEPTIONAL
East Midlands			100	88	
East of England			100	62	
Nationwide				86	
North East			83	88	
North West	100		100	85	
South East		100	83	100	25
South West		100	64		
West Midlands		100	91	80	
Yorkshire and The Humber			96	100	

Local Enterprise Partnerships were only eligible to apply to the Regional Growth Fund in Rounds 1 to 4. Since then, Local Enterprise Partnerships have been able to apply for funding through the Local Growth Fund.

■ Regional Growth Fund

Roberta Blackman-Woods:
[\[224047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how much funding had been drawn down by successful bidders to the Regional Growth Fund by 31 December 2014; and what proportion of the overall allocation for each round that funding represents.

Greg Clark:

The table sets out the total amount drawn down by operational RGF awards to date and the financial years in which the remaining RGF and eRGF is committed through to 31 March 2017.

Unless otherwise agreed, projects and programmes in Rounds 1 to 4 have until 31 March 2015 to draw down their funding and projects and programmes in Round 5 and 6 will be able to draw down funding until 31 March 2017. The Department agrees a draw down profile with each organisation when they sign their grant offer letter that matches the beneficiary's own investment schedules and job commitments. The subsequent rate of draw down is then subject to the beneficiaries meeting these conditions.

RGF Drawn Down by year (£m)

FINANCIAL YEAR	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	TOTAL
Actual paid – year to date	464	159	551	875*			2,048
Remaining/ Planned for whole financial year				16	459	305	780
Total							2,829

*This is the actual amount paid to beneficiaries and claims awaiting payment as of 24 March 2015.

Mr Chuka Umunna:

[\[225008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what total amount of funds has been allocated via intermediaries in each bidding round of the Regional Growth Fund; and what proportion of such funds has not yet been drawn down.

Greg Clark:

[Holding answer 26 February 2015]: £1.73 billion has been allocated to Programmes across Rounds 1-6 of the Regional Growth Fund and exceptional Regional Growth Fund. The tables show how much of that money has been drawn down to date. All data is correct at 24 March 2015.

Unless otherwise agreed, projects and programmes in Rounds 1 to 4 have until 31 March 2015 to draw down their funding and projects and programmes in Round 5 and 6 will be able to draw down funding until 31 March 2017. The Department agrees a draw down profile with each organisation when they sign their grant offer letter that matches the beneficiary's own investment schedules and job commitments. The subsequent rate of draw down is then subject to the beneficiaries meeting the conditions.

	ROUND 1	ROUND 2	ROUND 3	ROUND 4	ROUND 5	ROUND 6	EXCEP	TOTAL
RGF allocated to Programmes (£m)	179	455	550	224	149	161	16	1,734
RGF grant drawn down to date (£m)	179	452	490	201	8	-	13	1,343

The following table shows the planned RGF grant draw down timetable which has been agreed with these programmes.

RGF Drawn Down by year (£ million)

FINANCIAL YEAR	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	TOTAL
Actual paid – year to date	418	72	288	565*			1,343
Remaining/Planned for whole financial year				7	200	171	378
Total							1,721

*This is the actual amount paid to intermediaries as of 24 March 2015.

The difference between the totals in tables 1 and 2 arises because RGF programmes have not always claimed the full grant available to them.

More detail on which RGF programmes are still available for SMEs to bid into is available at <https://www.gov.uk/regional-growth-fund-programmes-guide>.

Mr Chuka Umunna:

[\[225009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what the total value is of all bids made in each region to each round of the Regional Growth Fund including the Exceptional Regional Growth Fund; how much has been allocated to winning bidders in each region in each round; and how much such funding has not yet been drawn down in each bidding round.

Greg Clark:

[Holding answer 26 February 2015]: The tables below provide a breakdown of the value of Regional Growth Fund (RGF) by region and round for RGF applications; the committed allocation of RGF to projects and programmes for all Round 1-5 programmes following due diligence and Round 6 projects and programmes that are subject to contract discussions. This data excludes those projects and programmes that have withdrawn. The third table sets out the amount drawn down by operational RGF awards to date and the financial years in which the remaining RGF and eRGF is committed through to 31 March 2017. The data is correct at 24 March 2015.

Unless otherwise agreed, projects and programmes in Rounds 1 to 4 have until 31 March 2015 to draw down their funding and projects and programmes in Round 5 and 6 will be able to draw down funding until 31 March 2017. The Department agrees a draw down profile with each organisation when they sign their grant offer letter that matches the beneficiary's own investment schedules and job commitments. The subsequent rate of draw down is then subject to the beneficiaries meeting the conditions.

	ROUND 1	ROUND 2	ROUND 3	ROUND 4	ROUND 5	ROUND 6	EXCEP	TOTAL
East Midlands	245	458	116	164	47	43	-	1,074
East of England	113	118	97	51	47	46	-	472
London	74	141	45	38	6	3	9	316
Nationwide	215	321	488	317	188	215	-	1,745
North East	334	329	332	202	105	32	46	1,379
North West	519	573	427	286	67	134	14	2,020
South East	172	179	154	189	39	40	27	801
South West	144	246	297	220	63	111	22	1,103

	ROUND 1	ROUND 2	ROUND 3	ROUND 4	ROUND 5	ROUND 6	EXCEP	TOTAL
West Midlands	567	239	459	178	52	99	55	1,648
Yorkshire and the Humber	337	451	351	244	30	68	6	1,485
Total	2,721	3,055	2,766	1,888	644	790	177	12,041

RGF Applications (£ million)

	ROUND 1	ROUND 2	ROUND 3	ROUND 4	ROUND 5	ROUND 6	EXCEP	TOTAL
East Midlands	2	64	27	35	20	9	0	157
East of England	12	35	25	15	5	9	0	101
London	0	0	9	0	0	0	9	18
Nationwide	175	171	171	79	84	79	0	759
North East	34	55	111	27	52	17	23	319
North West	20	180	105	54	20	50	5	434
South East	0	60	43	25	1	5	3	137
South West	4	71	82	13	22	39	8	239
West Midlands	89	25	144	43	30	38	34	403
Yorkshire and The Humber	47	73	90	33	11	21	0	276
Grand Total	384	735	808	325	245	265	82	2,843

RGF Committed (£ million)**RGF Draw Down by year (£ million)**

FINANCIAL YEAR	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	TOTAL
Actual paid – year to date	464	159	551	875*			2,048
Remaining/ Planned for whole financial year				16	459	305	780
Total							2,829

*This is the actual amount paid to beneficiaries and claims awaiting payment as of 24 March 2015.

The difference between the totals in tables 2 and 3 arises because RGF applicants have not always claimed the full grant available to them.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Brain: Tumours

Mr Dominic Raab:

[\[228535\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people had been diagnosed with a brain tumour, including all intracranial tumours, in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland on the last date for which figures are available.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Attachments:

1. ONS Letter to Member - Brain Tumour [PQ 228535 ONS 118.pdf]

■ Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Liz Kendall:

[\[228590\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people died as a result of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in England in each year from 2009-10 to 2014-15.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Attachments:

1. ONS Letter to Member - Death from Pulmonary [PQ 228590 ONS 116.pdf]

■ **Civil Servants**

Sir Hugh Bayley:

[\[228620\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many full-time equivalent Civil Service jobs there were (a) in total and (b) in each government department and its agencies in (i) the City of York, (ii) Yorkshire and the Humber, (iii) England and (iv) the UK (A) in May 2010 and (B) at the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Attachments:

1. Excel Attachment for Member - CS Jobs in York [Hugh Bayley PQ115 - Final.xlsx]
2. ONS Letter to Member - Civil Service Jobs in York [PQ 228620 ONS 115.pdf]

■ **Efficiency and Reform Group**

Andrew Bridgen:

[\[908318\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to achieve savings through the work of his Efficiency and Reform Group.

Mr Francis Maude:

In 2013/14, we delivered audited savings of £14.3bn against a 2009-10 baseline and, at Autumn Statement, we set out our ambition to go further with an additional £10bn for 2017/18, and £15-20bn for 2019/20.

■ **Electronic Government**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[228638\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many providers took part in the GOV.UK Verify trial; and how many such providers will be in place when that scheme is rolled out across central Government.

Mr Francis Maude:

[GOV.UK](#) Verify is already available for public use and will continue to be rolled out across central Government. Five additional companies have signed the new framework that has been announced today. They will start providing services over the coming months, bringing the total number of providers to 9.

■ Government Departments: Advertising

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[228619\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many prime-time television advertising slots the Government has purchased in each of the last 12 months; and what the cost was in each such case.

Mr Francis Maude:

The information requested on the number of advertising slots is not held centrally but overall spending on communications has been reduced 65% since 2009/10.

■ Government Departments: Disclosure of Information

Chi Onwurah: [\[228603\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans the Government has to promote opendata and data sharing; and whether he plans to conduct a review of data sharing.

Mr Francis Maude:

Further to the answer I gave on 9 February 2015 to UIN: 223481, we are also continuing our work to promote transparency and the open data agenda on the global stage. The second iteration of the National Information Infrastructure (NII), launched on 24 March, will include important information about how critical data is managed and will ensure the UK's data is easily discoverable, high-quality, accessible and linkable, making it much easier for businesses and others to use public data.

■ Government Departments: Trade Unions

Graeme Morrice: [\[908315\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his policy is on the deduction of trade union subscriptions from payroll in the Civil Service.

Mr Nicholas Brown: [\[908316\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) organisations in total and (b) trade unions receive income by means of a government check-off facility.

Mr Francis Maude:

This is matter that is delegated to individual Departments in the Civil Service.

This information is a matter for departments.

■ Low Pay

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[228157\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of the workforce was paid at least the living wage in (a) Huddersfield, (b) Kirklees, (c) Yorkshire, (d) London, (e) England and (f) the UK in each of the last five years.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Attachments:

1. ONS Letter to Member - Living Wage [PQ 228157 ONS 112.pdf]

■ **Minimum Wage**

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[228092\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of the workforce was paid no more than the minimum wage in (a) Huddersfield, (b) Kirklees, (c) Yorkshire, (d) London, (e) England and (f) the UK in each of the last five years.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Attachments:

1. ONS Letter to Member - Minimm Wage [PQ 228092 ONS 111.pdf]

■ **Public Sector: Mutual Societies**

Richard Graham: [\[908321\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of mutuals in the public sector.

Mr Francis Maude:

In 2013, we commissioned the Boston Consulting Group to analyse the financial market for public service mutuals. They found that mutuals can operate effectively across the public sector, improving service quality and driving innovation. In particular, they found mutuals create significant productivity gains: for instance, absenteeism and staff turnover fell by 20% and 16% respectively.

■ **Shoplifting: North West**

Mark Hendrick: [\[228082\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many incidents of shoplifting and theft from shops were reported to police in (a) Preston constituency, (b) Lancashire and (c) the North West in (i) 2010, (ii) 2011, (iii) 2012, (iv) 2013 and (v) 2014.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Attachments:

1. ONS Letter to Member - Shoplifting and Theft [PQ 228082 ONS 113.pdf]

■ **Youth Services**

Julie Hilling: [\[908317\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to support youth services.

Gavin Shuker:

[\[908319\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to support youth services.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[908320\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to support youth services.

Mr Rob Wilson:

We continue to offer practical support to the youth sector by promoting innovative delivery models for youth services and supporting organisations to measure their impact and demonstrate their value.

We have also provided over 130,000 opportunities for young people through National Citizen Service.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Housing

Chris Ruane:

[\[213381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the affordable housing budget was in each of the last 15 years.

Brandon Lewis:

Affordable housing expenditure for the last 15 years is set out below. Expenditure is a more accurate reflection of resources used to deliver affordable housing as budgets can and do fluctuate during the year.

	£M
2013-14	965
2012-13	1,083
2011-12	1,578
2010-11	2,660
2009-10	3,737
2008-09	2,612
2007-08	2,029
2006-07	1,921
2005-06	1,577
2004-05	1,647
2003-04	1,831

	£m
2002-03	1,390
2001-02	1,175
2000-01	1,116
1999-00	965

The budget for the supply of new affordable housing in 2014-15 is £1,239 million. Our Affordable Homes Programme is on track to deliver 170,000 new affordable homes between 2011 and 2015, with £19.5 billion of public and private funding. Over 144,000 homes were delivered by the end of September 2014. (*DCLG Affordable Housing Supply, 2013-14 (16 October 2014), table 2012, Affordable Housing starts and completions funded by the HCA and GLA (20 November 2014)*). We are confident that we will meet the target.

217,000 affordable housing have been delivered from April 2010 to September 2014.

£38 billion of public and private investment will help ensure 275,000 new affordable homes are provided between 2015 and 2020. This means over the next parliament we will build more new affordable homes than during any equivalent period in the last twenty years.

■ Affordable Housing: South East

Mr Dominic Raab: [\[228536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how much the Government plans to invest in affordable housing in the South East of England between 2015 and 2020; and how many affordable homes he forecasts will be built in that region in that period.

Mr Dominic Raab: [\[228549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how much the Government has spent on affordable housing in (a) England, (b) the South East, (c) Surrey and (d) Elmbridge in each year since 2005.

Brandon Lewis:

£38 billion public and private investment will help ensure 275,000 new affordable homes are provided between 2015 and 2020. This means over the next Parliament we will build more new affordable homes than during any equivalent period in the last twenty years. Funding is allocated through competitive bidding and there are no top down targets for particular areas.

The 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme has made initial allocations of £1.3 billion grant funding to deliver almost 62,000 new affordable homes, including £154 million in the East and South East area to deliver over 9,600 homes. The Homes and Communities

Agency are inviting bids for the remainder of the 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme funding. Approximately £800 million is available.

Affordable housing expenditure for England, South East, Surrey and Elmbridge in each year since 2005 is set out below.

	ENGLAND	SOUTH EAST	SURREY	ELMBRIDGE
	£m	£m	£m	£m
2013-14	965	123	11	0.9
2012-13	1,083	157	14	1
2011-12	1,578	224	17	0.9
2010-11	2,660	426	34	4
2009-10	3,737	565	46	6
2008-09	2,612	424	45	2
2007-08	2,029	363	37	5
2006-07	1,921	375	45	2
2005-06	1,577	269	47	5

■ Council Housing: Greater London

Sadiq Khan:

[228550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many council houses have been sold in (a) London and (b) each London borough since 2010.

Brandon Lewis:

Statistics on local authority right to buy sales in London and in each London Borough are published in the Department's live table 685 (annual) and 691 (quarterly) which are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-social-housing-sales>

In England, council house building starts are now at a 23 year high and twice as many council homes have been built in the last 4 years than from 1997 to 2009. Previously, councils were not encouraged to build new homes from sales receipts and only 1 new council home was built for every 170 Right to Buy sales completed under the last Administration.

Since the Right to Buy was reinvigorated in England, £730 million in sales receipts are being re-invested in affordable house building; leveraging a further £1.7 billion of investment over the next 2 years. This means that in total, over £2.4 billion will be raised to invest in affordable house building as a result of the as a result of Right to Buy.

■ Forced Labour

Paul Blomfield: [\[228292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 28 January 2015 to Question 221886, how many cases of forced labour have been found by local authorities during pro-active inspection of houses of multiple occupation in the last five years; and what training his Department provides to officials in local authorities on (a) the indicators of forced labour and (b) working with victims of trauma.

Brandon Lewis:

[Holding answer 23 March 2015]: The Department does not collect information on the number of local authority inspections of Houses in Multiple Occupation. The Department does not have policy responsibility for forced labour or victims of trauma, consequently local authority officers do not receive training from my Department on the indicators of forced labour or working with victims of trauma. To support local authorities, we have just published revised guidance on tackling rogue landlords, as well as beds in sheds. This builds on the £6.7 million the Government has given councils to tackle rogue landlords in their area. To date, nearly 40,000 properties have been inspected and over 3,000 landlords are now facing further action or prosecution for breaking the law.

■ Local Government Finance: Derbyshire

Heather Wheeler: [\[224582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how much (a) Derbyshire County, (b) South Derbyshire District and (c) Derby City Council received in total from government grants in (i) 2012-13, (ii) 2013-14 and (iii) 2014-15; and if he will make a statement.

Heather Wheeler: [\[224583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how much (a) Derbyshire County, (b) South Derbyshire District and (c) Derby City Council have budgeted to spend in 2014-15.

Kris Hopkins:

Derby City

In 2014-15, Derby City Council is forecast to receive £261 million in government grants, excluding mandatory housing benefits. Including mandatory housing benefits, the forecast is £351 million (source: Revenue Account Budget returns). Total grants (excluding mandatory housing benefits) are forecast to be equivalent to £2,430 per dwelling.

Leaving aside school spending which has changed due to the funding shift from Local Education Authorities to Academies, in 2014-15, Derby's net current expenditure excluding education services is forecast to be £282 million (source: Revenue Account Budget returns). This compares with £258 million in 2009-10 (source: Revenue Outturn Summary returns). This represents a 9 per cent increase in cash terms.

South Derbyshire

In 2014-15, South Derbyshire District Council is forecast to receive £4.4 million in government grants, excluding mandatory housing benefits. Including mandatory housing benefits, the forecast is £22.3 million (source: Revenue Account Budget returns). Total grants (excluding mandatory housing benefits) are forecast to be equivalent to £109 per dwelling.

South Derbyshire residents will also benefit from funding given to the Derbyshire County Council for its statutory functions (e.g. police, fire, transport, strategic housing and planning). Derbyshire County Council is forecast to receive £648 million in government grant, equivalent to a Derbyshire average of £1,862 per dwelling in 2014-15. Taken together, this is equivalent to £1,971 per dwelling in South Derbyshire.

In 2014-15, South Derbyshire's net current expenditure is forecast to be £29.2 million (source: Revenue Account Budget returns). This compares with £27.1 million in 2009-10 (source: Revenue Outturn Summary returns). This represents an 8 per cent increase in cash terms.

Derbyshire County

Derbyshire County's net current expenditure excluding education services was £410.1 million in 2009-10 and £449.0 million in 2014-15, an increase of 9 per cent.

I am aware that Derbyshire County Council has issued a leaflet with its council tax bills making contentious claims on funding. I would note that Derbyshire's revenue spending power is unchanged this year (2015-16, compared to 2014-15), and has a revenue spending of £1,575 per dwelling (compared to £1,505 in Hampshire County, which is mentioned in its leaflet).

Previous figures

Previous figures on local authority revenue expenditure and financing can be found online at:

Revenue Outturn 2012-13:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2012-to-2013-individual-local-authority-data-outturn>

Revenue Outturn 2013-14:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2013-to-2014-individual-local-authority-data-outturn>

Revenue Account 2014-15:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2014-to-2015-individual-local-authority-data>

■ Local Plans

Mr Marcus Jones: [\[227786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to assist local residents to produce a local plan in areas where no such plan has been produced by the local authority.

Mr Marcus Jones: [\[227787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to provide for local authorities who do not produce a local plan to be placed in special measures.

Brandon Lewis:

Plan making has significantly improved under this Government. 81% of local planning authorities have at least published their plan and 63% of local planning authorities now have an adopted local plan in place (compared to 17% in 2010).

The Localism Act has strengthened the role of Local Plans, allowing local councils – in consultation with local residents – to draw up plans and determine where new development should and should not go. Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework already provides a very strong incentive for councils to have a Local Plan in place. I am aware that the Labour Party's Lyons Review proposed that sanctions should be imposed against councils without a Local Plan and that the Secretary of State should direct the Planning Inspectorate to produce a Local Plan in place of the Council. However, I believe that proposal is excessively centralising, and would be an unpalatable re-creation of the top-down planning regime that we abolished in the Localism Act.

Drawing up a Local Plan can be challenging – it involves trade-offs and hard choices, and there is no longer Regional Planning Guidance or Regional Spatial Strategy imposed from above to hide behind and blame. But it is our preference for this to be a locally-led process.

The Government has supported local authorities in their Plan making by funding the Planning Advisory Service; the Planning Inspectorate; and senior retired Planning Inspectors to help bring forward sound Local Plans.

This Government introduced neighbourhood planning which offers an unprecedented opportunity for communities to develop plans with statutory force. Over 1,400 communities, representing around 6 million people in England, have now applied for a neighbourhood area to be designated and 59 successful referendums on neighbourhood plans have been held. The Government is committed to supporting communities throughout the process and encouraging more communities to join them. The Government recently announced a new support contract worth £22.5 million, which will begin in April 2015 and last until 2018.

■ Parking

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[228091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's announcement, Government delivers on parking promises to help local shops, published on 6 March 2015, if he will take further steps to ensure that local authority parking schemes are more advantageous to motorists.

Penny Mordaunt:

Higher parking charges and more parking fines were the explicit policy of the Labour Government.

- Labour Ministers called for councils to charge for more services, including parking, bemoaning that: 'Only one in five councils are using charging to the full potential... [such as for] reducing congestion' (Speech to the Local Government Association, 2 July 2008).
- Planning guidance issued by the Labour Government in 2001 (PPG13) told councils to hike parking charges and adopt aggressive enforcement to discourage drivers.
- Labour Ministers asserted: 'The local government sector already has significant powers to raise revenue through fees and charges in return for the provision of services, and many councils have used this mechanism extensively to support local service delivery (for example through parking charges... The Government supports councils in looking creatively at the scope offered by fees and charges' (DCLG, Government response to the CLG Select Committee report into the balance of power: central and local government, 18 September 2009).

Yet unreasonable parking charges and fines push up hard-working people's cost of living. If parking is too expensive or difficult, shoppers will simply drive to out of town supermarkets or just shop on-line, undermining the vitality of town centres and leading to 'ghost town' high streets. This Government has rejected the Labour policy of encouraging higher parking charges and aggressive parking enforcement, and has been standing up for hard-working people and local shops.

Since 2010, we have:

- Scrapped Labour's Whitehall policy that pressured councils to hike car parking charges as a 'demand management measure' to discourage car use.
- Removed Whitehall restrictions which restricted the provision of off-street parking spaces, and issued new national planning policy to discourage unnecessary restrictions on parking spaces being provided in new developments.
- Abolished Labour's Whitehall policy which inhibited parking charge competition between council areas, and instead introduced a new policy that says parking charges should not undermine the vitality of town centres, and stated that parking enforcement should be proportionate;
- Issued new planning practice guidance on removing street clutter and encouraging the provision of shopper-friendly parking space provision.

- Introduced the local retention of business rates, which means that councils benefit from business and retail growth in town centres, rather than just hiking parking charges.
- Increased parking transparency through the local government Transparency Code so councils are required to publish how income from parking charges is being used.
- Stopped the industrial use of CCTV for parking enforcement: this will commence in April following the Deregulation Bill receiving Royal Assent.
- Introduced a mandatory 10 minute “grace period” at the end of on-street and off-street, free and paid municipal parking.
- Introduced a new right to allow local residents and local firms to demand a review of parking in their area, including charges and the use of yellow lines.
- Changed guidance so drivers parking at an out-of-order meter are not fined if there are no alternative ways to pay.
- Reformed statutory parking guidance so it is less heavy handed with drivers, prevents over-aggressive action by bailiffs, positively supports local shops and clearly reinforces the prohibition against parking being used to generate profit.
- Updated guidance so the public know when they can be awarded costs at tribunals; strengthened the power of adjudicators to overturn parking fines; frozen parking fines in this Parliament; the Government will also be trialling a 25% discount for motorists who lose an appeal against a parking ticket at tribunal on the full price of their parking ticket

My Department has now taken on the policy responsibility for off-street parking, both municipal and on private land. We will consult shortly on areas where we can intervene to tackle unfair practices. We will also address the issue of local authorities not offering any cash payment facilities in municipal parking.

■ Private Sector: Thames Gateway

Lyn Brown: [\[221627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what Government support (a) is available and (b) has been provided to secure private sector investment in the Thames Gateway since 2010.

Lyn Brown: [\[221628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of progress in securing private sector investment in the Thames Gateway since 2010.

Lyn Brown: [\[221629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what plans he has for Ministers to visit locations in the Thames Gateway in the period up to the dissolution of Parliament; and what the planned locations of those visits are.

Lyn Brown: [\[221630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he plans to take to ensure that development of new Thames Gateway communities is sustainable, cohesive and integrated.

Lyn Brown: [\[221631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of progress in securing private sector investment in Thames Gateway projects at (a) London Gateway Port, (b) Purfleet, (c) Paramount Park and (d) Southend Airport since 2010.

Lyn Brown: [\[222265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what plans the Government has for regeneration of the Thames Gateway.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Thames Gateway is a long term national priority for growth and the Government is firmly committed to working with local partners to help them deliver its potential.

The Government has worked closely with investors across a range of projects, for example we have helped to secure £1.5 billion investment into the London Gateway Port by working hard with the Highways Agency to ensure that road capacity was not a barrier to the Dubai Ports World investment. London Paramount is another major potential investment which could bring up to 15 million visitors a year to the area. I am delighted to hear that Lafarge Tarmac has now agreed a deal with London Resort Company Holdings to sell their land in the Swancombe Peninsula in north Kent, which is needed for the creation of this entertainment resort.

In addition to encouraging investors, Government is itself providing funding for a number of major projects in the area. These are set out in the attached document.

Attachments:

1. Thames Gateway - Major Projects [690691 Brown.docx]

■ **Right to Buy Scheme**

Robert Neill: [\[225453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to incentivise local authorities to promote social tenants' Right to Buy.

Brandon Lewis:

Under the Housing Act 1985 and associated secondary legislation, social landlords have a duty to supply information to their tenants to make them aware of how they can exercise their Right to Buy.

However, it has been clear that some Labour councils have not enthusiastically done this, trying to keep their tenants in the dark. My Department has used a variety of media channels to raise awareness of the Right to Buy. We are open to representations on how we can further take forward the Right to Buy.

More broadly, Right to Buy sales help councils boost housing construction and reduce housing waiting lists. Since the Right to Buy was reinvigorated in England, £730 million in sales receipts are being re-invested in affordable house building; leveraging a further £1.7 billion of investment over the next 2 years. This means that in total, over £2.4 billion will be raised to invest in affordable house building as a result of the Right to Buy.

My Department recently announced a new £42 million fund in 2015-16 to help council tenants who are eligible for Right to Buy to purchase a home on the open market. This will prioritise several groups of council tenants, including older people and will give those older people an opportunity to buy a home which is more suitable for their needs, or closer to family or support networks.

■ Social Services

Mr John Denham: [\[227764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of spending on adult social care in (a) Dorset, (b) Poole, (c) Bournemouth, (d) Hampshire, (e) Isle of Wight, (f) West Sussex, (g) Bracknell Forest, (h) Reading, (i) Slough, (j) West Berkshire, (k) Windsor and Maidenhead, (l) Wokingham, (m) Oxfordshire, (n) Wiltshire and (o) Swindon local authority areas in each year since 2010.

Mr John Denham: [\[228169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of spending on adult social care in (a) Portsmouth and (b) Southampton local authority areas in each year since 2010.

Kris Hopkins:

[Holding answer 23 March 2015]: Spending figures can be found in the revenue outturn returns published on the Local Authority Revenue Expenditure and Financing tables on gov.uk.

Despite the need to pay off the deficit left by the last Labour Government, net current expenditure on social care has increased from £20.962 billion in 2009-10 to £22.089 billion in 2014-15 (budget).

Government initiatives like the Better Care Fund are joining up the NHS and social care, so savings can be delivered through joint working and outcomes improved.

■ York

Sir Hugh Bayley: [\[228607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to visit York before the General Election.

Kris Hopkins:

Since 2010, Coalition Ministers have undertaken regular visits to a wide variety of local authority areas in England, whilst balancing their Parliamentary work, internal Ministerial meetings in London and meetings of Cabinet Committees. Ministers also regularly host delegations from local authorities for meetings in Westminster.

York's historic city, the traditional county town of Yorkshire, has a rich tapestry of cultural attractions and a thriving economy, including a particularly strong service industry sector and a fine university. I fear it is unlikely that Ministers will be able to visit this week before the dissolution of Parliament, but this will be our loss at not being able to see what York has to offer first hand.

My Department does not centrally hold information on political visits that will take place after dissolution, but I understand the my rt. hon. Friend, the Secretary of State (Eric Pickles) will be seeking to visit a wide number of places across the country.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Broadband: North West

Andrew Stephenson:

[228173]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to increase the availability of fibre-optic broadband to businesses in (a) Pendle constituency, (b) Lancashire and (c) the North West.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

Current superfast broadband coverage is over 80% of UK premises and the Government remains committed to providing 95% coverage to homes and businesses by 2017.

Commercial broadband delivery is expected to cover 62% of premises in the Pendle constituency. By the end of the Superfast Lancashire project, coverage is expected to have increased to 98% of premises.

This data is included in the table in the House of Commons Library:

http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/business-papers/commons/deposited-papers/?house=1&search_term=Department+for+Culture%2c+Media+and+Sport&itemd=122028#toggle-163

As of June 2014, Lancashire had 74% superfast broadband coverage (speeds of more than 30Mbps+) as stated in the Ofcom Infrastructure Report 2014. By the end of 2017 the Government expects there will be 97.5% superfast coverage to homes and businesses in Lancashire.

The Government does not have data of superfast broadband at regional level.

■ Broadband: Rural Areas

David Simpson:

[228524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what progress his Department has made on providing 95 per cent of rural areas with superfast broadband by 2017.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

Current superfast broadband coverage is over 80% of UK premises and the Government remains committed to providing 95% coverage to homes and businesses by 2017.

■ Broadband: Urban Areas

Chris Bryant:

[\[226442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2015 to Question 225611, on broadband: urban area, how much funding from the SuperConnected Cities budget has been assigned to each city; and how much has been spent (a) in total, (b) on broadband connection vouchers, (c) on free WiFi in public buildings, (d) on advertising and (e) on other items to date in (i) the programme as a whole and (ii) each city.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

[Holding answer 9 March 2015]: The 22 SuperConnected Cities were given 'up to' funding allocations at the start of the SuperConnected Cities Programme. Spending priorities have developed over the course of the Programme, and the cities are now committed to delivering over 10,000 vouchers, free public Wi-Fi in 1,000 public buildings and on buses, trams and trains, as well as other digital connectivity projects for a total spend of around £80m. The majority of the spend will come at the end of the Programme - particularly with vouchers where there is a period of time between when the voucher is issued and the connection work is completed - with some wrap up costs in the next financial year.

For Northern Ireland and Scotland funding is given to cities via the budget transfer system, so a split for spending on individual projects is not applicable.

The table below outlines the original 'up to' allocations and current spend across the 22 cities of the Programme.

It is not possible to provide city allocations for marketing as it was a nationwide campaign.

ENGLAND AND WALES

"Up To" Allocation	£M	Spend to February (Qtr 3 claims) 2014- 15				£M
	Total		CVS	WFPB	OTHER	Total
Birmingham	8.25	Birmingham	0.39	0.39	0.00	0.78
Brighton	2.52	Brighton	0.07	0.00	0.56	0.63
Bristol	11.37	Bristol	0.02	0.00	1.52	1.54
Cambridge	4.12	Cambridge	0.05	0.47	0.00	0.52
Cardiff	10.17	Cardiff	0.85	0.08	0.00	0.93

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Coventry	2.35	Coventry	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.09
Derby	2.27	Derby	0.03	1.22	0.00	1.25
LeedsBradford	13.54	LeedsBradford	0.93	0.32	0.50	1.75
London	25.00	London	1.68	0.41	0.00	2.10
Manchester	10.25	Manchester	2.15	1.96	0.00	4.12
Newcastle	5.25	Newcastle	0.20	0.00	0.58	0.78
Newport	6.00	Newport	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.04
Oxford	4.83	Oxford	0.04	0.00	0.09	0.12
Portsmouth	4.89	Portsmouth	0.07	0.68	0.00	0.74
Salford	7.10	Salford	0.34	1.11	0.00	1.45
York	1.65	York	0.10	0.00	0.11	0.21
Total	119.56	Total	7.04	6.64	3.36	17.04

Devolved Administrations - Northern Ireland and Scotland

"Up To"	£M	Budget	£M
Allocation		Transfers	
	Total		Total
Belfast	13.46	Belfast	5.68
Derry	2.20	Derry	0.10
Nth Ireland	15.66	Nth Ireland	5.78
Aberdeen	5.58	Aberdeen	2.44
Edinburgh	9.00	Edinburgh	4.98
Perth	0.34	Perth	0.23
Scotland	14.92	Scotland	7.65
Total	30.58	Total	13.43
Total SCCP			
Allocation	£M	Spend &	£M
		Budget Tfrs	

ENGLAND AND WALES

	Total	Total
	150.14	30.47
Marketing		
Allocation	2.20	
Spend	1.67	

■ **Internet: EU Action**

Adam Afriye: [\[227421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent steps he has taken to implement EU regulations on net neutrality.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

Negotiations are continuing on an EU Regulation on net neutrality, as part of the Connected Continent package. Should a common position be agreed between the European Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament, and the Regulation adopted, the Regulation will be directly applicable in UK law.

■ **Local Press**

Mr Frank Field: [\[228476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to safeguard the future of local newspapers.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

Since the DCMS hosted the future of local newspapers summit in November 2014, Department officials have been engaging regularly with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss the future of the industry. As part of Budget this Government announced that it will consult on whether to introduce a business rates relief for all local newspapers in England to help them adapt to new technology and changing circumstances.

■ **Mobile Phones**

Jonathan Edwards: [\[226349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with Ofcom on switching of mobile phone contracts by consumers from a losing provider-led process to a gaining provider-led process.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

My Right Hon. Friend the Secretary of State meets regularly with Ofcom to discuss a variety of issues.

We set out our thinking on switching in the Connectivity, Content and Consumers [CCC] Strategy Paper, published in July 2013. In December 2013 Ofcom announced that gaining-provider led (GPL) switching would be mandated for broadband and fixed telephony over the Openreach network. Full implementation of this will be completed by June 2015.

In July-September 2014, Ofcom collected inputs on consumers' experience of switching providers of pay-TV, mobile services and bundled services; and considered possible impacts on competition. The regulator will publish a document in the first half of 2015 setting out its findings and how it intends to take things forward, including for the switching of mobile service providers. I hope that, in line with our statement in the CCC paper, this will result in GPL switching being mandated across the board.

Chris Ruane:

[\[228049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to introduce arrangements for broadband and landline providers gaining a customer to lead the switching process.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

We set out our thinking on switching in the Connectivity, Content and Consumers [CCC] Strategy Paper, published in July 2013. In December 2013 Ofcom announced that gaining-provider led (GPL) switching would be mandated for broadband and fixed telephony over the Openreach network. Full implementation of this will be completed by June 2015.

Chris Ruane:

[\[228050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what information his Department holds on the number of customers who switched between mobile phone providers in each year for which data is available.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

DCMS does not hold this information, however from Ofcom data we understand that there are around 83 million active mobile subscribers in the UK. This figure includes people who have mobile devices that are not telephones - such as tablet and laptop computers - but which use mobile telephone technology and contain SIMs

Ofcom figures indicate that the percentage of mobile subscribers switching service provider *per year* since 2010 is as follows:

9% in 2010

9% in 2011

9% in 2012

11% in 2013

7% in 2014

Miss Anne McIntosh: [228152]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) residential and (b) commercial properties that will be in complete mobile not-spots in the period 2015 to 2018.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

Data on not-spots is collected by the telecoms regulator Ofcom, and is published on an annual basis in its infrastructure reports. The last report was published in December 2014 and can be found on the Ofcom website here:

<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/infrastructure/2014/infrastructure-14.pdf>. The report does not contain any data or forecasts relating to residential and commercial split.

Miss Anne McIntosh: [228153]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of the (a) major road network and (b) rail network that will be in complete not-spots in the period 2015 to 2018.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

No such estimate has been made. Mobile coverage information is provided by mobile network operators to Ofcom that uses this information to provide an assessment of existing coverage. This is collated and updated annually. Ofcom's most recent Infrastructure Report was published in December 2014. The report and an interactive map showing coverage of 2G, 3G and 4G services can be found at <http://infrastructure.ofcom.org.uk/>

Miss Anne McIntosh: [228154]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions his Department has had with mobile network operators on complete not-spots in Great Britain not covered by the agreement announced on 18 December 2014.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

The Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) are key partners in delivering the Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP). Through MIP the Government is investing up to £150m funding to build infrastructure to serve those areas where there is no voice coverage available from any of the four Mobile Network Operators (known as not-spot areas). Government funds the capital expenditure on infrastructure, while the MNOs are responsible for meeting the running costs.

The MNOs are integral to the success of MIP and there is regular engagement with them on tackling not-spots through project delivery meetings and via the project's governance forums. This includes discussion on site occupation and cost sharing.

Miss Anne McIntosh: [228156]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the roll-out of 4G to areas of Great Britain that are complete or partial not-

spots since the agreement with the mobile network operators announced on 18 December 2014.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

The DCMS has not made any specific assessment of 4G roll-out to complete or partial not-spot areas since the agreement was reached with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) on 18 December 2014. The coverage obligations that were agreed with MNOs have now been made legally binding by Ofcom through a voluntary licence variation on 2 February 2015. Monitoring and enforcement of licence conditions is a matter for Ofcom.

Ofcom also collects data on the provision of digital infrastructure, including 4G mobile services, and publishes this annually as part of its Infrastructure Report. Data on 4G coverage from the 2014 Infrastructure Report is available on Ofcom's website:

<http://infrastructure.ofcom.org.uk/>

■ **Natural History Museum**

Chi Onwurah:

[228563]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if he will request that the Natural History Museum stops its practice of gender-specific marketing of toys.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is in regular contact with the Natural History Museum. The Natural History Museum is passionate about science learning and careers for all. Following its recent collaboration with Marks and Spencer to create a dinosaur-themed clothing line, the Natural History Museum is working with the retailer's design team to expand the range to include products for girls.

The Museum is committed to diversity in engagement and learning and in the development of scientific careers. In its education programmes and exhibitions, as well as through the press and social media, its scientists are a diverse group of role models inspiring the next generation. Products in the Museum shop are displayed without gender differentiation for children, and the Museum's own children's clothing range is cut for a unisex fit.

Licensing for retail items plays an important role in generating revenue for the Museum to run their activities and exhibitions and conduct scientific research, and therefore the Museum often works with commercial partners. Product ranges being separated by female and male options is standard retail practice for many high street retailers.

■ **Ofcom**

Chris Ruane:

[228048]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, which Ofcom decisions have been subject to the most appeals in each year since 2003.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

Government does not hold data relating to the number of Ofcom decisions subject to the most appeals. Information relating to appeals of regulatory decisions can be sought directly from Ofcom, who are independent from Government.

Chris Ruane:

[\[228051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many Ofcom decisions were subject to (a) successful and (b) unsuccessful on the merits appeals in each year for which data is available.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

Government does not hold information relating to how many Ofcom decisions were subject to (a) successful and (b) unsuccessful on the merit appeals. Information relating to appeals of regulatory decisions can be sought directly from Ofcom, who are independent from Government.

Chris Ruane:

[\[228052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, on how many occasions each communication provider has asked for an on the merit review of an Ofcom decision in each year for which data is available.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

Government does not hold information relating to the number of requests from communication providers for an on the merit review of Ofcom decisions. Information relating to appeals of regulatory decisions can be sought directly from Ofcom, who are independent from Government.

DEFENCE

■ Conditions of Employment

Pamela Nash:

[\[227545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many staff in his Department and its executive agencies and associated bodies were engaged off-payroll in each of the last five years up to the most recent period for which figures are available.

Anna Soubry:

[Holding answer 23 March 2015]: The number of off-payroll appointments made by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and its Arms Length Bodies in each of the past five Financial Years (FY) has been as follows:

FY 2009-10 - 1,815

FY 2010-11 - 1,175

FY 2011-12 - 3,171

FY 2012-13 - 4,021

FY 2013-14 - 5,632

These figures represent off-payroll appointments (headcount) made centrally under the Contingent Labour arrangements. The number of off-payroll appointees engaged through other arrangements (ie, as fee earners, consultancy or locally by exception) could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Contingent Labour is generally engaged on a temporary basis to fill vacant, funded posts until recruitment action is taken to appoint a salaried permanent member of staff. Included in this category are temporary admin and clerical workers, interim managers, and specialist contractors (in finance, HR, IT and other functions).

Information about the MOD's senior payroll appointees (ie, those engaged for over £220 a day for more than six months) and those of its Arm's Length Bodies has been published in the MOD's Annual Reports and Accounts since the 2012-13 Financial Year.

Access to certain forms of private-sector expertise is of enduring value to us as it does not make economic sense to maintain all the specialist skills we need permanently in-house. However we are seeking to ensure that we benefit from external expertise through skills transfer to our own staff wherever possible to help make us more self-reliant and resilient in the longer term. The current number of off-payroll appointments reflects the need to bring in, for the short term, specialist skills which cannot be found among the permanent workforce to help us implement the Levene reforms across Defence.

■ Employment Agencies

Gemma Doyle:

[\[228190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much has been paid to recruitment agencies by (a) his Department and (b) its executive agencies and associated bodies in each year since 2010.

Anna Soubry:

[Holding answer 23 March 2015]: The Ministry of Defence has made payments to recruitment agencies since 2010 as follows:

CALENDAR YEAR	TOTAL PAYMENTS
2010	£120,905
2011	£143,785
2012	£283,725
2013	£372,937
2014	£583,086

This expenditure relates to recruitment to the permanent Senior Civil Service across the MOD, including the Trading Funds (the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, the Defence Support Group and the UK Hydrographic Office). It represents the costs of searches, advertisements, response handling, assessment and support to selection

panels. The figures do not include expenditure on Contingent Labour, the process used to engage temporary staff through recruitment agency contracts.

Recruitment to the MOD for all grades below the Senior Civil Service is carried out by Defence Business Services who do not make use of external recruitment agencies.

Gemma Doyle: [\[228191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which five recruitment agencies have received the largest total amount of money from (a) his Department and (b) its executive agencies and associated bodies since 2010.

Anna Soubry:

[Holding answer 23 March 2015]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ ICT

Philip Davies: [\[227821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which news applications staff in his Department are authorised to download and use on their work-provided phones and tablets.

Anna Soubry:

The vast majority of Ministry of Defence (MOD) mobile phones are supplied via the central Defence Fixed Telecommunications Service (DFTS). For standard issue phones, the downloading of external applications is not enabled.

There are a number of trials of Android devices (including tablets and smart phones) underway in the MOD. Users with devices supplied via the DFTS trial can download most applications as required, although security considerations prevent them from downloading some applications. Users with tablets supplied via the central Defence Information Infrastructure (DII) trial can download only a limited set of applications from an internal applications store.

Outside the provisions of the DFTS and DII arrangements, some MOD business areas have purchased devices (mobile phones and tablets) and associated applications independently. However, there is no business requirement to record details centrally; as a result, collated information related to these is not held.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

Angus Robertson: [\[227873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps have been taken to eliminate uncommanded wing drop when manoeuvring the F-35B.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Joint Strike Fighter programme has completed an extensive period of dedicated development flight test to both assess the impact of uncommanded wing drop (called transonic roll off) and mitigate its impact. The results of flight test have been to use a combination of control surface inputs from the leading edge flaps, trailing edge flaps

and horizontal tails which have been applied differentially using software driven flight controls when the aircraft is operating at elevated angles of attack in the transonic flight condition.

It is extremely difficult to totally remove transonic roll from the transonic area of the flight regime, but these changes in the software control laws have lessened its severity and it has been assessed that they are now acceptable by the experienced flight crews that have flown with them. The programme leadership, which includes the UK Ministry of Defence, has concluded that they will allow the aircraft and pilots to execute the mission. The programme will continue to monitor and refine the flight control laws throughout the life of the aircraft as the aircraft's capability develops and if the target set and mission changes.

Angus Robertson:

[\[227874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effects of buffeting and transonic roll-off on the ability of (a) the helmet-mounted display systems to display symbology and (b) gyroscopes in the inertial platforms to operate correctly on the Joint Strike Fighter F-35B.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Joint Strike Fighter programme has completed an extensive period of dedicated flight test to assess the impact of buffeting and transonic roll-off on both the helmet mounted display and gyroscopes in the inertial platforms. The conclusion of these flight tests, which have used changes in the flight control laws to mitigate both conditions throughout the flight envelope, is that the helmet mounted display and gyroscopic equipment meet the required performance specification and are fit for purpose to allow pilots to execute the mission. It is only in one area of the flight regime where buffet makes screen symbology difficult to read, and this is at the extremes of the envelope and extremely short lived as the aircraft manoeuvres, it is considered that they can be overcome by pilot training. These flight trials have included UK test pilots who have agreed with the conclusions of the US experts from government and industry.

Angus Robertson:

[\[227875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many production Joint Strike Fighter F-35B aircraft have been received by the UK armed forces; and how many of those aircraft have achieved supersonic speeds.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The UK has received three F-35B aircraft in the low rate initial production phase. None of the production aircraft have achieved supersonic speeds to date. Although the F-35 design has been tested up to supersonic flight there is currently a flight restriction that prevents this as the aircraft are awaiting modification. There is currently no requirement for the aircraft to achieve supersonic flight in support of the UK's current phase of introduction to service which is focused initial operational test and training activity.

Angus Robertson:

[227936]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the level of susceptibility of the Joint Strike Fighter F-35B to catching fire or exploding due to a lightning strike (a) while flying and (b) on the ground.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The F-35 design has yet to complete its lightning strike testing. Due to this incomplete testing, and the fact that design modifications are planned to meet required levels of performance, a flight restriction has been placed on the aircraft which prevents operation within 25 nautical miles of lightning conditions. This restriction is reduced when the aircraft is on the ground to 10 nautical miles and also uses additional protection measures such as shelters. These restrictions will be lifted once modifications have been embodied and testing completed. The modification and testing is due to be completed ahead of UK Introduction to Service in mid 2016.

■ Languages

Ian Lucas:

[228367]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) military and (b) civilian staff in his Department are proficient in (i) Arabic, (ii) Persian, (iii) Turkish, (iv) Berber, (v) Kurdish, (vi) Polish and (vii) Russian.

Anna Soubry:

[Holding answer 24 March 2015]: It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation.

■ Redundancy

Vernon Coaker:

[228355]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many people have been made redundant from (a) his Department and (b) its executive agencies and associated bodies in each year since 2010.

Anna Soubry:

[Holding answer 24 March 2015]: The table below shows the number of civilian personnel who have left the Ministry of Defence and its Trading Funds through compulsory early retirement or severance, through voluntary release and redundancy, or under the terms of the Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) in each financial year from 2010 to 31 December 2014.

	FINANCIAL YEAR					
MOD MAIN	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013/14	2014-15 (to 31/12/2014)
Voluntary Release & Redundancy	400	180	40	40	130	190

FINANCIAL YEAR						
Voluntary Early Release Scheme	-	-	5,950	3,240	1,680	~
Compulsory Retirement/Severance	210	150	20	40	10	20
TRADING FUNDS						
Voluntary Release & Redundancy	80	150	470	40	20	120
Compulsory Retirement/Severance	70	20	80	~	-	~

Notes:

1. Headcount is a measure of the size of the workforce that counts all people equally regardless of their hours of work.
 2. The figures above relate to permanent and casual MOD Main and Trading Fund personnel only. Excluded are all Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) and locally engaged civilian (LEC) personnel.
 3. Personnel who exit under Voluntary Early Release Schemes from 1 July 2011 onwards are listed separately for MOD Main from those leaving under alternative voluntary release or redundancy schemes.
 4. Where rounding has been used, totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not equal the sums of their rounded parts. When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.
- denotes 0 and a ~ denotes numbers of 1 to 5.

■ **Staff****Gloria De Piero:**[\[227956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of employees in his Department identify as (a) white or white British, (b) Asian or Asian British, (c) Black or Black British, (d) mixed or multiple ethnic group and (e) another ethnicity.

Anna Soubry:

Information on the number and proportion of employees in the Ministry of Defence identified as white or white British, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, mixed or multiple ethnic group and another ethnicity is shown in the following tables:

Service Personnel as at 1 April 2014:

	ALL PERSONNEL	WHITE	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	OTHER	UNKNOWN
All Services	159,630	146,440	1,955	6,450	2,025	770	1,980
		92.9%	1.2%	4.1%	1.3%	0.5%	

Notes:

1. Percentages are calculated from unrounded data and only include personnel with a known ethnic origin.

2. Asian comprises: Asian Bangladeshi, Asian Pakistani, Asian Indian and other Asian Backgrounds, and reflecting changes made in the 2011 Census, now includes Chinese.

Black comprises: Black Caribbean, Black African and other Black Backgrounds.

Mixed comprises: Mixed Black African and White, Mixed Asian and White, Mixed Black Caribbean and White and other Mixed Ethnic Backgrounds.

Other is defined as "other ethnic background".

Unknown includes those with an unrecorded ethnic origin and those who chose not to declare.

Civilian Personnel at 1 April 2014:

TOTAL CIVILIAN PERSONNEL	WHITE	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	OTHER	UNKNOWN	-
41,400	39,780	840	360	310	110	6,570	-
*	96.1%	2.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.3%	*	

Notes:

1. The table above excludes Trading Funds, Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) and Locally Engaged Civilians overseas (LEC) for whom declaration data are not available.

2. Percentages are calculated from unrounded data and only include personnel with a known ethnic origin.

3. Asian comprises: Asian Bangladeshi, Asian Pakistani, Asian Indian and other Asian Backgrounds, and reflecting changes made in the 2011 Census, now includes Chinese.

Black comprises: Black Caribbean, Black African and other Black Backgrounds.

Mixed comprises: Mixed Black African and White, Mixed Asian and White, Mixed Black Caribbean and White and other Mixed Ethnic Backgrounds.

Other is defined as "other ethnic background".

4. Ethnicity is a self declared characteristic on the civilian Human Resources Management System. As such, those personnel that have not declared at all and/or have chosen "not to declare" are reflected under the heading "Unknown" in the table above.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr Andrew Smith: [\[228179\]](#)

To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, when he intends to reply to the letter to him of 21 October 2014 from the hon. Member for Oxford East, reference TF/TAYL01013/01131611.

Mr Nick Clegg:

As the minister with responsibility for whistleblowing legislation, the Minister for Employment Relations and Consumer Affairs has replied to this letter.

EDUCATION

■ Children: Day Care

Andrew Stephenson: [\[228061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many free child care places there were in Lancashire in each of the last 10 years.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The table below provides the number of part time equivalent funded early education places, in Lancashire, from 2005 to 2014:

	PART TIME EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF FUNDED EARLY EDUCATION PLACES FILLED BY 2-YEAR-OLDS	PART TIME EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF FUNDED EARLY EDUCATION PLACES FILLED BY 3- AND 4-YEAR-OLDS
2005	-	22,300
2006	-	22,500
2007	-	22,600
2008	-	23,300
2009	-	23,800
2010	-	25,000
2011	-	25,200
2012	-	26,200

	PART TIME EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF FUNDED EARLY EDUCATION PLACES FILLED BY 2-YEAR-OLDS	PART TIME EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF FUNDED EARLY EDUCATION PLACES FILLED BY 3- AND 4-YEAR-OLDS
2013	-	26,700
2014	1,400	26,800

Source: Early Years Census (EYC), School Census (SC), and School Level Annual School Census (SLASC). Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.

Prior to 2010, the number of part-time places filled was derived by counting children taking up: 12.5 hours per week as one place; 10 hours per week as 0.8 places; 7.5 hours per week as 0.6 places; 5 hours per week as 0.4 places; and 2.5 hours per week as 0.2 places. A child taking up a place at a maintained nursery or primary school was counted as one part-time funded place. Since 2011, a part-time equivalent place has been equivalent to 15 hours. The part time equivalent places filled is derived from the number of funded places filled according to the amount of free entitlement a child receives. A child who holds a place at a maintained nursery or primary school is counted as one part time equivalent funded place.

The latest statistics can be found online at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provision-for-children-under-5-years-of-age-january-2014

■ Pay

Gloria De Piero:

[228578]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average hourly pay is of employees in her Department identified as (a) White or White British and (b) from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic group.

Mr Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education pays staff an annual salary and not an hourly rate of pay. The average gross pay of employees in the Department, split by ethnicity, is listed in Table 1 below that includes the Department's three Executive Agencies. Not all employees choose to declare their ethnicity and the information has been calculated from the payroll records of staff who have provided this information.

Table 1: Average gross annual salaries for staff as at September 2014 (the date of the Department's last equal pay audit) split by grade.

	WHITE	BME
EA	£19,066	£20,971
EO	£24,210	£25,510
HEO	£29,884	£31,112

	WHITE	BME
SEO	£37,444	£37,488
GRADE 7	£50,387	£51,090
GRADE 6	£62,939	£62,485
Senior Civil Servants	£84,597	£88,501

■ **Tauheedul Education Trust**

Mark Hendrick:

[\[228552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what (a) discussions, (b) meetings and (c) other communications she has had with the Tauheedul Education Trust since 13 February 2015 on the application for change of use from offices to state funded school for Universal House, 35-37 London Road, Preston.

Mr Edward Timpson:

The Secretary of State has not held any discussions, meetings, or had any other communications with the Tauheedul Education Trust since 13 February 2015.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Animal Products: Israel**

Jeremy Corbyn:

[\[228634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she has taken to ensure that animal products originating in Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory are not imported into the UK with sanitary or phytosanitary certification issued by the Israeli authorities; and when those steps were taken.

George Eustice:

Products of animal origin (POAO) imported from third countries must have been produced to standards at least equivalent to those in the European Union (EU). The European Commission's Food and Veterinary Office is responsible for carrying out inspections in the third countries from which POAO is imported. POAO from third countries must:

- come from an approved country;
- come from an approved establishment/plant;
- be accompanied by appropriate animal and public health certification;
- enter the EU through a Border Inspection Post (BIP) where checks are carried out to ensure that import conditions have been met.

Israel is approved for a number of different categories of animal product. This approval is limited to Israel and does not include the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr Gordon Marsden: [\[228616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what independent veterinary evidence she has sought from outside her Department on the effects on badger cubs of moving the proposed badger cull from autumn 2015 to June 2015.

Mr Gordon Marsden: [\[228617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of additional (a) badger cubs and (b) adult badgers that will be killed as a result of moving the proposed badger cull from autumn 2015 to June 2015.

George Eustice:

No decision has yet been taken on the start dates for culling in 2015. It is for the cull companies to decide when they wish to start, and the current four year licences for the two existing cull areas allow culling of badgers from 1 June onwards. This is based on previous advice that badger cubs are weaned and independent by 1 June.

An estimate of the minimum number of badgers to be removed from each cull area has not yet been finalised.

■ Dairy Farming

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[228559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of dairy farmers who have ceased trading in the last 12 months.

George Eustice:

Data is only available on the total number of dairy farms each year so this only shows the net change, rather than the separate numbers of entries and exits from dairy farming. The latest data available on the number of dairy farms in England is for the period from December 2013 to December 2014 and is shown below. The change in the number of farms will include new holdings which are registered with dairy cattle, holdings that have ceased to have cattle and holdings that have merged together.

The number of dairy cows on these dairy farms is also shown below. This shows that despite a 2% decrease in the overall number of dairy farms in the past year, the number of dairy cows has increased by a corresponding 2%, suggesting consolidation within the industry.

DATE	NUMBER OF DAIRY FARMS ^(A)	NUMBER OF COWS IN THE DAIRY HERD ^(B)
Dec-2013	8,197	1,124,368
June-2014	8,092	1,128,548

DATE	NUMBER OF DAIRY FARMS ^(a)	NUMBER OF COWS IN THE DAIRY HERD ^(b)
Dec-2014	8,051	1,150,007
% change Dec14/Dec13	-2%	2%

(a) Sourced from Cattle Tracing System. Dairy farms are defined as the number of holdings with more than 10 cows in the dairy herd.

(b) Cows in the dairy herd are defined as female dairy cows over 2 years old in the milking herd (i.e. with offspring).

■ Dangerous Dogs

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[228570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many convictions there have been for offences concerning dangerous dogs under the Anti-Social, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

George Eustice:

There are no offences related to dangerous dogs under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. There were amendments made to the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 by the 2014 Act but as those changes only came into force last year, we would not have any available data until May this year.

■ Ivory: China

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[228566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions her Department has had with the Chinese government on whether it plans to expand its temporary ban on ivory imports.

George Eustice:

The UK Government welcomes China's introduction of a temporary ban on ivory imports as a positive signal of its commitment to tackle the illegal trade in ivory. Defra has an ongoing dialogue with China on all aspects of the illegal ivory trade, including as part of the preparations for the Kasane Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade being held in Botswana on 25 March.

■ Pigeons: Diseases

Jim Shannon:

[\[228015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to reduce the incidence of trichomoniasis in pigeons.

George Eustice:

Trichomonas gallinae, is an endemic parasitic disease of birds, including pigeons. It is not an OIE listed disease, nor is it notifiable under EU legislation. As such there is no requirement for Government to take any action to control this disease. Control can be undertaken by keepers under the advice of their veterinary surgeons and by regular cleaning of food and water sources, and from contamination by wild pigeons and other birds.

■ **School Milk****Kevin Brennan:**[\[228597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions officials in her Department have had with their counterparts in EU member states and officials in the European Commission on the revision of the European School Milk Scheme.

George Eustice:

Defra officials have been fully engaged with the EU Commission's proposal to reform the EU School Milk Scheme and have participated in a number of technical working groups.

Work on this dossier has become bogged down on a number of important issues, including Member State concerns about the legal basis for the proposals, the nature of their objectives and scope, and the main financial provisions. The Commission is currently carrying out a review and the department will engage constructively with this process. In the meantime, the existing arrangements for EU school milk – agreed during CAP reform and set out in Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 – will continue to apply.

Kevin Brennan:[\[228598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department plans to participate in the European School Milk Scheme in future years.

George Eustice:

The UK has a long track-record of participation in the EU School Milk Scheme. However, plans to reform and improve it have been put on hold whilst the EU Commission carries out an evaluation. At this stage, future arrangements including any details of Member State allocations have yet to be decided.

Kevin Brennan:[\[228611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much the Rural Payments Agency claimed under the European School Milk Scheme in each year since 2005.

George Eustice:

The amount claimed by the RPA under the European School Milk Scheme is set out in the table below:

SCHOOL YEAR	KILOLITRES PAID	STERLING PAID EU ELEMENT ONLY
05/06	41,590.001	£5,986,677.08
06/07	45,758.031	£5,836,919.30
07/08	42,032.483	£4,816,514.53
08/09	37,055.854	£5,466,277.10
09/10	44,549.169	£4,696,956.69
10/11	26,229.850	£4,209,003.66
11/12	25,251.060	£4,079,587.82
12/13	22,078.642	£3,344,255.55
13/14	21,278.406	£3,354,230.10

Notes:-**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ **Bahrain****Jeremy Corbyn:**[\[228630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to the government of Bahrain concerning the cases of Nabeel Rajab and Hussain Jawad and other human rights activists charged with expression-related offences.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

I have raised Mr. Rajab's case with senior representatives of the Government of Bahrain and encouraged the Bahraini authorities to ensure due process is followed and international norms of justice are upheld, including with regards to freedom of expression. The Government is also following Mr Jawad's case closely. The British Embassy in Bahrain has raised the allegations of mistreatment made by Mr Jawad with the Ministry of Interior's Ombudsman. I understand that Mr Jawad's complaint has been referred to the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) and a criminal investigation is underway. The Ministry of Interior Special Investigation Unit is aware of the UK's concerns about this case. British embassy officials have attended Mr Rajab and Mr Jawad's court appearances.

■ Employment Agencies

Mr Pat McFadden: [\[228379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which five recruitment agencies have received the largest amount of money from (a) his Department and (b) associated bodies since 2010.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The following five agencies received the largest amount of money from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in the UK. Figures for recruitment conducted by Posts overseas are not held centrally. Capita Penna Veredus Hudson Hays Recruitment agencies are selected through a competitive tendering exercise to ensure value for money. The following five agencies received the largest amount of money from the executive agencies and associated bodies of the FCO (FCO Services, Wilton Park, British Council, Great Britain China Centre, Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission and Westminster Foundation for Democracy). Accountancy Recruitment Morgan Hunt Perrett Laver Prospectus Pytec

Mr Pat McFadden: [\[228440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much has been paid to recruitment agencies by (a) his Department and (b) its executive agencies and associated bodies in each year since 2010.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The following table shows the total amount paid to all recruitment agencies used by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for each year since 2010/11. Our records for 2010/11 and 2011/12 did not include the cost of advertising. Records for subsequent years have included the cost of advertising.

2010/11	£238,416.80
2011/12	£80,867.21
2012/13	£275,515.25
2013/14	£255,777.10
2014/15 (year to date)	£101,869.75

Recruitment agencies are selected through a competitive tendering exercise to ensure value for money.

Over the same years the following amounts were paid to recruitment agencies used by executive agencies and associated bodies of the FCO (FCO Services, Wilton Park, British Council, Great Britain China Centre, Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission and Westminster Foundation for Democracy).

2010/11	£5,955.00
2011/12	£18,287.79
2012/13	£13,351.37
2013/14	£34,485.87
2014/15 (year to date)	£64,694.71

■ **European Union**

Mr Pat McFadden: [\[228380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many times the Minister for Europe has met with (a) the President of the European Commission, (b) Vice Presidents of the European Commission, (c) the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and (d) European Commissioners since January 2014.

Mr Pat McFadden: [\[228381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many times he has met with (a) the President of the European Commission, (b) Vice Presidents of the European Commission, (c) the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and (d) European Commissioners since July 2014.

Mr David Lidington:

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right Hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond), and I regularly engage with Commissioners and Members of the European Parliament. In addition to specific inward and outward visits, we routinely talk to European Commissioners during and in the margins of Councils, conferences and other events on a monthly basis. The following examples are indicative. 2014 was an atypical year for engagement with Commissioners because of the transition from the Barroso to Juncker Commissions.

We both met First-Vice President Timmermans in London in March 2015 and I also met him in the margins of the February and March 2015 General Affairs Councils. I met Vice President Georgieva in March 2015, Commissioner Hahn in January 2015 and Commissioner Hill in January 2015. The Foreign Secretary also met Commissioner Hill in December 2014. In 2014, I met Commissioners Füle, Sefcovic and Vice President Reding.

We both met the new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President, Federica Mogherini, in London on 24 February 2015. The Foreign Secretary and I regularly meet the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President at meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council Brussels. The Foreign Secretary also meets her at sessions of the nuclear negotiations with Iran and at other events such as at the Munich Security Conference in February 2015. Both the Foreign Secretary and I met the former High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice

President Baroness Cathy Ashton numerous times since January 2014. A precise number of these meetings is not held on record.

■ **Ilois: Resettlement**

Jeremy Corbyn: [\[228636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on whether the recent KPMG report is the first independent study there has been on the feasibility of resettlement in the British Indian Ocean Territory.

James Duddridge:

Both the 2002 and the current feasibility studies of resettlement of the British Indian Ocean Territory involved external consultants. The scope and scale of the most recent study delivered by KPMG was much broader than the 2002 report.

■ **Legal Costs**

Mr Gareth Thomas: [\[228276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much (a) his Department and (b) its executive agencies and associated bodies has spent on legal fees in each year since 2010; and if he will publish a detailed breakdown of that expenditure.

Mr David Lidington:

[Holding answer 23 March 2015]: Please see attached document for full response in table form.

Attachments:

1. Answer PQ 228276 [PQ 228276.docx]

■ **Middle East**

David Simpson: [\[228525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to protect Christians and other minority groups across the Middle East.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Conflict and instability in the region has made the plight of many minorities a significant concern and we have witnessed systematic and deliberate attacks against religious and ethnic minorities in the Middle East and North Africa, including Christians. We regularly urge all governments in the region to ensure the protection of all religious minorities. We encourage them to develop inclusive political systems that represent all of their citizens. We also work proactively in the region to promote community cohesion and inclusive governance.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have been responsible for many recent atrocities committed against religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria. We condemn these appalling acts and are committed to defeating ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained international strategy as part of the efforts of the Global

Coalition to Counter ISIL. The humanitarian aid provided by the UK will have helped many victims of ISIL's atrocities, including the protection of vulnerable groups. And the UK co-sponsored the resolution passed by the UN Human Rights Council on 1 September 2014, which highlights ISIL's abhorrent actions and commits to a team of experts going to Iraq to investigate these atrocities.

In Syria a number of UK funded projects have brought together religious leaders from all denominations (including Alawi, Christians, Kurds, Druze and Sunnis) to foster greater understanding between faiths and support reconciliation. In Tunisia, we also funded a project run by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Democracy which considers, amongst other things, the protection of religious minorities under the new constitution. In Jordan, our work within refugee camps has helped reduce tensions between Syrian refugees and their host communities. In Lebanon, we are supporting education programmes including the addition of extra-curricular activities to help strengthen social cohesion. And in Iraq, we have funded a series of grassroots meetings between religious leaders to promote religious tolerance and freedom of religion or belief. We also continue to encourage religious leaders in Iraq to speak out publicly and condemn sectarian violence.

■ Passports: British Nationals Abroad

Jenny Willott:

[228730]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much revenue his Department has generated through the processing and issuing of temporary passports overseas to British nationals who had lost or had their passports stolen whilst abroad in each of the last five years.

James Duddridge:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office issues two travel documents – Emergency Travel Documents (ETDs) which allow for travel up to a maximum of five countries and Emergency Passports (EPs) which are used primarily in the event of a crisis. These travel documents are issued to British nationals who are overseas and whose passport is lost, stolen, damaged, has expired or is otherwise unavailable and who have a requirement to travel before a replacement passport is available. The total income from ETDs and EPs in the last five financial years is shown below. This cannot be accurately broken down by the reason why a travel document was issued.

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL INCOME
2014-15 (as of 24 Mar 2015)	£3,481,866.30
2013-14	£3,283,015.79
2012-13	£2,810,021.69
2011-12	£2,855,322.55
2010-11	£1,739,616.52

The cost of consular services is not subsidised by the UK taxpayer. The charges for services we provide, such as ETDs, are calculated to cover the full cost of the consular operation globally.

Jenny Willott:

[\[228731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many temporary passports were issued by the British authorities in Spain to British nationals who had lost or had their passports stolen in each of the last five years.

James Duddridge:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) can issue Emergency Travel Documents (ETDs) to British national overseas if their passport has been lost, stolen, damaged, has expired or is otherwise unavailable. A breakdown of ETDs issued in Spain over the last five years is in the table below.

YEAR	ETDs ISSUED FOR LOST/STOLEN PASSPORTS (SPAIN)	ETDs ISSUED FOR ALL REASONS (SPAIN)
2014	5,028	6,373
2013	5,058	5,924
2012	5,180	6,029
2011	No data available	5,323
2010	No data available	4,198*

(*from March 2010 – Dec 2010)

Jenny Willott:

[\[228732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many temporary passports were issued overseas to British nationals who had lost or had their passports stolen whilst abroad in each of the last five years.

James Duddridge:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) can issue Emergency Travel Documents (ETDs) to British national overseas if their passport has been lost, stolen, damaged, has expired or is otherwise unavailable. A breakdown of ETDs issued by the FCO over the last five years for lost/stolen passports is below, as well as the complete figure.

YEAR	ETDs ISSUED FOR LOST/STOLEN PASSPORTS (GLOBAL)	TOTAL NUMBER OF ETDs ISSUED
2014	19,400	39,053
2013	18,069	30,006

YEAR	ETDS ISSUED FOR LOST/STOLEN PASSPORTS (GLOBAL)	TOTAL NUMBER OF ETDS ISSUED
2012	17,298	28,880
2011	No data available	27,467
2010	No data available	14,367

■ Pay

Gloria De Piero:

[228311]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the average hourly pay is of employees at each grade within his Department identified as (a) White or White British and (b) from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic group.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Our pay scales at all grades apply equally to all staff.

A number of factors impact on an individual officers hourly rate of pay including length of service, time in grade, and previous civil service employment.

The average hourly pay of Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) employees at each grade identified as a) White or White British and b) from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic group is:

Grade White or White British Black, Asian or other minority ethnic group A1 (AA=) £9.82 £9.80 A2 (AO=) £11.21 £11.22 B3 (EO=) £13.31 £13.16 C4 (HEO=) £15.47 £15.05 C5 (SEO=) £19.22 £18.76 D6 (G7=) £24.95 £25.64 D7 (G6=) £30.98 £30.85 SCS1 £36.18 £34.37 SCS2 £46.85 £46.28 SCS3 £67.51

This is taken from data at 31 December 2014 and only includes staff salaries where a declaration of ethnicity has been made.

More details on FCO Diversity and Equality can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/diversity-and-equality-report-2014>

■ Saudi Arabia and Egypt

Greg Mulholland:

[228725]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to secure the release of Raif Badawi and Alaa Abdel Fattah.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK condemns the use of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment in all circumstances. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond) raised the matter last month with the Deputy Crown Prince, Second Deputy Premier and Interior Minister of Saudi Arabia, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Naif. My right hon. Friend also raised the case again when he visited the Kingdom on 23 March. The Saudi authorities have confirmed that the case has been referred to the Saudi courts for further consideration. We have raised this case of Alaa Abdel Fattah in our conversations with the Egyptian government and will continue to do so. We remain concerned by the Protest Law under which Alaa Abdel Fattah was charged. Egypt's constitution rightly demands respect for freedom of expression and association. I call on the Egyptian government to ensure that they implement these rights for Egyptian citizens, including by reviewing the Protest Law.

■ South Sudan

Mr Gordon Brown:

[\[228185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to leaders in South Sudan on the recent abduction of children from a school in Malakal.

James Duddridge:

We are deeply concerned by the recent abduction of children in Malakal, South Sudan. Our Embassy in Juba has made repeated representations to the Government of South Sudan and called for their safe return and for the perpetrators to be held to account.

■ Sudan

Mark Durkan:

[\[228073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Government has taken a position on the viability of forthcoming elections in Sudan; and what discussions he has had with his Sudanese counterpart on ensuring that conditions are met for those elections to be free and fair.

James Duddridge:

Due to the ongoing conflicts, political detentions, and clampdown on media freedoms, it is hard to see how elections scheduled in April 2015 could be free and fair. Our Embassy in Khartoum continues to call on the Government of Sudan to address these issues and stand by their commitments to National Dialogue. A genuine National Dialogue remains the best opportunity to achieve a genuinely representative political system in Sudan.

Mark Durkan:

[\[228078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of levels of political freedoms in eastern Sudan.

James Duddridge:

The Government of Sudan continues to restrict political and individual freedoms throughout Sudan, including eastern Sudan. HMG ministers and officials consistently raise our serious concerns about human rights in Sudan with its government.

■ Ukraine**Sir John Stanley:**[\[228444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Defence Attaché in post in the British Embassy in Ukraine was aware when the Government gave export licence approval in December 2014 for the export of 75 Saxon Armoured Personnel Carriers to Ukraine that they might be armed on their arrival in Ukraine; and what steps were taken by the British Embassy in Ukraine to inform the Government of this possibility.

Mr David Lidington:

Our British Embassy in Kyiv were consulted on the export licence application and made enquiries with the Ukraine Ministry of Defence and Ukroboronprom (state-owned defence enterprise) who stated that the Saxon Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) would be used by two battalions operating in the Anti-Terrorist Operation area and by airmobile units for reconnaissance and general patrolling. Our British Embassy in Kyiv was not aware that the Saxon vehicles might be armed on their arrival in Ukraine and we are not aware that the Ukrainians have armed any of the APC's. We have however been informed by the Ukraine Deputy Minister of Defence that some may be converted for use as "Medevac vehicles."

■ Yemen**Keith Vaz:**[\[228346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support his Department is providing to the UN for ongoing negotiations between political parties in Yemen.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK is extremely concerned about the deteriorating situation in Yemen. We continue to believe that an inclusive political process is the best way to achieve long-term stability, avoid civil war, economic collapse and a humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen. We work through the UN, Friends of Yemen and other international organisations to support the political transition. The UK contributes core funding to the Office of Jamal Benomar, the UN Special Advisor to the Secretary General, who is leading the political negotiations. The UK is also providing financial support via the UN to the political transition, including the National Dialogue Conference and constitution drafting, and for the elections process.

Keith Vaz:[\[228347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what contact his Department has with President Hadi of Yemen in his new residence in Aden.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Our Ambassador to Yemen personally visited President Hadi in Aden on 3 March. The Ambassador, as well as my Rt Hon Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Sir Alan Duncan), have also spoken to President Hadi by telephone, twice in the last week.

HEALTH

■ Ambulance Services

Andrew Stephenson: [228058]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of Community First Responders supporting ambulance responses in (a) England, (b) the North West and (c) East Lancashire.

Jane Ellison:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Ambulance Services: East of England

Mr Douglas Carswell: [228004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the response time performance was of the East of England Ambulance Service in the last six months.

Jane Ellison:

Ambulance response time data is published monthly and can be found on the NHS England website using the following link:

www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/ambulance-quality-indicators/ambulance-quality-indicators-data-2014-15/

■ Aspirin

Jim Shannon: [228017]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with the Royal Colleges and the British Medical Association about steps to reduce excessive usage of aspirin leading to internal bleeding or strokes.

Jane Ellison:

There have been no such recent discussions.

In England, the current clinical consensus is that low dose aspirin is not recommended purely for primary prevention of cardiovascular disease.

■ Barts Health NHS Trust

Lyn Brown: [\[228126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans Barts and the London NHS Trust has for neuromuscular care co-ordinator support to meet the neurosciences: specialised neurology (adult) service specification.

Norman Lamb:

NHS England has advised that the provision of a neuromuscular care co-ordinator within the multidisciplinary team was a key requirement of the specialised commissioning, service specification compliance exercise.

At the time of the initial assessment in 2013, the service at Barts Health NHS Trust was rated compliant in this area, which included the provision of a neuromuscular care co-ordinator.

The NHS Trust Development Authority has advised that Barts Health NHS Trust has agreed to prepare a business case to explore the possibility of creating a trust funded neuromuscular care coordinator post and will explore the possibility of obtaining charity funding for this post.

■ Childbirth

Luciana Berger: [\[228637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many recorded episodes of births before admission there were in each year since 2009-10.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

This information is not collected centrally.

■ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Jim Shannon: [\[228018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of people in each age group who have suffered from chronic fatigue syndrome in each of the last five years.

Norman Lamb:

No assessment has been made of the number of people in each age group who have suffered from chronic fatigue syndrome in each of the last five years. With the exception of cancer, there is no comprehensive central record of disease diagnosis for any condition. In 2007 The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence produced the clinical guidance '*Chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis (or encephalopathy): Diagnosis and management of CFS/ME in adults and children*', which estimates that the annual prevalence is approximately 4,000 cases per million of the population.

■ Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Liz Kendall: [\[228589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the average length of stay in hospital was for people with a primary diagnosis of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in England in each year from 2009-10 to 2014-15.

Jane Ellison:

The attached table gives the mean and median length of stay and the number of finished discharge episodes where length of stay was recorded for patients with a primary diagnosis of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease for years 2009-10 to 2013-14. Complete and quality checked data for 2014-15 is not yet available.

Attachments:

1. COPD length of stay and FDEs 2009-14 [COPD length of stay and FDEs.xlsx]

Liz Kendall: [\[228591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much was spent on the prescription of drugs to manage chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in the NHS in each year from 2009-10 to 2014-15.

George Freeman:

The information requested cannot be provided as information on why a drug is prescribed is not collected. This is a particular issue for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) as medicines used to treat COPD are also used to treat a number of other medical conditions, for example asthma.

Liz Kendall: [\[228612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much the Government has allocated to development of new drugs and treatments for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease each year from 2009-10 to 2014-15.

George Freeman:

The following table shows estimated expenditure on research relating to the development of new drugs and treatments for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) by Research Councils, Innovate UK, and by the National Institute for Health (NIHR) through its research programmes, research centres and units, and research fellowships.

£ million						
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Medical Research Council (MRC)	3.8	2.6	2.4	2.9	2.1	n/a
Innovate UK	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.3	1.4	0.6
NIHR	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.9	2.6	2.5
Total	4.7	3.5	3.7	6.2	6.1	n/a

Notes:

1. The BBSRC funds world class bioscience and biotechnology that underpins health research funded by others, but does not fund research directly relating to understanding/treating specific diseases. The underpinning health research that the BBSRC supports seeks to provide a better understanding of what makes a healthy biological system, and the key moderators of this health (both positive and negative), and also informs strategies to help maintain resilient health across the life-course and reduce the risk of emergence of diseases typically associated with age-related health decline. In the context of COPD, the BBSRC funds a small amount of directly underpinning biotechnology work on the development of new lung tissue models.

2. The MRC supports investigator-led research in response to proposals from the academic community and does not normally allocate funds to particular topics. High quality applications for support are welcomed into any aspect of human health and are judged in open competition with other demands on funding. Awards are made according to their scientific quality and importance to human health. The MRC also provides long term funding through our own research Units, often in partnership with Universities. In addition to research directly relating to the development of new drugs and treatments for COPD the MRC also supports a broader portfolio of research on COPD and other respiratory conditions which aims to advance our understanding and inform new treatments.

3. The Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) has not funded any research into the development of new drugs and treatments for COPD. STFC's Central Laser Facility and the Diamond Light Source have provided access for research by other organisations.

4. Total spend by the NIHR on research relating to the development of new drugs and treatments for COPD is higher than the figures shown because expenditure by the NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN) on these topics cannot be disaggregated from total CRN expenditure.

■ Colorectal Cancer

David Simpson:

[\[228520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps the Government is taking to provide support and assistance for patients with bowel cancer.

Jane Ellison:

The National Cancer Survivorship Initiative (NCSI) has set out to understand the numbers, needs, and experiences of people living with and beyond cancer, including bowel cancer, and the most effective service solutions to meet the growing numbers of survivors. The NCSI has recommended four priority areas: recovery packages; consequences of treatment and Patient Report Outcome Measures; stratified pathways of care; and physical activity. To support this work NHS England, in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, has established the Living with and Beyond Cancer Programme, a two-year programme of work to embed the four priority areas from NCSI into mainstream commissioning.

Living with and beyond cancer has also been identified as a key theme by the independent Cancer Taskforce, which is developing a new cancer strategy to be published in summer 2015.

■ Contraceptives: Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Jim Shannon:

[\[228011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with the Royal Colleges and the British Medical Association about possible links between use of the contraceptive pill and Crohn's disease.

George Freeman:

A search of the Department's Ministerial correspondence database has not identified any items of correspondence received since 1 January 2012 from the Royal Colleges and the British Medical Association about possible links between use of the contraceptive pill and Crohn's disease.

The contraceptive pill is a scientifically proven, highly effective medicine for preventing unwanted pregnancy. The benefits associated with using the contraceptive pill far outweigh the risk of serious side effects, which are rare. Several observational studies have found a possible association between the contraceptive pill and Crohn's disease.

As with all medicines, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency continually monitors the safety of the contraceptive pill and will seek independent scientific advice from the Commission on Human Medicines and the Medicines for Women's Health Expert Advisory Group on the available data on a possible association between the contraceptive pill and Crohn's disease to ensure that product information adequately describes the risks associated with use of these medicines.

■ Dental Services

Mr Frank Field:

[\[228442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to encourage the provision of dental treatment in domiciliary settings.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

NHS England is responsible for commissioning all dental services including domiciliary care to meet local need. The range of care offered in domiciliary settings can be limited by constraints on equipment, health and safety issues and cross infection. NHS England considers all these factors as well as costs in commissioning domiciliary dental services.

■ Dental Services: Clacton

Mr Douglas Carswell:

[\[228001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the provision of NHS dental services in Clacton constituency.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

NHS England is responsible for commissioning dental services. As such, the Department has made no assessment of the adequacy of the provision of NHS dental services in Clacton constituency.

NHS England advises that it believes there are sufficient units of dental activity commissioned in the Clacton area to meet oral health needs. NHS England is not aware of any significant complaints in respect of accessing NHS dental provision in this locality.

Nationally, more than 30 million people were seen by an NHS dentist in the 24 month period ending 31 December 2014. Almost 1.6 million more people have been seen by an NHS dentist since May 2010. The Government is committed to working with NHS England to increase access to NHS dentistry.

■ Doctors: Lancashire

Mark Hendrick: [\[228083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many doctors were employed by (a) Lancashire Teaching Hospitals and (b) Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust in (i) 2010, (ii) 2011, (iii) 2012, (iv) 2013 and (v) 2014.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

The information requested is shown in the following table.

NHS HOSPITAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES (HCHS): HCHS DOCTORS ¹ BY SELECTED ORGANISATIONS AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2010 TO 2014, FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS

As at 30 September each year					full time equivalents
	2010	2011	2012	2013	September 2014
Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust	129	116	150	160	163
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	671	680	681	688	732

Source: Health and Social Care Information Centre Medical and Dental Workforce Census.

Source: Health and Social Care Information Centre, Provisional NHS HCHS monthly workforce statistics.

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These statistics relate to the contracted positions within English NHS organisations and may include those where the person assigned to the position is temporarily absent, for example on maternity leave.

Notes:

2010-2013 figures are from the medical and dental annual workforce census, as at 30 September each specified year

2014 figures are from the Provisional Monthly Workforce Statistics, as at 30 September 2014.

Full time equivalent figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

¹ All figures exclude locum doctors

Monthly data

Provisional monthly NHS workforce data figures may be revised from month to month as issues are uncovered and resolved. The monthly workforce data does not include Primary care staff or Bank staff.

www.hscic.gov.uk/pubs/provisionalmonthlyhchsworkforce

Data quality

The Health and Social Care Information Centre seeks to minimise inaccuracies and the effect of missing and invalid data but responsibility for data accuracy lies with the organisations providing the data. Methods are continually being updated to improve data quality. Where changes impact on figures already published, this is assessed but unless it is significant at national level figures are not changed.

■ Empty Property

Andrew Gwynne:

[228046]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much his Department and each of its non-departmental public bodies has spent on vacant properties since May 2010.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

Between 2010/11 and 2013/14 the Department and its non-departmental public bodies spent the following on vacant property:

2010 - £500,669

2011 - £352,875

2012 - £163,996

2013 - £229,540

2014 - £174,669

This includes spend on holding costs such as maintenance and security, for wholly vacant properties.

■ Fractures

Jim Shannon: [\[228014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects the NHS to introduce titanium splints to stabilise rib fractures.

George Freeman:

In the absence of guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), it is for National Health Service commissioners to take funding decisions on treatments based on an assessment of the available evidence.

NICE issued interventional procedures guidance on the insertion of metal rib reinforcements to stabilise a flail chest wall in 2010 that recommends that the procedure may be used provided that normal arrangements are in place for clinical governance, consent and audit. NICE interventional procedures guidance makes recommendations on whether procedures are safe and efficacious, but does not provide guidance on whether the procedure should be funded in the NHS.

■ General Practitioners

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[228628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will set a target date by which all GP-registered patients in England will be able to access a GP, 8am to 8pm, seven days a week.

George Freeman:

We are encouraging improved access to general practitioner services through the Prime Minister's Challenge Fund.

Over seven million patients are already benefiting from the initial £50 million investment which is supporting 20 pilots covering over 1,100 practices.

A wide variety of approaches are being tested ranging from opening 8am-8pm on weekdays and weekends; better use of telecare and health apps; more innovative ways to access services by video call, email or telephone, to developing more integrated services with a single point of contact to co-ordinate patient services across health and social care.

Last September the Prime Minister announced a further £100 million investment. This will enable millions more patients to benefit from improved access. We will be announcing the successful wave two pilots shortly.

■ Health and Social Care Act 2012

Andrew Gwynne: [\[228045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the cost has been of implementing the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

The main provisions of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 came into effect on 1 April 2013. They reshaped the National Health Service so that is more patient-centred, led by health professionals and focussed on delivering world-class health outcomes.

My Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced the costs in his Written Ministerial Statement of 22 July 2014 official report, column 119WS.

These have been more than covered by the savings arising from the Health and Social Care Act which, up to 31 March 2014, were approximately £4.9 billion, and the NHS will see recurrent savings of £1.5 billion per year as a result of the reforms. This money will be available for reinvestment in future patient care.

■ Health Services: Private Sector**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[228222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many new licences Monitor has granted to a non-NHS provider in each year since 2010.

Jane Ellison:

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 requires independent providers to hold a licence from 1 April 2014. Therefore, no licences were issued before that date.

In 2014, Monitor issued 102 licences to independent providers. In 2015 to date, five licences have been issued.

Andrew Gwynne:[\[228223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many non-NHS providers have registered with the Care Quality Commission in each year since 2010.

Norman Lamb:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care providers in England. The CQC is responsible for registering providers and assessing whether providers are meeting the required levels of safety and quality.

The CQC provided the following information:

There is no legal definition of a non-National Health Service provider. The legal terms used to cover NHS trusts, foundation trusts and special health authorities are "NHS bodies" and "NHS providers" as defined in the Health and Social Care Act 2008. The data for this response has been obtained by excluding providers that are classified as NHS providers or NHS bodies from the list of all providers of health and social care registered with CQC.

NUMBER OF NON NHS PROVIDERS REGISTERED PER FINANCIAL YEAR SINCE 1 OCTOBER 2010						
Financial Year	Independent Ambulance	Independent Healthcare Organisation	Primary Dental Care	Primary Medical Services	Social Care Organisation	Total
2010-11		898		5	11,179 ²	12,082
2011-12	249	425	8,451 ²	54	1,911	11,090
2012-13	29	274	522	11	1,111	1,947
2013-14	30	237	639	7,671 ²	1,054	9,631
2014-15 ¹	24	178	636	108	796	1,742
Total	332	2,012	10,248	7,849	16,051	36,492

Source: CQC database as at 2 March 2015

Notes:

¹ From 1 April 2014 to 1 March 2015

² The increase in figures is due to the initial transition of these sectors to within the remit of the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

Regulation of non-NHS providers under the Health and Social Care Act began on 1 October 2010 so numbers have been provided from that date.

The numbers given are non-NHS providers that registered and also include non-NHS providers that are now deregistered. A single provider may operate one or more locations.

A provider can change sector classification over time which explains why some primary medical services providers appear to have registered before 2013 when that sector transitioned to within the remit of the Health and Social Care Act.

■ Health Services: Young People

Luciana Berger:

[\[228606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many NHS trusts across the country have a youth advisory partnership group or similar engagement provision for young people using services.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

This information is not collected centrally.

■ Hepatitis: Drugs

Sir David Amess:

[\[228063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department and NHS England are taking to accelerate the access of hepatitis C patient to interferon-free medicines; and what estimate he has made of the number of patients who will commence treatment with such medicines in 2015.

George Freeman:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is undertaking technology appraisals of several new drugs for the treatment of hepatitis C.

In advance of the NICE guidance, NHS England will be extending access to non-interferon based therapies for some patient groups with hepatitis C. Interferon remains a standard treatment recommended by NICE.

NHS England has advised that it is not able to give an estimate of the number of patients who will commence treatment with these medicines in 2015 at this stage.

Luciana Berger:

[\[228635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answers of 27 February 2015 to Questions 225235 and 225238, by what process NHS England is developing the interim commissioning policies referred to in those Answers; whether funding has been allocated to support those policies; and whether those policies have been discussed by the Clinical Priorities Advisory Group.

Jane Ellison:

NHS England's process for developing interim commissioning policies involves evidence review, recommendation development, and service and financial impact assessment.

NHS England's Clinical Reference Groups (CRGs), Public Health England and other stakeholders are involved in these processes.

The recommendations of CRGs are considered by the relevant Programme of Care Board and then the Clinical Priorities Advisory Group (CPAG).

The draft interim policy for treatment of hepatitis C in patients with cirrhosis is following this process. NHS England has advised that it will be considered by the Programme of Care Board at the end of March and then by CPAG.

The financial impact assessment of the interim policy is continuing. This will inform the decision on financial planning that NHS England will take with regard to this policy.

■ Hospitals: Cleaning Services

Mr Jamie Reed:

[\[228610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when the last deep clean of hospitals in the NHS took place.

George Freeman:

All hospital trusts must retain registration with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) against a range of safety and quality standards including one relating to the cleanliness of healthcare premises. The precise arrangements that hospitals make to demonstrate that they are meeting the standard are for local determination and hospitals will make provision for on-going deep clean activity via their strategic and operational cleaning plans.

The NHS Constitution pledges that all patients should be treated in a clean environment and by all recent measures, standards of hospital cleanliness are very high. The most recent CQC survey results (of both in-patients and those using accident and emergency departments) show the highest ever levels of patient satisfaction with the cleanliness of wards and toilets.

These improved levels of cleanliness have gone hand in hand with a continuing reduction in the number of healthcare associated infections such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. Against that background, there has been no centrally funded deep cleaning programme for all hospital trusts since that undertaken in 2008 by the previous administration.

■ Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Mr Andrew Smith: [\[228148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the ability of patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) to access (a) a specialist IBD nurse, (b) specialist dietetic support and (c) defined psychological support.

Mr Andrew Smith: [\[228178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what guidance his Department issues to providers and commissioners on the NICE Quality Standard on inflammatory bowel disease.

Mr Andrew Smith: [\[228180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to meet the psychological needs of those with (a) inflammatory bowel disease and (b) other long-term health conditions.

Norman Lamb:

The two main forms of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) are Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published, *Crohn's Disease Management in Adults, Children and Young People*, in October 2012, and, *Ulcerative Colitis Management in Adults, Children and Young People*, in June 2013, set out best practice in the management of these conditions.

Both sets of guidance state that people with IBD should be offered a range of support which could include access to psychological and dietetic support, if appropriate. The ulcerative colitis guideline highlights psychological support as being particularly important if a patient is considering surgery for their disease, and post-operatively, when surgery has taken place. With regard to access to IBD nurse specialists, the Ulcerative

Colitis guideline sets out that both patients who are considering surgery and who have had surgery should have receive information about their treatment from a specialist.

The NICE Quality Standard for IBD comprises the four quality improvement statements as follows; specialist assessment, multidisciplinary team support, surgery and monitoring drug treatment. Quality standards are designed to drive measurable quality improvements within a particular area of health or care using the best available evidence. NHS England expects local commissioners and providers to consider the latest evidence and guidance, including from NICE, when planning services for patients with all conditions, including IBD. Whilst providers and commissioners must have regard to the Quality Standards in planning and delivering services, the quality standards do not provide a comprehensive service specification and are not mandatory.

Finally, we want all patients with long-term conditions to feel supported to maintain good physical and mental health which meet their social and psychological needs. Good care planning for patients with long-term conditions as set out by NHS England in the House of Care model, should take into consideration all aspects of a patient's needs, including psychological needs.

Mr Andrew Smith:

[\[228177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what funding there has been from the public purse for research into treatment of (a) Crohn's disease and (b) ulcerative colitis in the last five years.

George Freeman:

The following table shows expenditure on research relating to the treatment of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis by the Medical Research Council, and by the National Institute for Health (NIHR) through its research programmes, research centres and units, and research fellowships.

£ million

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Crohn's disease					
Medical Research Council	3.1	3.4	2.6	2.4	2.5
National Institute for Health Research	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.8
Ulcerative colitis					
Medical Research Council	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.6

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
National Institute for Health Research	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.0
Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis					
Medical Research Council ¹	3.6	4.0	3.3	2.9	2.7

Note:

¹ Research looking at both Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis within the same project.

Total spend by the NIHR on research relating to the treatment of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis is higher than the figures shown because expenditure by the NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN) on these diseases cannot be disaggregated from total CRN expenditure.

■ Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation

Mr John Baron:

[\[228219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation is subject to the general equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

Jane Ellison:

Yes.

■ King's College Hospital

Caroline Lucas:

[\[228130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps are being taken to improve adult outreach services from King's College Hospital to the South East Coast region.

Norman Lamb:

NHS England has advised that it understands the Hon. Member is referring to the provision of specialised services for patients with neuromuscular conditions.

NHS England reports that it is providing transition funding to support an existing care coordinator post to support patients from the South East who have neuromuscular conditions, which is currently delivered by the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign (MDC). Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust received the funding for this post from November 2014.

NHS England has also confirmed that the transitional funding for the existing care co-ordinator post has been provided whilst the tertiary provider at Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has been working to secure its own care co-ordinator to support

patients. This post will support both children and adults in line with the previous arrangement.

We are advised that NHS England's London team and local National Health Service providers have also reached agreement with the MDC for it to host a London and South East Neuromuscular Conditions Provider Network. The Strategic Clinical Networks in London and the South East are supporting the development of this provider network, which it is hoped will enable patients from the South East to access specialised outpatient services locally in the future so that they do not have to travel to London for care.

■ Maternity Services

Jim Shannon:

[\[228013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information his Department holds on the number of incidents in which a pregnant mother was told that her baby was dead but it subsequently proved to be alive in each of the last five years.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

None. This information is not collected centrally.

■ Medicine: Research

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[228545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of using artificial human organs in medical testing.

George Freeman:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the competent authority responsible for authorising Clinical Trial Applications in the United Kingdom and for the issuing of Marketing Authorisations (licences) for medicinal products.

One of the joint MHRA and National Centre for 3 Rs (NC3Rs) projects involved surveying the global safety assessment community to better understand the current use of human tissue and what barriers exist to prevent wider uptake. For the purpose of the survey, human tissue was defined broadly as any material derived from human sources, including organs, tissues, (stem) cells, biofluids, etc.

The development and use of human tissue-based assays provides an obvious alternative to current approaches used to predict human pharmacological responses. Despite this however, very little drug development is conducted using human tissues.

The NC3Rs and MHRA are working together to increase the uptake of human tissue-based approaches to replace the use of animals and provide more predictive tools to determine the safety of drugs entering clinical studies. An expert working group was convened to generate an evidence base to support this project. The initial work has highlighted that human tissue use for safety assessment is currently limited, but there is increasing interest in adopting this approach.

A number of barriers to further developing work with human tissues have been identified, but these could potentially be overcome by sharing data, experiences and information.

The project identified that the development of human-based non-animal technologies is a rapidly evolving field, with advances being made in the development of tissue engineering, microfluidics and organ on chip technologies for many of the organ systems relevant to the safety assessment of new drugs.

The project is now looking for ways to ensure that the safety assessment community does more to connect with these technology developers to help shape the research and development of new technologies to meet their needs.

The initial work on this project has been summarised in a number of papers that are scheduled to be published in scientific journals during 2015. The results are also being discussed at a number of international scientific meetings to further publicise the project and encourage more involvement from the international safety assessment community to engage in the project and to share data, experiences and information.

■ Mental Health Services

Katy Clark:

[\[228125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many NHS beds per 100,000 people were provided for mental health patients in each of the last 10 years.

Norman Lamb:

This information is not available in the format requested. The table below shows the average daily number of mental health beds open overnight in each of the last 10 years, for all NHS trusts with mental health beds in England.

YEAR	BEDS PER 100,000 POPULATION
2013-14	40.75
2012-13	41.87
2011-12	43.59
2010-11	44.54
2009-10	48.86
2008-09	51.04
2007-08	52.41
2006-07	54.77
2005-06	58.89

YEAR	BEDS PER 100,000 POPULATION
2004-05	62.33

Source: NHS England KH03 return.

Since 2010-11 the data has been collected in a different format, therefore it cannot be directly compared with the data prior to 2010-11.

The Government has made it clear that beds must always be available for those who need them. We have set out in our Mandate to NHS England that plans must be put in place to ensure no one in mental health crisis will be turned away.

The first ever national Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat is a commitment by agencies to work together to improve care and support for people in mental health crisis. The Crisis Care Concordat makes it clear that local commissioners should commission a range of mental health services that respond rapidly and appropriately to a person in urgent need. We asked local areas to commit to and agree their own 'Mental Health Crisis Declaration' before the end of 2014. Every area in England agreed a Declaration by 23 December 2014 and work is now underway across the country to develop action plans detailing how local partners will improve crisis care for people of all ages. Progress with these plans can be seen at:

www.crisiscareconcordat.org.uk/

Luciana Berger:

[228604]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many and which police forces directly refer people with mental health problems into primary mental health services.

Norman Lamb:

All police forces work closely with local mental health services and have signed a local mental health crisis declaration, which reflects the principles of the national Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat. The police, working closely with mental health professionals, will work to ensure that people in mental health crisis reach the most appropriate mental health service as soon as possible. Information on which mental health services people are referred to following contact with the police is not collected centrally.

To assist police officers who make face to face contact with people who may be suffering from a mental illness, street triage programmes provide on the spot advice from nurses to officers about mental health, or about those individuals known to services. Street triage schemes will also make referrals to mental health services. Street triage schemes are now operating in at least 21 police force areas in England.

In addition the police may use their powers under sections 135 and 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 to take a person who appears to them to be suffering from a mental

disorder, and in need of immediate care and control, to a place of safety; where the person will be assessed by mental health professionals so that arrangements can be made for their further care and treatment.

For people who have been arrested for a crime, Liaison and Diversion services are available in courts and police stations to make referrals to mental health services when the person's condition requires it. 10 pilot services went live on 1 April 2014 and a further 14 will go live on 1 April 2015, such that Liaison and Diversion schemes will cover 50% of the English population from 1 April. The aim is for 100% roll-out by 2017/18 subject to the approval of a full business case to HM Treasury and further funding to support the roll out to 100% coverage for 2017/18.

■ NHS 111

Mr Nicholas Brown: [\[228546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, on how many occasions 999 ambulance call handlers have been diverted to assist with 111 calls in (a) England and (b) the North East Ambulance Service area in the last 12 months.

Jane Ellison:

This data is not held centrally. NHS England has advised that this would be a matter for local providers.

■ NHS Foundation Trusts

Andrew Gwynne: [\[228220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many staffing reviews of NHS foundation trusts Monitor has undertaken in each of the last five years.

Jane Ellison:

Monitor has not undertaken any staffing reviews of National Health Service foundation trusts. Local NHS organisations are responsible for deciding how many staff they employ, based on the needs of their patients and local communities.

■ NHS Protect

Andrew Gwynne: [\[228128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the real terms budget of NHS Protect was in each of the last five years.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

Spending on NHS Protect does not represent the total spend on anti-fraud activity across the Department of Health group. In November 2014 the Department created a DH Anti-fraud unit which is responsible for developing, implementing and reviewing the group wide anti-fraud strategy.

Further investment of £5.87m has been made to tackle prescription charge evasion and dental contractor losses in 2014/15 and 2015/16.

NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS providers also invest in anti-fraud activity to tackle fraud that can be dealt with locally.

The real terms spending on anti-fraud activity by NHS Protect is shown in the following table:

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
NHS Protect budget	£12.1m	£11.4m	£11.4m	£11.4m	£11.2m

■ NHS: Billing

Andrew Gwynne: [\[228129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the average annual cost to the NHS of overpayments to suppliers caused by fraud or error.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

The information is not available centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ NHS: Buildings

Andrew Gwynne: [\[228047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, which properties in the NHS estate his Department has identified as being surplus to requirements.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

Local National Health Service organisations are responsible for identifying and disposing of surplus estate. The Department collects annually information about NHS land that is surplus or potentially surplus to clinical requirements. An extract of this data, excluding sites that have been defined by the NHS as sensitive, is attached.

Attachments:

1. Surplus NHS properties [Surplus NHS Properties.xls]

■ NHS: Managers

Andrew Gwynne: [\[228221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what proportion of the cost savings from reductions in NHS management since 2010 have been part of his Department's QIPP savings programme.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

The 2010 Spending Review protected health funding in real terms. However, in order to continue to meet rising demands from an ageing population while improving services, it was estimated that up to £20 billion of efficiency savings would be required over the

four years from 2011-12 to 2014-15. This became known as the 'QIPP' (Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention) challenge.

The National Health Service is on track to deliver these efficiency savings, having reported around £15 billion of efficiencies in the first three years, all of which are being reinvested into frontline care.

As part of this wider efficiency challenge and as a result of our reforms, modernisation is also expected to save £4.9 billion cumulatively over this Parliament, through reductions in administration costs - and £1.5 billion a year from 2014-15 onwards.

■ NHS: Standards

Andrew Gwynne: [\[228391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, on how many occasions since he has taken office he has spoken to Health Trust Chief Executives on (a) A&E performance, (b) referral to treatment times, (c) delayed discharges, (d) bed availability and occupancy and (e) ambulance response times.

Jane Ellison:

Health Ministers speak frequently with a wide range of people, including Health Trust Chief Executives, about National Health Service performance.

■ Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust

John Mann: [\[228064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will discuss with Nottingham University Hospital Trust steps to ensure that patients have access to specialist physiotherapy.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

The commissioning and provision of National Health Services is a matter for the NHS locally.

■ Nurses

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[228618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what progress has been made on introducing hourly ward rounds for nurses; how those rounds will be monitored and recorded; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect on staff time of such recording.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

Hourly ward rounds (known as intentional rounding) are viewed as good practice but are not mandated. National Health Service organisations with their knowledge of the patients they serve are best placed to decide if hourly ward rounds should be implemented based on clinical need and sound evidence. Depending on their need, some patients may need more contact with nursing staff, while others may only require hourly or two-hourly checks.

Since April 2014, under its new inspection methodology, the Care Quality Commission's monitoring of hospitals consists of a range of systemic indicators, including the monitoring of hourly ward rounds during inspections to ensure that these are being undertaken.

■ **Nurses: Lancashire**

Mark Hendrick: [\[228084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many nurses were employed by (a) Lancashire Teaching Hospitals and (b) Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust in (i) 2010, (ii) 2011, (iii) 2012, (iv) 2013 and (v) 2014.

Mark Hendrick: [\[228085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many midwives were employed by (a) Lancashire Teaching Hospitals and (b) Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust in (i) 2010, (ii) 2011, (iii) 2012, (iv) 2013 and (v) 2014.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

The information requested is shown in the following table.

NHS HOSPITAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES (HCHS): QUALIFIED NURSING, MIDWIFERY AND HEALTH VISITING STAFF WORKING IN LANCASHIRE TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST AND LANCASHIRE CARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER FOR EACH SPECIFIED YEAR

	2010 ¹	2011 ¹	2012 ¹	2013 ¹	Full-time equivalent September 2014 ²
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust					
Qualified Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting staff	1,853	1,817	1,739	1,820	1,894
Of which:					
Registered	161	164	147	154	153

NHS HOSPITAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES (HCHS): QUALIFIED NURSING, MIDWIFERY AND HEALTH VISITING STAFF WORKING IN LANCASHIRE TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST AND LANCASHIRE CARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER FOR EACH SPECIFIED YEAR

Midwives

Lancashire Care
NHS
Foundation
Trust

Qualified Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting staff	1,271	1,196	2,139	2,093	2,047
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Of which:

Registered Midwives	-	-	1	1	1
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Source:

Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC), HCHS: Non-Medical Workforce Census.

HSCIC, HCHS: provisional monthly workforce statistics.

Notes:

'-' denotes zero.

Full-time equivalent figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

¹ 2010-2013 figures are taken from the Non-Medical Workforce Census as at 30 September for each specified year.

² 2014 figures are taken from the provisional monthly workforce statistics as at 30 September 2014.

These statistics relate to the contracted positions within English National Health Service organisations and may include those where the person assigned to the position is temporarily absent, for example on maternity leave.

The changes in staff figures in Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust over the period of this request are likely to be due to moves in service provider from primary care trusts to neighbouring trusts as part of Transforming Community Services.

Monthly data

As from 21 July 2010 the HSCIC has published provisional monthly NHS workforce data. As expected with provisional statistics, some figures may be revised from month to month as issues are uncovered and resolved. The monthly workforce data is not directly comparable with the annual workforce census; it only includes those staff on the Electronic Staff Record (i.e. it does not include Primary care staff or Bank staff). There are also new methods of presenting data (headcount methodology is different and there is now a role count). This information is available from September 2009 onwards at the following website:

www.hscic.gov.uk

Data quality

The HSCIC seeks to minimise inaccuracies and the effect of missing and invalid data but responsibility for data accuracy lies with the organisations providing the data. Methods are continually being updated to improve data quality. Where changes impact on figures already published, this is assessed but unless it is significant at national level figures are not changed.

■ Nursing and Midwifery Council

Mark Hendrick:

[228551]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will provide funding to the Nursing and Midwifery Council to enable it to avoid increasing annual registration fees for registered nurses.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is an independent body. Accordingly, the NMC Council is responsible for determining the level of the annual fee it charges for registration, which must cover the full cost of its regulatory activity.

In 2012 the NMC identified that £120 per registrant per year is the amount required to cover its regulatory costs. The NMC had intended to increase the level of its fee to £120 in February 2013. However, for two years the NMC's costs have been subsidised by a £20 million Government grant, which in-part enabled the NMC to charge a lower registration fee of £100 instead of £120.

The Government has no plans to offer the NMC a further grant to subsidise the registration fee increase to £120, which came into force on 1 February 2015.

■ Nutrition: Health Education

David Simpson:

[228540]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions his Department has had with the Department for Education on increasing the level of healthy-eating advertising within primary schools.

Jane Ellison:

Officials from the Department of Health and Department for Education meet regularly to discuss public health issues including food in schools. Formal discussions have not included increasing the level of healthy-eating advertising in primary schools, however they have included the Change4Life programme.

Change4Life is Public Health England's social marketing programme which aims to support families to eat well, move more and live longer. The programme works with schools by providing teachers with resources, which include recipes and ideas for including healthy eating messages across the curriculum.

■ Patients: Safety

Luciana Berger:

[\[228605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether face-down physical restraint is included in the list of never events that must be reported to the Strategic Executive Information System.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

Face-down physical restraint is not included in the list of Never Events contained within the Never Events Framework that must be reported to the Strategic Executive Information System.

Use of face-down restraint is, however, a patient safety incident that should be reported and submitted to the National Reporting and Learning System. Any serious harm resulting from the use of face-down restraint would be reportable to the Strategic Executive Information System as a Serious Incident.

■ Radiotherapy

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[228390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what proportion of cancer patients received (a) intensity modulated and (b) stereotactic radiotherapy in the last month for which figures are available.

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[228690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what proportion of cancer patients received (a) intensity modulated and (b) stereotactic radiotherapy in the most recent month for which figures are available.

Jane Ellison:

NHS England monitors the progress in achieving the following standard:

- A minimum 24% of patients requiring radical radiotherapy have access to inverse planned Intensity Modulated Radiotherapy (IMRT).

NHS England monitors this standard as a three month rolling average. The latest data shows that 6,492 patients received IMRT during the period from October to December 2014, a proportion of 36% of patients requiring radical radiotherapy.

Data relating to the proportion of cancer patients receiving stereotactic radiotherapy is not held centrally.

■ Research

Mr Clive Betts:

[228818]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what research reports his Department has commissioned from external bodies between September 2010 and December 2014 have not been published; when each such report was commissioned; what the nature of the research commissioned for each report was; from whom each such research report was commissioned; what the value of each such commission was; on what date each such report was received by his Department; for what reason each such research report has not yet been published; and when he plans to publish each such report.

George Freeman:

The Department funds research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and the Department's Policy Research Programme (PRP). The NIHR's policy statement on open access for its funded research can be found on the NIHR website:

<http://www.nihr.ac.uk/policy-and-standards/nihr-policy-on-open-access-for-its-funded-research.htm>

Details of commissioned and researcher-led projects funded through programmes managed by the NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre can be found on the centre's website:

http://www.nets.nihr.ac.uk/projects?collection=netssc&meta_P_sand=Project

These details include research summary, contractor, cost, start date, estimated date of publication, and links to commissioning briefs and published reports.

Details of projects, initiatives and long-term programmes of research currently funded by the PRP are available on the website of the PRP Central Commissioning Facility:

<http://www.prp-ccf.org.uk/>

These details include research summary, contractor, start date, and estimated date of completion. Cost will be included in future updates. The website also has links to summary final reports received since April 2011.

■ Sugar

David Simpson: [\[228518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent steps his Department has taken to encourage confectionery retailers to reduce the sugar content of their products.

Jane Ellison:

We are working in voluntary partnership with the food and drink industry to cut calories, including sugar, across a range of products including confectionery and fizzy drinks. Businesses have taken billions of calories out of their products, including by cutting sugar in juice and fizzy drinks, and by reducing the size of single serving confectionery.

■ University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

Sir Edward Garnier: [\[228079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with University Hospitals of Leicester Trust on steps to ensure that patients with complex respiratory issues have access to specialist physiotherapy.

Jane Ellison:

The Department's Ministers have had no such discussions with University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust.

The commissioning and provision of National Health Services is a matter for the NHS locally.

■ Vulnerable Adults: Protection

Mr Tom Clarke: [\[228441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether it is his policy that local authorities should be required to provide appropriate support where it is identified through an official safeguarding inquiry that further support is needed to protect a person from the risk of abuse or neglect.

Norman Lamb:

The Care Act 2014 clarifies and strengthens the processes to support adults who are at risk from abuse or neglect in the following ways:

- Where local authorities have reasonable cause to expect a person is at risk of abuse or neglect they must carry out a safeguarding enquiry, consider what if any actions are needed, and who should carry these out. This makes clear that there is no eligibility threshold and allows authorities flexibility to respond to a safeguarding issue

appropriately, which may be through the authority or one of its partners such as the police.

- The statutory Care Act guidance clarifies that where a local authority has started a safeguarding enquiry but identifies a potential need for a care and support service, it should continue the needs assessment for care and support in parallel, and determine whether the person has eligible needs which it must meet. The eligibility criteria is based upon whether the person's needs have a significant impact on their wellbeing, which includes abuse and neglect. While the authority is likely to have already identified any safeguarding issues earlier and made an enquiry, it would still consider these at the eligibility determination as it would clearly impact on the person's wellbeing.

- The care and support system should support the above by having a comprehensive preventative strategy that promotes wellbeing and independence, and one that does not wait to respond when people reach a crisis point.

■ Written Questions

Mark Hendrick:

[\[228557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2015 to Question 223927, if he will review the range of data collected centrally within his Department and the subjects of Parliamentary Questions received by his Department in the present Parliament to ensure that a higher proportion of hon. Members' Questions can be answered with substantive information.

Dr Daniel Poulter:

The Department answers parliamentary questions where it is able to, based on the information it collects. Transparency in public services and access to open data are key Government priorities. Transparency in the health and social care sector is important to support public accountability of services and choice for service users.

HOME OFFICE

■ Crimes of Violence: Blackpool

Mr Gordon Marsden:

[\[228627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of reports of violent crime in the Blackpool Constabulary area led to a prosecution in each year from 2010 to 2015 to date.

Lynne Featherstone:

It is not possible to calculate the figures requested. Figures on prosecutions are not directly comparable with the recorded crime figures as cases tried at court may have occurred in a different time period to when the police recorded the crime. Furthermore, Ministry of Justice figures are based on the number of defendants proceeded against, while police recorded crime data are based on the number of crimes.

The Ministry of Justice hold information on the number of prosecutions for violent crime for the Lancashire Police Force Area (Table 1). The Home Office hold data on the number of violent crimes recorded by the police for the Blackpool Community Safety Partnership and Lancashire Police Force (Table 2).

Attachments:

1. Tables 1&2 violent crime in Blackpool [PQ228627_ table.xls]

■ **Domestic Violence**

Jim Dowd:

[\[227744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress the Inter-Ministerial Group on Violence Against Women and Girls has made on implementing recommendation 11 of the HMIC report Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse into policing on domestic violence; and when she expects the further multi-agency inspection referred to in that report to take place.

Lynne Featherstone:

Recommendation 11 of the HMIC report relates to a multi-agency inspection on domestic abuse. The Home Secretary wrote to Ministerial colleagues seeking support to multi-agency inspections in January.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary will continue to inspect the police response to domestic abuse as part of their annual all-force PEEL (Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy) inspection programme.

■ **Entry Clearances**

Mr Andy Slaughter:

[\[228595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many citizens of Islamic countries have been refused visas when attempting to enter the UK to attend academic conferences in each year since 2010.

James Brokenshire:

The Home Office is unable to provide the data requested as it is not possible to distinguish those applying to attend academic conferences from within the business visit category.

■ **National Centre for Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research**

Jim Dowd:

[\[228586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the National Centre for the 3Rs was offered additional funding for the next financial year; and whether that body accepted that funding.

Lynne Featherstone:

The National Centre for Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs) primarily receives Government funding through the Department for Business

Innovation and Skills via the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC).

The NC3Rs is currently undergoing its quinquennial review to which the Home Office provided evidence recognising the exceptional achievements of the Centre. As part of the outcome of the review, decisions regarding core funding for the NC3Rs will be made by the MRC and BBSRC, the core funders. The current core funding level for 2015/16 from the MRC and BBSRC is £7.62 million.

The main meeting of the Review Panel took place on 19 March 2015 and the Review Panel's recommendations will be considered by the MRC and BBSRC. The outcome of the review will be known by the summer.

The Home Office allocated funding of £250,000 to the NC3Rs for 2014/15. Funding for 2015/16 from the Home Office is yet to be allocated.

The Government has a continuing commitment to safeguard animal welfare and advance the use of the 3Rs principles (replacement, refinement and reduction) in research and development. The UK remains at the forefront of global work to develop alternatives to animal testing.

■ Passports

Steve McCabe: [\[228339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the performance of the Passport Office against its performance targets for new passport applications.

Steve McCabe: [\[228340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average length of time taken by the Passport Office to make a decision on renewal of an expired passport was in each year since 2010.

Steve McCabe: [\[228341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average length of time taken by the Passport Office to make a decision on a new passport application was in each year since 2010.

James Brokenshire:

Her Majesty's Passport Office does not have specific performance targets relating to new passport applications, as the total time it takes to issue a passport from a first-time applicant depends in part on the speed with which the applicant books and attends their new applicant interview.

In February this year, straightforward UK applications were being processed in an average of 3.1 days, which includes new adult applicants being processed up to the point of being invited to attend an interview. This is well within published service standards.

Her Majesty's Passport Office does not retain management information in the format requested. New adult and new child application processing times are not monitored separately from renewal passport applications. The table below shows the proportion of UK straightforward applications processed within 15 working days from January 2010 to December 2014.

YEAR	15 DAYS	VOLUME	%
2010	3,429,922	3,429,933	100.00%
2011	3,234,706	3,234,743	100.00%
2012	3,493,916	3,539,586	98.71%
2013	3,660,590	3,660,740	100.00%
2014	3,377,228	3,896,932	86.66%

■ Police: Blackpool

Mr Gordon Marsden:

[\[228625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers served in the Blackpool Constabulary on (a) 1 March 2010 and (b) 1 March 2015; and how many such officers were categorised as front-line staff.

Mike Penning:

The Home Office does not collect police workforce statistics for Blackpool Constabulary.

The Home Office collects and publishes statistics on the police workforce at police force area level but not more locally.

The table provided contains statistics on the number of full-time equivalent police officers employed by Lancashire Constabulary as at 31 March 2010 and the 31 March 2014. The table also contains the number and proportion of police officers in operational frontline roles. Data for 2015 have not yet been collected centrally and will not be published until later this year.

Between March 2010 and March 2014, the total number of full-time equivalent police officers employed by Lancashire constabulary has fallen by 575 police officers or 16%.

Over the same period, police recorded crime (excluding fraud) has fallen by 10% in Lancashire police force area.

What matters is how officers are deployed, not how many of them there are. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary has made clear that there is no simple link between officer numbers and crime levels.

Attachments:

1. Full-time equivalent police officers [PQ228625_table.xlsx]

Mr Gordon Marsden:

[\[228626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average response time to a 999 call was for police services in the Blackpool Constabulary area in each year from 2010 to 2015 to date.

Mike Penning:

The requested information is not collected centrally by the Home Office.

■ Private Rented Housing

Jeremy Corbyn:

[\[228629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of landlord immigration checks in the private rented sector on landlords' willingness to rent.

Jeremy Corbyn:

[\[228633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of landlord immigration checks on non-EEA residents trying to rent, who have entered the UK on temporary documents and are waiting for a biometric residence permit.

James Brokenshire:

People with no right to be in the UK should not be able to rent homes and place people who are here legally at a disadvantage.

That is why the Immigration Act 2014 introduced landlords' right to rent checks. The first phase of the landlords' scheme, which was launched in the Cities of Birmingham and Wolverhampton and the Metropolitan Boroughs of Sandwell, Dudley, and Walsall on 1 December 2014, is currently being evaluated.

The regulations enable migrants to demonstrate evidence of their right to rent a property using a range of specified documentation, and the Home Office is providing a responsive checking service for landlords to confirm a person's right to rent where the individual has an outstanding immigration application or appeal.

People issued with a 30 day visa to enter the UK in advance of collecting their biometric residence permit will be able to evidence their right to rent using their short term visa, and the landlord will then need to conduct a follow-up check after 12 months, at which point the migrant will be able to evidence any continued lawful immigration status using their biometric residence permit (BRP).

■ Sexual Offences

Seema Malhotra:

[\[228587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the date was of each meeting of the Sexual Violence Against Children and Vulnerable Adults National Task Force since it was set up; and which government departments (a) were invited to and (b) attended each such meeting.

Lynne Featherstone:

The National Group on Sexual Violence Against Children and Vulnerable People has held 19 meetings since it was formed in April 2013. The group met every four weeks until January 2014, while it developed its programme of work. Since then, meetings have focused on monitoring delivery of the programme, and have been held every six to eight weeks.

The Home Office-led group, which I chair as Minister of State for Crime Prevention, is attended by senior officials from the following Government departments:

Home Office, Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service, Crown Prosecution Service, Department for Education, Department of Health, Cabinet Office, Department for Communities and Local Government, Department of Culture Media and Sport. In accordance with the terms of reference for the group, departments are required to send senior representation to every meeting.

■ Surveys**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[227156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of (a) disabled and (b) all other staff in her Department reported experiencing bullying or harassment at work in the most recent Civil Service People Survey.

Karen Bradley:

The overall response rate for the Home Office 2014 People Survey was 51% (15,431 staff). Of those who responded, 2,090 staff (14%) declared a long-standing physical or mental health condition, illness, impairment or disability.

63% of respondents declaring a long-standing physical or mental health condition, illness, impairment or disability responded that they were treated fairly at work. 76% of respondents declaring that they did not have a long-standing physical or mental health condition, illness, impairment or disability responded that they were treated fairly at work.

23% of respondents declaring a long-standing physical or mental health condition, illness, impairment or disability reported that they had personally experienced bullying or harassment at work in the past 12 months. 11% of respondents declaring that they did not have a long-standing physical or mental health condition, illness, impairment or disability reported that they had personally experienced bullying or harassment at work in the past 12 months.

We are concerned by these results and are taking action. In particular, we are building on our existing programme of work with disabled staff and their managers to ensure the issues are understood so that staff are treated fairly. The Home Office signed the Time to Change pledge and we are committed to raising awareness of mental health issues. We are reviewing our guidance on reasonable adjustments for disabled staff, including guidance on setting work objectives and managing performance.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ Select Committees: ICT

Chi Onwurah:

[228624]

To ask the hon. Member for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross representing the House of Commons Commission, whether the Commission made an assessment of the risks of being locked into one supplier when the decision was taken to trial Apple iPad for select committees.

John Thurso:

Apple iPads for Members engaged in Select Committee business were initially piloted by the Administration Committee between April and October 2011. This was followed by an extended pilot with other Select Committees.

At the time of the first pilot, the tablet market was very limited and there were not considered to be any comparable products to the iPad.

At the time of the extended pilot the tablet market had grown and an assessment was carried out by Parliamentary ICT (PICT) that considered the suitability of a range of tablet devices against a number of different criteria including security, operating software and price. The assessment concluded that the Apple iPad – and its supporting software – was the most suitable tablet device available to Members for this purpose.

A further assessment of the market was undertaken when it was decided to offer all Members a tablet following the General Election. That assessment concluded that the Apple iPad was still the most suitable primary device. The Apple iPad remains the most mature tablet on the market and was assessed to be the most effective to support in large numbers. PICT's experience of supporting iPads and the retraining of users and support staff if another product was used were considerations within the assessment.

Parliament's existing strategy is to develop applications in open standards and iPads are not a constraint on that approach. The latest version of the Apple operating system, iOS 8, has proven to be more open and has reduced the risk of becoming locked in.

In equipping their offices after the election, Members will be able to select IT equipment from an online catalogue. The catalogue will include a range of laptops, desktops, tablets, printers and peripherals. PICT intends to offer tablets running the following operating systems, subject to security assurance and testing: Windows, iOS and Android.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Bangladesh

David Simpson:

[228529]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how her Department is using international aid to tackle the water shortage in Bangladesh.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

The UK government is providing up to £23.5 million over five years (2012-17) through the South Asia Water Governance Programme to facilitate regional collaboration over shared rivers in South Asia, including in Bangladesh, in order to address challenges around water resource management, development and climate change.

The UK Government is also supporting a multi-country study (including Bangladesh) on groundwater resilience to climate change and abstraction in the Indo-Gangetic basin. The study is being undertaken by the British Geological Survey (BGS) in association with several local partners.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[228581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will take steps to encourage better dialogue between factory workers and management in Bangladesh's garment industry.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

We are supporting the formation of Operational Health and Safety committees, including training and capacity development of up to half a million participants, with the aim of improving dialogue and cooperation around worker safety. We are also supporting the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) to implement a Social Dialogue project in five pilot factories in Bangladesh, and are providing support to workers to form functioning worker participation committees.

■ Democratic Republic of Congo**Mr Andrew Smith:**[\[228159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department has taken to implement the recommendations in the report, Rape as torture in the DRC, published by Freedom from Torture in June 2014.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

DFID recognises there is a strong need in the Democratic Republic of Congo for support to projects to reform the security and justice sectors. We currently provide support to the UN's Joint Human Rights Office to collect and analyse information on serious human rights violations committed by security sector officers to inform decisions on whether to provide or withdraw UN or international support. We also provide support to Search for Common Ground to undertake awareness raising exercises with the security sector and communities to improve human rights behaviour and levels of trust between security actors and civilians in Eastern DRC.

DFID has and will continue to raise our concerns at the highest level to lobby the Congolese authorities to end impunity for those who abuse or violate human rights.

We ensure that the needs of girls and women are at the centre of all programmes. The UK remains fully committed to playing a full part in efforts to end Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in the DRC. At the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in June 2014, a specially convened DRC Country Forum reconfirmed the DRC's commitment to

tackling SGBV. Key successes have been the launch of work on the first Action Plan for the Congolese Army on tackling Sexual Violence and President Kabila's appointment of a Personal Representative on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment (Jeanine Mabunda). We expect to reach at least 12,000 victims of sexual and gender-based violence with medical, psychological and economic support.

DRC is a focus country for the UK's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI). The [PSVI campaign was launched](#) in May 2012 by the former UK Foreign Secretary, [William Hague](#) and the Special Envoy of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Angelina Jolie. The UK hosted the [Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict](#) in June 2014. The summit was attended by over 120 countries and more than 900 delegates, including many from conflict affected countries. The summit agreed practical steps to end impunity for the use of rape as a weapon of war and to begin to change global attitudes to these crimes. In July 2014 William Hague was appointed the [Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict](#). The Special Representative's mandate is to lead the UK's contribution to the international campaign to end the use of rape and sexual violence as weapons of war. He will work with governments, civil society, international organisations and other interested parties to implement the outcomes of the June Global Summit.

■ Developing Countries: Conditions of Employment

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[228583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what progress has been made on encouraging companies to sign up to the Ethical Trading Initiative.

Justine Greening:

The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) is a unique alliance of companies, trade unions and non-government organisations. DFID supports the Ethical Trading Initiative in their work to improve the lives of workers around the world. Company sign-up to ETI has nearly doubled in the last 5 years from 45 members to 87 members.

■ International Assistance

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[228602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what her policy is on the proposed Sustainable Development Goals and the Special Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2015.

Justine Greening:

The summit in September will be the occasion at which UN Member States formally adopt the Sustainable Development Goals as part of the post-2015 agenda. The UK believes that we need an ambitious, transformational, and measurable set of post-2015 goals and targets that will eradicate poverty and put the world on a path to sustainable development.

■ Nigeria

David Simpson: [\[228528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how her Department is using international aid to increase the literacy rate amongst women in Nigeria.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

The UK has a number of development programmes in Nigeria which will seek to increase the literacy rate amongst girls and women. The Girls' Education Project aims to improve basic education for 1 million girls in Northern Nigeria where 7 out of 10 women cannot read at all. Another programme, Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises, supports 18,000 young mothers and out-of-school-girls to increase their access to basic literacy and numeracy, including financial literacy.

■ Overseas Aid

Mary Creagh: [\[228534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answers of 19 and 22 January 2015 to Questions 220652, 220623, 221273 and 221277, how much has been spent on the Economic Development Strategy in 2014-15 to date.

Justine Greening:

As of 6 January (the last date on which relevant expenditure data was produced) the total expenditure on economic development in financial year 2014/15 was £746 million.

■ Palestinians

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[228560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what monitoring her Department undertakes of the content of UN Relief and Works Agency educational materials in Gaza and the West Bank.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

We accompany our support for the UN Relief and Works Agency with stringent attention to their neutrality and values of peace. UNRWA continues to implement a human rights, conflict resolution and tolerance policy, which applies to all its schools in its five fields of operation, supplementing the host country curriculums. UNRWA has also developed a framework which establishes standard criteria for analysing and enhancing textbooks across all fields and includes tools to guide analysis of host country curricula, textbooks, and other learning material to ensure they reflect UN values. We take allegations of incitement very seriously and raise them with UNRWA whenever appropriate.

■ Pay

Gloria De Piero:[\[228314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the average hourly pay is of employees at each grade within her Department identified as (a) White or White British and (b) from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic group.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

The average hourly pay for each grade in DFID is:

CIVIL SERVICE GRADE	DFID GRADE	HOURLY RATE
G6	A1 London	£36.49
G6	A1 National	£34.08
G7	A2 London	£30.14
G7	A2 National	£27.39
SEO	A2(L) London	£24.24
SEO	A2(L) National	£22.26
HEO	B1 London	£19.25
HEO	B1 National	£16.44
EO	B2 London	£15.22
EO	B2 National	£12.56
AO	C1 London	£12.56
AO	C1 National	£10.24
AA	C2 London	£10.84
AA	C2 National	£8.43

DFID does not distinguish between ethnicity groups in paying staff.

■ Procurement

Mary Creagh:[\[228533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the value is of contracts her Department holds with (a) Adam Smith International, (b) PwC and (c) KPMG.

Justine Greening:

DFID publishes full contract information on the Contracts Finder website

<https://online.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/>.

■ Rwanda

David Simpson: [\[228527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how her Department is using international aid to tackle poverty in Rwanda.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

DFID Rwanda's 2011-2016 Operational Plan (OP) supports the Government of Rwanda's Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2 (EDPRS2 2013-2017/18). In 2014/15 DFID will spend around £67 million supporting delivery of basic services, in particular education and social protection; private sector and economic development; and the strengthening of domestic accountability and Rwandan civil society.

By 2016, DFID support will seek to help 723,600 of the poorest people in Rwanda to get a job, or financial support to meet their basic needs; 44,200 children to complete basic education and ensure it is of a quality which enables them to pass their national exam at the age of 14; 4.7 million land parcels to be registered as legally owned, allowing owners to be able to invest in it to raise their incomes; and help 1.8 million people to have a greater say in their own development and to hold decision-makers to account.

■ Syria

Anas Sarwar: [\[228693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2015 to Question 221760, what assessment she has made of the ability of Syria's neighbouring countries to manage the safety and security of (a) Syrian refugees with urgent medical needs, children and victims of torture and sexual violence and (b) other Syrian refugees.

Justine Greening:

Syria's neighbours are taking steps to ensure the safety and security of Syrian refugees, most importantly by continuing to provide protection within their borders to those fleeing violence. The UK is assisting the Lebanese and Jordanian governments with the management of their borders, and is funding the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, to provide guidance on best practice and to advocate for the safety and security needs of refugees. The UK also supports a number of specialised partners to help meet the needs of the most vulnerable individuals, including those with urgent medical needs, victims of torture, and sexual and gender-based violence.

■ Vanuatu

Jim Shannon: [\[228012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assistance the UK has provided to Vanuatu in dealing with the aftermath of the recent cyclone.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

The UK is providing up to £2million of immediate support to the people affected by Cyclone Pam through funding to non-governmental organisations, the Red Cross and

the United Nations to provide shelter, water and sanitation and protection. In addition, a Royal Air Force cargo plane has delivered DFID supplies to Port Vila, including 1,640 shelter kits for 8,200 people and 1,944 solar lanterns. DFID has deployed a small team to Vanuatu to provide humanitarian expertise and support coordination with agencies operating in the region.

JUSTICE

■ Contempt of Court

John Hemming:

[\[228034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the letter sent on 2 February 2015 to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley by HM Courts and Tribunals Service's Performance, Analysis and Reporting Team, what the (a) name of the judge, (b) date, (c) period of committal and (d) court was of each court order issued by courts in Leeds for contempt of court since November 2014.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

Details of contempt of court hearings are not always held on Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) case management systems, and HMCTS do not centrally collate data on contempt of court cases. Contempt of court can cover a variety of circumstances and can be committed by a party in a case or by someone unconnected with specific proceedings such as a juror or a member of the public. Those relating to a specific case will be noted on the court log or daily list and any warrant retained on file. Those not relating to a specific case will be recorded on daily lists and any warrants stored along with other orders. Local practices vary as to how contempts of court are recorded and stored.

HMCTS have checked records of cases heard since November 2014 in relation to Leeds County Court, High Court sitting at Leeds and Leeds Family Court. For those courts, HMCTS have identified no cases where a committal order was made for imprisonment for contempt of court.

It has not been possible to provide information in relation to Leeds Crown Court or Leeds Magistrates' Court. Data are not recorded in a way that enables HMCTS to identify all such cases without checking every case file and every daily list since 1 November which would involve disproportionate costs.

John Hemming:

[\[228035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the letter sent on 2 February 2015 to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley by HM Courts and Tribunals Service's Performance, Analysis and Reporting Team, what the (a) name of the judge, (b) date, (c) period of committal and (d) court was of each court order issued by courts in Manchester for contempt of court since November 2014.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

Details of contempt of court hearings are not always held on Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) case management systems, and HMCTS do not centrally collate data on contempt of court cases. Contempt of court can cover a variety of circumstances and can be committed by a party in a case or by someone unconnected with specific proceedings such as a juror or a member of the public. Those relating to a specific case will be noted on the court log or daily list and any warrant retained on file. Those not relating to a specific case will be recorded on daily lists and any warrants stored along with other orders. Local practices vary as to how contempts of court are recorded and stored.

HMCTS have checked records of cases heard since November 2014 in relation to Manchester County Court, High Court sitting at Manchester and Manchester Family Court. For those courts, HMCTS have identified one case where a committal orders was made for imprisonment for contempt of court. Details are contained in the table below. The contemnor may not have been present at court and therefore may not necessarily have begun their term of imprisonment straight away. This data is management information and has been collated specifically to answer this question.

COURT	JUDGE	DATE	PERIOD
Manchester County Court	HHJ Kushner QC	12/12/14	6 months

It has not been possible to provide information in relation to Manchester Crown Court or Manchester Magistrates' Court. Data is not recorded in a way that enables HMCTS to identify all such cases without checking every case file and every daily list since 1 November, which would involve disproportionate costs.

John Hemming:[\[228036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the letter sent on 2 February 2015 to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley by HM Courts and Tribunals Service's Performance, Analysis and Reporting Team, what the (a) name of the judge, (b) date, (c) period of committal and (d) court was of each court order issued by courts in Sheffield for contempt of court since November 2014.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

Details of contempt of court hearings are not always held on Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) case management systems, and HMCTS do not centrally collate data on contempt of court cases. Contempt of court can cover a variety of circumstances and can be committed by a party in a case or by someone unconnected with specific proceedings such as a juror or a member of the public. Those relating to a specific case will be noted on the court log or daily list and any warrant retained on file. Those not relating to a specific case will be recorded on daily lists and any warrants stored along with other orders. Local practices vary as to how contempts of court are recorded and stored.

HMCTS have checked records of cases heard since November 2014 in relation to Sheffield County Court, High Court sitting at Sheffield and Sheffield Family Court. For those courts, HMCTS have identified no cases where a committal order was made for imprisonment for contempt of court.

It has not been possible to provide information in relation to Sheffield Crown Court or Sheffield Magistrates' Court. Data are not recorded in a way that enables HMCTS to identify all such cases without checking every case file and every daily list since 1 November which would involve disproportionate costs.

John Hemming:

[\[228037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the letter sent on 2 February 2015 to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley by HM Courts and Tribunals Service's Performance, Analysis and Reporting Team, what the (a) name of the judge, (b) date, (c) period of committal and (d) court was of each court order issued by courts in Bristol for contempt of court since November 2014.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

Details of contempt of court hearings are not always held on Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) case management systems, and HMCTS do not centrally collate data on contempt of court cases. Contempt of court can cover a variety of circumstances and can be committed by a party in a case or by someone unconnected with specific proceedings such as a juror or a member of the public. Those relating to a specific case will be noted on the court log or daily list and any warrant retained on file. Those not relating to a specific case will be recorded on daily lists and any warrants stored along with other orders. Local practices vary as to how contempts of court are recorded and stored.

HMCTS have checked records of cases heard since November 2014 in relation to Bristol County Court, High Court sitting at Bristol and Bristol Family Court. For those courts, HMCTS has identified cases where committal orders were made for imprisonment for contempt of court. Details are contained in the table below. The contemnors may not have been present at court and therefore may not necessarily have begun their term of imprisonment straight away. This data is management information and has been collated specifically to answer this question.

COURT	JUDGE	DATE	PERIOD
Bristol County Court	Deputy District Judge Paddison	27/11/14	4 weeks
Bristol County Court	Deputy District Judge Hall	5/12/14	12 weeks

It has not been possible to provide information in relation to Bristol Crown Court or Bristol Magistrates' Court. Data is not recorded in a way that enables HMCTS to identify

all such cases without checking every case file and every daily list since 1 November, which would involve disproportionate costs.

■ Data Protection

Steve McCabe: [\[226364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's press release on data management, published on 29 January 2015, whether his Department is taking disciplinary proceedings against officials identified as responsible for the loss of data relating to three independent judge-led inquiries.

Steve McCabe: [\[226365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's press release on data management, published on 24 January 2015, if he will publish the findings of his Department's investigations on the loss of data relating to three independent judge-led inquiries.

Steve McCabe: [\[226431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the independent review commissioned by his Department on the loss of data relating to three independent judge-led inquiries is due to report its findings.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

The work coordinated by Cabinet Office and announced in the Government's statement of 29 January is not yet complete. When it is, the Government will make a further announcement. For now, the investigatory work continues.

■ Electronic Tagging

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[228158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of GPS tagging on the efficacy of monitoring of offenders released on probation.

Andrew Selous:

Electronic location monitoring may discourage offenders from committing further offences, because of their perception that location data could link them to the offence. We believe there could be benefits in terms of reduced re-offending, public protection, and crime detection and investigation by the police.

■ Employment and Support Allowance: Preston

Mark Hendrick: [\[228553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people in Preston constituency are currently appealing against refusal of employment and support allowance.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

The First-tier Tribunal - Social Security and Child Support (SSCS), administered by HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS), hears appeals against Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) decisions on a range of benefits, including Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

Claimants can appeal to the Tribunal against elements of an ESA award, such as a decision on the rate of entitlement, as well as a decision to refuse ESA. HMCTS does not record data specifically relating to appeals against the refusal of ESA and so does not hold the information requested.

Information on all appeals against ESA decisions is published by the Ministry of Justice in the Tribunal Statistics Quarterly. The most recent report, for the period October to December 2014, published on 12 March 2015, can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-and-gender-recognition-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2014>.

■ Employment Tribunals Service**Meg Munn:**[\[226836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, in what proportion of cases employment tribunals found in favour of the employee in the 12 months (a) before and (b) after the introduction of fees.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

The table below outlines the employee success rate at employment tribunals for the 12 month period a) before and b) after the introduction of fees on 29 July 2013.

The table shows the four quarters wholly before fees were introduced from July 2012 to June 2013, and the four quarters wholly after fees were introduced from October 2013 to September 2014.

Employment tribunal cases can be brought under a number of jurisdictions called complaints. Each jurisdictional complaint is decided separately within a case. The information provided is the number of jurisdictional complaints that were decided by an employment tribunal. Individual cases can have a number of outcomes for different jurisdictional complaints.

Employment tribunal outcomes are published quarterly at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics

JURISDICTIONAL COMPLAINTS DISPOSED PRE AND POST FEES

July 2012 to June 2013	Total	% of total
Claimant Successful ¹	34,998	42%
Claimant Unsuccessful ²	48,257	58%

JURISDICTIONAL COMPLAINTS DISPOSED PRE AND POST FEES

Total Jurisdictional complaints disposed 235,811

October 2013 to September 2014	Total	% of total
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Claimant Successful ¹	23,034	37%
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Claimant Unsuccessful ²	38,476	63%
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Total Jurisdictional complaints disposed 218,615

¹ Claimant Successful includes Successful at Hearing and where a Default Judgment is made.

² Claimant Unsuccessful includes Unsuccessful at Hearing, Default Judgment Claimant Unsuccessful, Dismissed at Preliminary Hearing and case Struck Out

■ Offences against Children

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[228446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of (a) changes in the length of prison sentences received by paedophiles since 2010 and (b) the reasons for such changes.

Mike Penning:

Sexual offences committed against children are abhorrent and the independent courts rightly reflect that when sentencing offenders for such offences.

Overall custodial sentence lengths for sexual offences have increased significantly since 2010. The average custodial sentence for all sexual offences increased from 49 months in 2010 to 59.1 months in 2013. Between 2003 and 2013 the average custodial sentence length rose by 19.1 months. These increases are the result of longer sentences for the most serious sexual offences following the implementation of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and the creation of Extended Determinate Sentences in 2012.

The most serious sexual offences against children carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, including rape, assault by penetration and paying for the sexual services of a child under the age of 13. This Government has taken steps to further strengthen the law by legislating in the Criminal Justice & Courts Act 2015 to end automatic early release for anyone receiving a custodial sentence for rape of a child under 13.

In addition to legislation, in December 2013 the Sentencing Council issued a revised guideline on sentencing for sexual offences, which came into force in England and Wales in April 2014. The guideline makes it clear that the court's starting-point, when considering a sentence for any serious sex offences against children, is a substantial

custodial sentence. The guideline takes an expanded approach to how courts assess offenders and victims.

The figures in the table below have been calculated from a list of statutory sexual offences against children. This includes offences where the victim is described as under 13, under 16, aged 13-17 or aged 16-17. Statistical data on all sexual offences are published annually and are available for the period 2010-2013. Data for 2014 with more detailed offence level data will be published later this year.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/311319/8-outcomes-by-offence.xls

AVERAGE CUSTODIAL SENTENCE LENGTH (MONTHS) ⁽¹⁾ FOR SEXUAL OFFENCES INVOLVING CHILDREN, ENGLAND AND WALES, 2009-2013 ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
All sexual offences involving children	46.4	46.3	51.4	52.3	57.4
17 Sexual assault on male child under 13	31.1	37.0	29.6	32.4	50.5
19 Rape of a child under 16	120.4	121.8	122.0	126.2	129.3
19 Rape of a child under 13	93.7	98.8	106.6	108.2	132.3
20 Sexual assault on female child under 13	41.5	42.1	47.1	53.8	54.4
21 Sexual activity with child under 13	28.3	31.4	29.8	33.2	36.9
22 Sexual activity with	31.3	31.2	32.7	34.3	35.7

AVERAGE CUSTODIAL SENTENCE LENGTH (MONTHS) ⁽¹⁾ FOR SEXUAL OFFENCES INVOLVING CHILDREN, ENGLAND AND WALES, 2009-2013 ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

child under
16

23 Familial Sexual Offences (Incest) with child ⁽⁴⁾	36.9	38.5	41.3	43.5	50.4
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71 Abuse of children through prostitution and pornography ⁽⁵⁾	49.3	24.3	32.1	39.5	35.4
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73 Abuse of trust - sexual offences with child ⁽⁶⁾	12.0	17.0	17.2	19.0	15.0
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74 Gross Indecency with Children	31.2	32.7	32.2	31.4	31.1
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86 Taking, permitting to be taken or making, distributing or publishing indecent photographs or pseudo photographs of children	13.5	15.6	15.8	16.3	17.9
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86 Possession of indecent photograph of a child	10.8	11.0	11.7	14.5	13.7
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88 Sexual	21.0	17.8	20.8	20.5	22.8
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AVERAGE CUSTODIAL SENTENCE LENGTH (MONTHS) ⁽¹⁾ FOR SEXUAL OFFENCES INVOLVING CHILDREN, ENGLAND AND WALES, 2009-2013 ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

grooming of
child under
16

(1) Excludes
life and
indeterminate
sentences.

(2) The figures given in the table on court proceedings relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

(3) Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts and police forces. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used.

(4) Includes offences where child is under 13, offences where child is aged 13-17 and offences where child is aged 16-17

(5) Includes offences where child is under 13 and offences where child is under 16

(6) Includes
offences
where victim
is under 13
and offences
where victim
is aged 13-17

Source:
Justice
Statistics
Analytical

AVERAGE CUSTODIAL SENTENCE LENGTH (MONTHS) ⁽¹⁾ FOR SEXUAL OFFENCES INVOLVING CHILDREN, ENGLAND AND WALES, 2009-2013 ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

Services -
Ministry of
Justice.

Ref: PQc 175-
15

■ Pay

Gloria De Piero: [\[228315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average hourly pay is of employees at each grade within his Department identified as (a) White or White British and (b) from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic group.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

To provide the average hourly pay of each grade broken down in the way requested would incur disproportionate costs. The Ministry of Justice pay landscape is complex involving multiple Terms and Conditions, a regional pay model and multiple working patterns. Providing an answer would require identifying all staff falling into the defined categories to calculate a meaningful average.

■ Preston Prison

Mark Hendrick: [\[228080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners there were in HM Prison Preston in (a) 2010, (b) 2011, (c) 2012, (d) 2013 and (e) 2014.

Andrew Selous:

Individual prison population and capacity information for every prison in England and Wales (such as HMP Preston), as well as the total population and useable operational capacity of the prison estate is published monthly on the Ministry of Justice website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-figures-2015>

The table below identifies the population at HMP Preston at the end of February in each year from 2010 to 2014.

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION
Feb – 2010	774
Feb – 2011	782
Feb – 2012	754

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION
Feb – 2013	690
Feb - 2014	702

■ Prisoners: Females

Andrew Stephenson: [\[228055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of women in prison have been victims of (a) domestic violence and (b) sexual abuse.

Andrew Selous:

Of the 2,309 women under sentence in custody at 31 March 2013 who had a formal offender management (OASys) assessment of sufficient quality, 1,401 (61%) were recorded as having volunteered that they had been victims of domestic abuse.

However, there is no equivalent question in OASys for sexual abuse and this information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Prisons: Wrexham

Ian Lucas: [\[228121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department plans to take to assist local contractors in the tendering process for work at HM Prison Wrexham.

Andrew Selous:

Businesses and interested individuals can find out about potential opportunities on two dedicated websites - Business Wales and Sell2Wales - which are managed by the Welsh Government. Both sites have a dedicated North Wales project page where suppliers and local businesses are encouraged to submit an expression of interest for future construction positions. The development will be seeking to create long-term work opportunities for local suppliers.

This is to support the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) partnership with Lend Lease who has committed to spending £30 million with local businesses and to recruit 50% of the entire workforce from within a 50 mile radius with a target of 70%. Under the contractual arrangements in place, Lend Lease reports to the MoJ on a regular basis on how much of the contract is being spent with companies within a 25 and 50 mile radius of the prison site. To date over £1.6m has been spent with local businesses as part of the early works at the prison site. In addition, the prison is set to boost the regional economy by around £23m a year and create up to 1,000 jobs once operational.

■ Procurement

Ian Lucas: [228651]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what guidance his Department issues on the use of local contractors in tendering processes.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

The Ministry of Justice is mandated to encourage Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) engagement and the policy is set out by the Cabinet Office; this is a government wide agenda. SME participation is encouraged by removing barriers and making the procurement process faster and less complex. Most recently the government issued policy supporting a number of new reforms to make public procurement even more accessible to businesses, particularly SMEs. These new reforms take account of the wide consultation and engagement that the Government has undertaken with public bodies, small businesses and trade bodies over the last two years and in response to Lord Young's recommendations to Government in his report 'Growing Your Business' (May 2013). These reforms are implemented in Part 4 of the new Public Contracts Regulations 2015, and have been embedded into MoJ procurement processes.

Secondly the Social Values Act must be taken into consideration. Thought must be given to the economic, social and environmental well being of the relevant areas and applied as appropriate to the procurement process.

The full policies can be found at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-04-12-procurement-supporting-growth-supporting-material-for-departments>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0315-reforms-to-make-public-procurement-more-accessible-to-smes>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/3/enacted>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61169/The_20Compact.pdf

The MoJ has exceeded the Government's stated aspiration that 25 per cent of government procurement expenditure goes to SMEs. The MoJ is one of the top performing departments, with over £1.7bn (37 per cent) of procurement expenditure going to SMEs in 2013/14.

■ Property Rights: Appeals

Miss Anne McIntosh: [228354]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, on how many occasions appeals involving adverse possession have been brought in the last six months.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

The First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber), administered by HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS), hears cases involving adverse possession that are referred to it by the Land Registry.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) publishes official statistics on the operation of HMCTS including the number of land registration receipts received by the Property Chamber. These statistics are published on a quarterly basis and the most recent official statistical publication (covering the period up to the end of December 2014) can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-and-gender-recognition-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2014>

Internal management information indicates that there have been 72 references with adverse possession as a main issue lodged with the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2014.

■ Squatting

Dr Matthew Offord:

[228568]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans his Department has to bring forward legislative proposals to prohibit the squatting of premises in the commercial property sector.

Mike Penning:

The unauthorised occupation of commercial buildings by squatters can affect the profitability of the businesses concerned and may have particularly damaging consequences for the owners of small businesses and their employees. We have been monitoring the situation closely since we criminalised squatting in residential buildings in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012. We have no proposals for further legislation at this time.

■ Theft: North West

Mark Hendrick:

[228184]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were convicted of theft in (a) Preston constituency, (b) Lancashire and (c) the North West in (i) 2010, (ii) 2011, (iii) 2012, (iv) 2013 and (v) 2014.

Mike Penning:

Theft is a serious offence punishable on indictment by up to seven years' imprisonment. Charges will be brought where there is a realistic prospect of conviction and it is in the public interest.

The number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and offenders found guilty at all courts of theft offences by police force area in the North West region from 2010 to 2013 (the latest available) can be viewed in the table. The Court Proceedings data for calendar year 2014 are due for publication in May 2015. Data requested for Preston is not available at constituency level.

While the figures show that the annual number of convictions has fallen since 2010, the percentage of prosecutions which led to conviction in the North-West has increased during the life time of this Parliament - from 88% in 2010 to 91% in 2013.

OFFENDERS FOUND GUILTY AT ALL COURTS OF THEFT OFFENCES, BY POLICE FORCE AREA, IN THE NORTH WEST REGION, 2010 - 2013 ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

Police force area	2010	2011	2012	2013
Cumbria	1,339	1,341	1,271	1,192
Lancashire	5,275	5,086	4,995	4,528
Merseyside	4,124	3,723	3,420	3,479
Greater Manchester	8,782	8,780	7,390	6,990
Cheshire	2,262	2,294	2,236	2,220
Total	21,782	21,224	19,312	18,409

(1) The figures given in the table on court proceedings relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

(2) Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts and police forces. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used.

Source: Justice Statistics Analytical Services - Ministry of Justice.

Ref: PQC 228184

PRIME MINISTER

■ York

Sir Hugh Bayley:

[\[228609\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, whether he plans to visit York before 7 May 2015.

Mr David Cameron:

I regularly visit all parts of the United Kingdom, including York. Under this Government, crime in Yorkshire has fallen by 21%, employment has risen by 129,000, 470 academies

have opened, there are more nurses and doctors, and 43,950 new homes have been built. We are also investing over £122 million in the Local Growth deal to create over 5,000 jobs, 5,000 homes and generate £150 million in public and private investment. And the hon. Member will be aware that in Yorkshire and Humber there was a bigger rise in the number of people in work in the last year than in the whole of France.

SCOTLAND

■ Advertising

Chris Ruane:

[\[227303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much his Department spent on (a) television advertising, (b) radio advertising, (c) national newspaper advertisements, (d) local newspaper advertisements, (e) social media advertising and (f) other types of advertising in each year since 2010.

David Mundell:

The only money that the Scotland Office has spent on (a) television advertising, (b) radio advertising, (c) national newspaper advertisements, (d) local newspaper advertisements, (e) social media advertising and (f) other types of advertising in each completed financial year since 2010 was £7357 in 2010-11, advertising in Scottish newspapers for applications to fill a vacancy for a member of the Boundary Commission for Scotland.

■ Conditions of Employment

Pamela Nash:

[\[227604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many staff in his Department were engaged off-payroll in each of the last five years up to the most recent period for which figures are available.

David Mundell:

No staff at the Scotland Office have been engaged off-payroll in any of the last five years.

■ ICT

Philip Davies:

[\[227832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, which news applications staff in his Department are authorised to download and use on their work-provided phones and tablets.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office uses an information technology system (SCOTS) operated by the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government is responsible for all hardware/software procurement, administration, support, maintenance and security of the system. Under its IT policy the downloading of 'apps' is prohibited, all functions that would allow the user

to do so are blocked and therefore no 'apps' can be added to work-provided phones or tablets.

■ Staff

Gloria De Piero: [\[227966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many and what proportion of employees in his Department identify as (a) white or white British, (b) Asian or Asian British, (c) Black or Black British, (d) mixed or multiple ethnic group and (e) another ethnicity.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office does not employ staff, all staff that join the department do so on loan or secondment from other government bodies, which remain the employer. The employers hold all information about ethnicity.

TRANSPORT

■ Bus Services: Greater London

Sadiq Khan: [\[228538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which organisation holds the franchise for each London bus route.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Transport in London is devolved to the Mayor of London. London's bus network is regulated by Transport for London (TfL) which plans, procures and manages the network of services in a consistent and coordinated manner. Bus operating companies compete for contracts to provide specified levels of service for up to seven years, with companies penalised or rewarded depending if they meet, exceed or fall short of quality targets. TfL pays the bus operating companies to run the routes they are awarded, with all fares collected being retained by TfL. There are currently 22 companies which run one or more routes in London. A list of these companies is below;

1. Abellio London Limited
2. Abellio West London Limited
3. Arriva (Kent Thameside) Limited
4. Arriva (The Shires) Limited
5. Arriva London North Limited
6. Arriva London South Limited
7. Blue Triangle Buses Limited
8. Ct Plus Community Interest Company
9. Docklands Buses Limited
10. East London Bus & Coach Company Limited

11. Hr Richmond Limited
12. London Central Bus Company Limited
13. London General Transport Services Ltd
14. London Sovereign Limited
15. London United Busways Limited
16. Metrobus Limited
17. Metroline Travel Limited
18. Metroline West Limited
19. South East London & Kent Bus Company Ltd
20. Sullivan Bus & Coach Limited
21. Tgm Group Limited
22. Tower Transit Operations Ltd

■ **Cycleways: Pendle**

Andrew Stephenson:

[\[228383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much has been spent on cycling improvements in Pendle constituency in each year since 2010.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We do not hold funding information for Pendle Borough Council. However, in 2012 the department for Transport awarded Lancashire County Council £5m Local Sustainable Transport fund for their 'Targeting key growth corridors' project. The project comprised a package of sustainable transport measures which supports economic growth and brings forward investment in a green way.

Elements of the package include:

- Network Optimisation to smooth traffic flows and improve journey time reliability
- Enabling Sustainable Travel to remove barriers, allowing more people to travel sustainably
- Promoting Smarter Travel to inform citizens, businesses, universities and schools of the options available to them and to facilitate behavioural change.

These measures are strongly interlinked and together facilitate green economic growth and development by providing fit for purpose transport options.

■ **Cycling: Pendle**

Andrew Stephenson:

[\[228368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many (a) accidents and (b) fatal accidents involving cyclists there have been in Pendle in each year since 2010.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The number of reported personal injury road accidents involving at least one pedal cyclist in Pendle constituency for 2010 to 2013 can be found in the table below. The table breaks the accidents down by the severity of the most seriously injured casualty (including fatalities) in the accident. The most seriously injured casualty could be someone other than a pedal cyclist.

Reported personal injury road accidents involving at least one pedal cyclist by severity: Pendle constituency, 2010-2013

	FATAL	SERIOUS	SLIGHT	ALL
2010	1	4	16	21
2011	0	4	14	18
2012	0	3	12	15
2013	0	4	13	17

Data for 2014 is not available until June 2015.

■ **First Great Western**

Ian Mearns:

[\[228580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to announce the timetable for the Greater Western franchise before 30 March 2015.

Claire Perry:

As announced on 23 March, the new Direct Award for the Greater Western franchise includes details of future changes to the timetable.

■ **High Speed 2 Railway Line**

Mr Dominic Grieve:

[\[228470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate his Department has made of the cost of maintaining the High Speed 2 network over the 60 year appraisal period set out in his Department's publication, The Economic Case for HS2.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Economic Case for HS2 published in October 2013 estimates that infrastructure maintenance costs for the HS2 network amount to £1,454m (2011 prices, PV) for Phase 1 and £2,931m (2011 prices, PV) for the full Y-Network over the 60 year appraisal period.

Mr Dominic Grieve:

[\[228471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to announce its decision on the route of Phase Two of High Speed 2 between Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The government will set out how to take forward HS2 Phase Two later this year.

Mr Dominic Grieve:

[\[228472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the cost to the public purse was of the Exceptional Hardship Scheme from its inception to its replacement by the Need to Sell scheme.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

To date the total cost of properties purchased under the Exceptional Hardship Scheme for the Phase One route is £83,952,010. There are a number of transactions that are yet to be completed.

Mr Dominic Grieve:

[\[228473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of the costs of operating a discretionary compensation scheme along the planned High Speed 2 Phase One route in the period to one year after the opening of Phase One.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The current estimate of the costs of operating discretionary compensation schemes along the planned High Speed 2 Phase One route in the period to one year after the opening of Phase One is £655m (based on 2Q 2011 prices). Additionally we estimate that the homeowner payment scheme will be £20m.

Mr Dominic Grieve:

[\[228474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate his Department has made of the cost of construction of the proposed tunnel for High Speed 2 from Old Oak Common to Euston.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The estimated cost of construction for the proposed tunnel for High Speed 2 from Old Oak Common to Euston is £434m. This costs figure (which is based on Q2 2011 prices) includes construction of the associated shafts and portals, but excludes land and property costs.

■ Highways Agency

Greg Mulholland:

[\[228719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 March 2015 to Question 227614, if he will publish the Counter Fraud Committee's reports to the Audit Committee of the Highways Agency.

Mr John Hayes:

The reports form part of the internal control framework of the Highways Agency. The report of the Counter Fraud Committee (CFC) is a standing item on the Audit Committee (AC) agenda, which until recently were provided orally, given that the chair of the AC also attends CFC. More recently these have been provided as a written report to the AC to facilitate follow up questions from other AC members. Each year an annual

CFC report is produced for the AC which informs the year end assurance report included in the Highways Agency year- end financial statements and report which are laid before the House. That report is therefore the most appropriate source of information about the control framework of which the work of the CFC forms part.

Highways England will be reviewing the Terms of Reference and internal reporting arrangements for its Counter Fraud Committee as part of the on-going process of review of its governance framework, risk and internal control framework as an independent company. The Framework Document provides that in doing so it will continue to follow Treasury guidance on tackling fraud.

Greg Mulholland: [\[228720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 March 2015 to Question 227614, how frequently the Counter Fraud Committee submits reports to the Audit Committee of the Highways Agency.

Mr John Hayes:

The Counter Fraud Committee reports to each Audit Committee meeting. Its meetings are arranged so that appropriate discussion and any additional action can be taken before the Audit Committee meets.

Greg Mulholland: [\[228721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 March 2015 to Question 227614, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the remit and powers of the Audit Committee of the Highways Agency.

Mr John Hayes:

As an executive agency, assurance is provided to the Secretary Of State through the accounting officer via the principal accounting officer, The Permanent Secretary. Each year the Audit Committee conducts an assessment of their effectiveness using the National Audit Office checklist that supports best practice for Audit Committees. Results of this are published in the annual report and discussed by the board through the chairman's annual report.

Greg Mulholland: [\[228722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 March 2015 to Question 227614, when the Counter Fraud Committee of the Highways Agency was created.

Mr John Hayes:

The Counter Fraud Committee has been in place since 2011 in its current guise.

Greg Mulholland: [\[228726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many formal grievances were raised against each office of the Highways Agency's North of England management team in each year since 2006.

Mr John Hayes:

No information is available prior to the HR casework team being set up in June 2008.

The attached table shows the number of grievances received in the calendar year by each office:-

Attachments:

1. Table [228726 (Table).docx]

Greg Mulholland:

[\[228727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many investigations of grievances raised against the Highways Agency's North of England management team in each year since 2006 (a) were found in favour of the complainant, (b) were found in favour of the Highways Agency, (c) are unresolved and (d) are yet to conclude.

Mr John Hayes:

No information is available prior to the HR casework team being set up in June 2008.

The table below shows the number of grievances received in the calendar year along with the current status:-

OUTCOME	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	GRAND TOTAL
Awaiting decision							9		9
Not Available		3	1	2	1				7
Informally resolved				1	1	1	1	1	5
Not upheld 1		2	5	14	8	5	6		41
Partially Upheld	2	1	4	4	9	1			21
Upheld		1	1	1	1	1	1		6
Withdrawn				2	1	2	5		10
Grand Total	3	7	11	24	21	10	22	1	99

When providing this information, the following assumptions have been made:-

1. North of England includes NW and NE Regional Control Centre and associated outstations, and both Leeds and Manchester offices.

2. We are unable to confirm whether the grievance related specifically to the management team
3. Awaiting decision indicates grievances that have been received that are awaiting a decision.
4. Not available indicates a case that has been concluded but in the timescale given we are unable to confirm the outcome.
5. Upheld: is defined as the grievance outcome was found in favour of the complainant.

Greg Mulholland: [\[228728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the (a) average, (b) shortest and (c) longest time taken to conclude investigations of grievances made against the Highways Agency's North of England management team was in each year between 2006 and 2014.

Mr John Hayes:

No information is available prior to the HR casework team being set up in June 2008.

The table below shows the average, shortest and longest number of days for grievances concluded in the calendar year:-

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Average Length	443	334	289	183	307	230	171
Shortest Case	346	132	34	6	48	13	3
Longest Case	696	477	566	566	497	441	397

When providing this information, the following assumptions have been made:-

1. North of England includes NW and NE Regional Control Centre and associated outstations, and both Leeds and Manchester offices.
2. We are unable to confirm whether the grievance related specifically to the management team.

Greg Mulholland: [\[228729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what guidelines he has set out for the Highways Agency on that body's process for completing grievance investigations.

Mr John Hayes:

Since 1 July 2013, grievance policy and procedures for Highways Agency has been aligned to the Department of Transport. This includes a number of guiding principles as follows:-

1. The objective is resolution of the grievance
2. Find out what outcome the person is seeking.
3. Take a balanced approach in considering the grievance.
4. Explain your decisions.
5. Consider the matter on the basis of current policy.
6. Make a decision in a reasonable time.
7. Ask for any documents that you think will help you.

It is for the Decision Officer appointed to the grievance to decide how to carry out each specific investigation, advised as necessary by the HR Casework Team.

■ Honeybourne Station

Sir Peter Luff:

[\[228378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to instruct Network Rail to resolve the land ownership issues at Honeybourne railway station.

Claire Perry:

Network Rail is operationally independent. As this is an operational matter for Network Rail, my Hon. Friend may wish to contact it directly. Further information can be obtained from Network Rail's Chief Executive at the following address:

Mark Carne

Chief Executive

Network Rail

1 Eversholt Street

London

NW1 2DN.

■ Humber Bridge

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[227856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for how long is half of the road carriageway area of the Humber Bridge to be cordoned off; and for what reason that cordoning has taken place.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Humber Bridge Board is responsible for the management, operation and maintenance of the Humber Bridge, not this Department. I understand that the Board are currently replacing the A frames which connect the main span bridge deck to the towers at either end of the bridge. The Board say that they expect to remove the majority of the traffic lane restrictions by the end of March, with full completion of the works by early May.

■ London Bridge Station

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[228632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will review compensation arrangements for passengers using Southern Railway's Metro line who have been affected by the recent disruption to rail services at London Bridge station.

Claire Perry:

I have previously set out that I am considering the case but I cannot make any guarantees at this point. To provide additional compensation above Passenger's Charter arrangements to passengers would place a large additional financial burden on this and future major projects which would in turn increase the cost to taxpayers.

■ North West

Mark Hendrick: [\[228081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of jobs his Department supports (a) directly and (b) indirectly in the supply chain in (i) the North West, (ii) Lancashire and (iii) Preston constituency.

Claire Perry:

The information requested is not held on Department for Transport data systems and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Pay

Gloria De Piero: [\[228450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average hourly pay is for employees at each grade within his Department identified as (a) White or White British and (b) from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic group.

Claire Perry:

For those staff who have declared their ethnicity, the average hourly pay for employees at each grade with the Department for Transport identified as (a) White or White British and (b) from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic group, is shown in the table below.

Note that nearly 18% of staff have not declared their ethnicity so the table below cannot be used to ascertain the exact ethnic group representation at each pay grade.

GRADE	NON WHITE	WHITE
AA	£8.58	£8.46
AO	£10.82	£10.17
EO	£13.46	£12.92
HEO	£16.97	£15.95
PB5	£18.07	£17.93

GRADE	NON WHITE	WHITE
SEO	£22.06	£21.09
Grade 7	£27.50	£27.33
Grade 6	£36.07	£34.77
TM1	£11.24	£11.25
TM2	£15.68	£15.56
TM3	£24.77	£23.82
MS1	£22.41	£22.53
G7AN	£40.77	£40.34
G6AN	-	£46.05
SCS1	-	£40.27
SCS2	-	£54.59
SCS3	-	£66.35

■ Railway Stations: Overcrowding

Sadiq Khan:

[228537]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many times national rail stations were closed because of overcrowding in each year since 2010.

Claire Perry:

The Department does not hold this information, as this is an operational matter for Network Rail and/or the relevant station operators.

■ Railways

Lilian Greenwood:

[228020]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the reason is for the changes planned to High Level Output Statement resource DEL expenditure classified under Other Railways in 2015-16.

Claire Perry:

Forecasts were made at the time of the July 2012 High Level Output Statement of the likely overall net resource DEL impact of implementation of the strategy in each year. The forecasts against this budget line will change over time as a result of changes in revenue and cost forecasts and implementation timings and, as projects are delivered, transfers to other budget lines.

■ Railways: Clacton**Mr Douglas Carswell:** [\[228002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will direct Network Rail to limit the amount of weekend track improvement work on the London Liverpool Street to Clacton line.

Claire Perry:

No, this is an operational decision for Network Rail.

■ Road Traffic Control: Lancashire**Andrew Stephenson:** [\[228333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to reduce traffic congestion in Lancashire since 2010.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

On 29 January the Government announced a £17.2m expansion of the Growth Deal with the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership. We understand the LEP intends to use around £1.85m of that additional funding to support transport interventions to support growth. This is in addition to the £179.4m Local Growth Fund support that we allocated to local transport improvements in last July's Growth Deal with the LEP, supporting delivery of 16 transport projects across Lancashire, including the Burnley to Pendle Growth Corridor.

This funding is in addition to £49.9m integrated transport block allocated to the 3 Lancashire transport authorities (Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire County Council) since the 2010 Spending Review, together with £98.6m for highways maintenance. In addition, we have announced a further £55.2m integrated transport block funding and £136.8m highways maintenance funding for these authorities covering the period 2015/16 to 2020/21. We have also given the go ahead to two local major schemes in Lancashire, the Heysham Link Road and Pennine Reach, both of which are under construction and have been supported by over £142 million of Government funding. A further £5.7 million local pinch point funding is addressing local congestion hotspots in Blackpool, Blackburn and on the A582 near Preston.

The Government launched the Roads Investment Strategy on 1 December 2014. It contains firm proposals to deliver the A585 Windy Harbour to Skippool Bypass, which will tackle congestion on the main route to Fleetwood, as well as a new Junction 2 on the M55, to support links between Lancashire's Enterprise Zone sites at Samlesbury and Warton as well as support future housing growth in Preston.

The Highways Agency is due to shortly complete over £14.3 million pinch point fund investment to relieve traffic congestion at four hotspots in Lancashire on the A585 - Windy Harbour Junction and Bourne Way to West Drive, M6 junction 32 and M55 junction 1, and M65 junction 5.

The Government and Lancashire County Council are also investing heavily in improvement of the rail network in Lancashire, including the electrification of lines between Blackpool, Preston and Manchester, the re-opening of the Todmorden Curve, a

new station at Buckshaw Parkway and a commitment for the new franchises for Northern and TransPennine Express to deliver new trains, more capacity and replace Pacers.

■ Roads: Clacton

Mr Douglas Carswell:

[228003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether central government funding has been made available to Clacton constituency for the repair of potholes.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Essex County Council is responsible for the maintenance of local roads in Clacton including repairing potholes. However, potholes are a menace to all road users and that is why this Government has taken action.

The Government announced in December 2014 that we are allocating just under £6 billion for councils in England to tackle potholes and improve local road conditions over the next six years. This includes allocating over £128 million, based on a needs formula, to Essex County Council.

I am aware that the leader of the County Council has recently pledged to spend £5 million of this funding on pothole repairs in the Jaywick area of the Clacton constituency over the next two years.

This funding is on top of the £4.7 billion we have provided to highway authorities for maintenance in England since 2010, which is £1 billion more than was spent in the previous Parliament, including over £118 million to Essex.

■ Transport: North of England

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[228600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department has allocated to support the programme set out in the Report by Transport for the North entitled The Northern Powerhouse, published in March 2015; and what proportion of the £2.7 billion of investment referred to in that Report will be guaranteed by the Government.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Government is making available up to £6.4 million to support Transport for the North's strategic work and rail option development, and will in addition ensure Highways England is able to take forward its studies identified in the report. With local contributions, this will mean that in total up to £12.5 million will be available to take forward development work. This comprehensive strategy will help the north pool its strengths and transform connectivity across the region, helping to boost business and create a northern powerhouse of jobs, investment and prosperity.

As is stated, the £2.7 billion figure refers to the committed InterCity Express Programme planned for the East Coast Main Line. Passengers can expect to enjoy more seats and faster journeys on these brand new trains from 2018.

■ Transport: Pendle**Andrew Stephenson:** [\[228334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to improve transport links between Pendle constituency and (a) Manchester and (b) London since 2010.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Passengers from stations on the Colne branch in the Pendle constituency, travelling to Manchester will, May 2015, benefit from additional connections to new services to Manchester via the Todmorden Curve, whose reinstatement was funded by Lancashire County Council but with support from the Regional Growth Fund. They will also, from 2016, benefit from wider improvements to Northern rail services following refranchising, including the replacement of the Pacer fleet.

Passengers connecting to London via Preston have benefited from additional capacity on the Virgin West Coast services as a result of the 106 extra carriages introduced in 2012.

On the highways side, the Lancashire Growth Deal also includes the Burnley - Pendle Growth Corridor, a project targeting junction improvements and other transport improvements to release additional site capacity, and enable quicker movement of goods, services and people through this key Economic Corridor. This is focussed on the M65 which has also had Highways Agency support for the M65 Junction 5 improvements. Works are scheduled to take place between January 2015 and March 2015. The M65 links East Lancashire to the M6 for journeys south to London.

The Highways Agency have also completed and started construction on a number major improvements on the M6, M60, M62 and the M1 that will improve journeys to Manchester and London.

TREASURY**■ Climate Change****Henry Smith:** [\[218380\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his Department's domestic adaptation spend was in 2014-15.

Andrea Leadsom:

HM Treasury does not have any dedicated expenditure on domestic adaption, as the central policy function sits with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency**Guto Bebb:** [\[228622\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2015 to Question 225793, for what reason the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency imposes a five per cent surcharge on people who pay by monthly direct debit, but does not do so on people who pay by annual direct debit.

Priti Patel:

Motorists who buy a six month Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) licence have historically paid a ten per cent surcharge.

The Government has introduced a direct debit scheme for the payment of VED, to allow families and businesses to spread their tax payments. Under the scheme, the surcharge has been halved to five per cent when the tax is paid by six monthly and monthly instalments. The retention of a surcharge prevents a loss in VED revenue which would otherwise need to be made up elsewhere, by either increasing other taxes or reducing the Government's investment in public services.

■ Electronic Government

Chi Onwurah:

[228497]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he will provide additional funding to enable Government Digital Service (GDS) to work with local government on digital services; to which bodies that will be allocated; and whether he expects GDS to grow in size.

Danny Alexander:

This work will be undertaken from within existing budgets at the Cabinet Office. The Government will engage as the sector draws up plans to help take advantage of the opportunities the new digital age presents – protecting frontline services whilst delivering efficiencies. If the sector is able to deliver these proposals, they could contribute towards our goal, as announced at Autumn Statement 14, of a further £10bn efficiency savings.

■ Employment and Support Allowance

John Woodcock:

[223403]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the total advertising budget is for the campaign to promote the Employment Allowance; and how much has been spent on (a) television, (b) newspaper, (c) online, (d) radio and (e) other advertising mentioning that allowance in the last 24 months.

Andrea Leadsom:

The Employment Allowance is administered by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. Details of all HMRC spending, in excess of £25,000, are set out on the government website via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/spending-over-25-000>

■ Energy: Taxation

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[227626]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will undertake to provide 12 months' notice to community energy societies of any tax changes that will affect them, in order to provide regulatory coherence and stability.

Mr Roger Godsiff: [227627]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what definition of a community energy co-operative he plans to use in any revision of the tax rules relating to such co-operatives.

Mr Roger Godsiff: [227629]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with hon. Members on the implications of his proposals to exclude co-operatives from future tax allowance schemes for community energy projects.

Mr David Gauke:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>.

The Autumn Statement 2014 announced that all community energy generation undertaken by qualifying organisations will be eligible for Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR) with effect from the date of the expansion of SITR, at which point it will cease to be eligible for the Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS), Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) or the Venture Capital Trust scheme (VCTs). To ensure a smooth transition, the Budget 2015 announced that there will be a transition period of six months following the confirmation of State aid approval for the expansion of SITR before eligibility for EIS, SEIS and VCTs is withdrawn for community energy organisations benefiting from subsidies for the generation of renewable energy. The government believes that this is an appropriate notice period providing certainty and stability for affected organisations.

To become a co-operative, a society must be registered by the FCA. A community energy co-operative is defined by reference to conditions as set out by the FCA.

Co-operatives do not qualify for SITR as they are run for the benefit of their members rather than for the benefit of the community. However, co-operatives with a social purpose and which meet other criteria can convert to a community benefit society by free application to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Those that remain co-operatives and benefit from subsidies for the generation of renewable energy will no longer be eligible for EIS, SEIS and VCTs following the end of the six month transition period.

■ Financial Services: ICT

Adam Afriyie: [225806]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department has taken to boost the growth of the financial technology industry.

Andrea Leadsom:

As part of our long term economic plan, the Government is committed to supporting the continued growth of the Financial Technology (FinTech) sector. The Government has taken a number of steps to achieve this, including:

- Creating a new Payments Systems Regulator (PSR), which will ensure that smaller banks and alternative providers of finance – including FinTechs – can access payment systems in a fair and transparent way, and thereby contributing to a fairer and more competitive payments industry. The PSR will open its doors on 1 April this year.
- Committing to additional funding of £100m to the British Business Bank's Investment Programme – including funding for FinTech.
- Launching the GO-Science's Blackett Review on FinTech Futures, which looks ahead 10 years to the future and identify what the technologies, enablers and barriers are that will shape the future of the UK FinTech sector.
- Naming the big banks that will have to share credit data, and refer on SMEs they reject for finance – helping alternative finance providers, including FinTech firms, to lend more effectively;
- Supporting the development of the peer-to-peer lending and crowdfunding market: consulting on ISA eligibility for crowdfunded debt securities; announcing we will review EU regulations standing in the way of P2P institutional lending; and creating a bespoke regulatory framework for P2P.

Most recently at budget 2015, we announced a further package of measures to build on the government's wide-reaching programme of reform to drive competition in banking and FinTech, including announcing that:

- The Government intends to apply anti-money laundering regulation to digital currency exchanges in the UK, launch a new research initiative into digital currency technology, with £10 million additional funding, and work with the British Standards Institution and the digital currency industry to develop voluntary standards for consumer protection.
- Gocompare will launch the first personal current account comparison tool making use of customers' bank midata releases on 26 March 2015.
- The Government will work with the banks and FinTech firms to develop an open API (Application Programming Interface) standard for banks, by the end of the year.
- the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) 'Project Innovate' will work with HMT and the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) to investigate the feasibility of developing a regulatory 'sandbox' for financial services innovators
- Innovate Finance has agreed to deliver its FinTech regional strategy through a series of local partnerships; the first partnership has already been established in Leeds, and further partnerships will be established in Manchester and Edinburgh by April, and in Newcastle, Bristol and other centres before the end of the year.

■ Housing: Sales

Pamela Nash: [228065]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many sales of property worth £1,000,000 or more there were in (a) the UK, (b) Scotland, (c) England, (d) Wales and (e) Northern Ireland in each of the last five years for which records are available.

Mr David Gauke:

Property transaction statistics by price band and geography are published by HM Revenue & Customs on an annual basis and contains data for several years.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-uk-property-transactions-statistics-2013>

The current publication combines information on the price of property transactions for England and Wales together. The specific information for each country is not readily available.

The Land Registrars for those respective countries also release their own data.

■ Income Tax: Pendle

Andrew Stephenson: [228200]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in Pendle constituency had their income tax reduced as a result of personal allowance increases since May 2010.

Mr David Gauke:

By the tax year beginning April 2017 this Government's increases in the personal allowance (for those born after 5 April 1948) are forecast to have reduced the income tax liability of 27.2 million individuals in the UK. It is forecast that 2.9 million of them live in the North West and Merseyside region, which includes the Parliamentary Constituency of Pendle.

These forecasts are based on the 2012-13 Survey of Personal Incomes, projected to 2017-18 using economic assumptions consistent with the Office for Budget Responsibility's March 2015 economic and fiscal outlook.

HM Treasury does not publish this information at constituency level.

■ Inheritance Tax

Pamela Nash: [227908]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many estates notified for probate and valued up to £1 million paid no inheritance tax in each year since May 2010.

Andrea Leadsom:

Estimates of the numbers of estates with values up to £1 million notified to HMRC that are not liable to Inheritance Tax for deaths in years up to 2011/12 (the latest year for which information is currently available) have been published at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/338970/140729Table12-3DUChecked.pdf.

Many of the estates in this table with a 'net estate' value of more than the Inheritance Tax threshold (including any unused amount transferred from a deceased spouse or civil partner) do not have a liability because of the availability of reliefs and exemptions, which will reduce the net estate value to below this threshold.

■ Marriage: Tax Allowances

Catherine McKinnell:

[\[227758\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have registered their interest in the marriage allowance to date; and what proportion of those people (a) are over 65, (b) are men, (c) are women and (d) have children under 18.

Mr David Gauke:

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) launched its registration system for the Marriage Allowance on 20 February and people are registering their interest all the time.

■ National Savings Bonds: Pensioners

Richard Fuller:

[\[227947\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reasons Pensioner Bonds are not included in the Tax Deduction Scheme for Interest.

Andrea Leadsom:

At Budget 2015, the Chancellor announced that from April 6th 2016, a new savings allowance will remove 95% of people from savings income tax. As a result the industry is expected to switch off the Tax Deduction Scheme for Interest (TDSI), and NS&I plan to start paying interest gross on all taxable products, including the 65+ "Pensioner" Bond.

The Bonds are not included in TDSI as NS&I as a whole does not operate TDSI. Instead NS&I decide on a product-by-product basis as to whether taxable products should be paid net or gross of basic rate tax. At the time 65+ bonds were being developed, the majority of pensioners were basic rate tax payers, and therefore liable to be taxed at the basic rate on the interest on their savings. Paying interest net of the basic rate on 65+ bonds meant that the majority of customers would be taxed correctly without the need to intervene.

When TDSI was implemented in 1991, it was decided that it was not appropriate or cost-effective for NS&I. The option to join was kept under review, but as 72% of NS&I's total stock is invested in tax-free products, and a large proportion of NS&I customers are not liable to pay tax on the remaining taxable products, it is considered to be prohibitively expensive to the taxpayer for NS&I to join the scheme.

■ Pensions

Cathy Jamieson:

[\[228298\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 1.164 of Budget 2014, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have taken their pension pots as a

lump sum as a result of the decision to increase the small pot limit from £2,000 to £10,000 and the number of pensions that can be taken as small pot lump sums from two to three.

Cathy Jamieson: [228299]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 2.57 of Budget 2014, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have cashed in their pension pots in a lump sum as a result of the decision to increase the upper limit for trivial commutation from £18,000 to £30,000.

Cathy Jamieson: [228300]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 2.54 of Budget 2014, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have accessed flexible drawdown as a result of the decision to reduce the guaranteed income requirement from £20,000 to £12,000.

Mr David Gauke:

As a result of the changes to pensions announced at Budget 2014 for the 2014-15 tax year, it is estimated that over 400,000 individuals are able to withdraw their pension wealth more flexibly if they wish to do so.

This figure was presented in the associated Tax Information and Impact Note, which is available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/293844/TIN_8070_8062_8202_8132_8133_increasing_pension_flexibility.pdf

■ Pensions: Advisory Services

Rachel Reeves: [227268]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have registered interest on the Pension Wise website in receiving (a) telephone or (b) face-to-face advice.

Andrea Leadsom:

Information on Pension Wise will be published in due course.

■ Private Rented Housing: Taxation

Pamela Nash: [225104]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many landlords have made a voluntary disclosure to HM Revenue and Customs since the Let Property Campaign began; and how much previously undeclared income has been declared as a result of that campaign.

Mr David Gauke:

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) launched the Let Property Campaign in September 2013 with the objective of raising landlords' awareness of the need to review their tax affairs to ensure they are in order. The campaign provides a voluntary disclosure opportunity to put right any previous errors or omissions, helping landlords to stay on track in future.

At 31 January 2015, 9673 voluntary disclosures have been received .

Information about previously undeclared income, which has now been declared as a result of the Let Property campaign, is not readily available at this time.

■ **Revenue and Customs: Swansea**

Nia Griffith:

[\[228548\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has for the future of HM Revenue and Customs' offices at Swansea; and if he will make a statement.

Andrea Leadsom:

HMRC has been discussing a vision of its future to 2020 and beyond with its workforce, through a national conversation called Building our Future. Through this, HMRC has outlined how it proposes to transform services to its customers and set out what this means for the future size, shape and location of the Department.

HMRC has set out its early thinking about the principles that will determine its future location strategy, which involves bringing teams closer together in a smaller number of large, modern, adaptable Regional Centres. These centres will be supported by a UK-wide network of smaller specialist and touchdown sites.

HMRC has told staff that, it believes that Cardiff is the most suitable location for a future Regional Centre in Wales, since it is already the biggest HMRC location in the country. However, no firm decisions have yet been made on the precise location or timing of a new HMRC Regional Centre in Cardiff or the nature and timing of impacts on other HMRC locations in Wales including Swansea.

HMRC will be developing its plans over coming months and will share details of them as they emerge. HMRC will naturally undertake all necessary consultations and impact assessments.

HMRC shared the main elements of this vision with MPs and Assembly Members in October 14 and will continue to keep MPs and Assembly Members informed of the outcomes of these conversations.

■ **Social Services: Pay**

Paul Blomfield:

[\[224740\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2015 to Question 220731, how many of the 94 investigations in the care sector have resulted in (a) prosecutions for non-payment of the national minimum wage, (b) recovery of fines following conviction for non-payment of the national minimum wage and (c) repayment of unpaid wages to workers affected by non-payment of the national minimum wage.

Paul Blomfield:

[\[224802\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 February 2015 to Question 223480, which stated that some complaints may not lead to the commencement of an investigation, for what reason the Answer of 28 November 2014 to Question 215561 stated that HM Revenue and Customs investigate all complaints.

Mr David Gauke:

The Government takes the enforcement of the National Minimum Wage (NMW) very seriously and has increased the financial penalty percentage from 50% to 100% of the unpaid wages owed to workers, and the maximum penalty from £5,000 to £20,000. These new limits are now in force where arrears are identified in pay reference periods on or after 7 March 2014. The Government will also bring in primary legislation as soon as possible so that the maximum £20,000 penalty can apply to each underpaid worker.

UIN 220731 makes reference to 94 care sector employers who are currently being investigated. As investigations are ongoing, it is not possible to provide the information requested.

To be clear, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) review every complaint referred to them but these may not lead to a formal investigation. This might be due to incomplete information being provided, or the worker subsequently wishing to withdraw their complaint. Similarly, multiple complaints about the same employer would only be recorded under one investigation. HMRC do not record statistics by complaints received, but by investigations completed.

■ Surveys**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[227160\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of (a) disabled and (b) all other staff in his Department reported experiencing bullying or harassment at work in the most recent Civil Service People Survey.

Andrea Leadsom:

8% of Treasury respondents declared that during the past 12 months they had personally experienced bullying or harassment at work.

The rules on confidentiality relating to the Civil Service People Survey (CSPS) do not allow for the breakdown of the results to the extent where the anonymity may be compromised. Therefore the Treasury does not hold information on the proportion of disabled staff who reported bullying or harassment at work in the 2014 Civil Service People Survey.

6% of Treasury respondents declaring that they did not have a long-standing physical or mental health condition, illness, impairment or disability reported that they had personally experienced bullying or harassment at work in the past 12 months.

■ Tax Avoidance**Pamela Nash:**[\[225152\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the tax yield was from BN66 legislation in (a) the UK, (b) Scotland, (c) England, (d) Wales and (e) Northern Ireland in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Pamela Nash: [\[225153\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many enforcement actions in respect of BN66 legislation there have been in (a) the UK, (b) Scotland, (c) England, (d) Wales and (e) Northern Ireland in each year since 2010.

Pamela Nash: [\[225154\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many BN66 status enquiries HM Revenue and Customs has made in (a) the UK, (b) Scotland, (c) England, (d) Wales and (e) Northern Ireland in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Pamela Nash: [\[225200\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many BN66 cases brought to tribunal led to (a) prosecution, (b) acquittal and (c) out of court settlements in each of the last five years.

Andrea Leadsom:

UK residents are taxable on their worldwide income wherever it arises including situations where it arises by way of foreign partnerships. Budget Note 66 (BN66) did not change this position, but announced new legislation to put this position beyond doubt and to close down a wholly artificial tax avoidance scheme. This scheme involved foreign partnerships comprised of foreign trustees that sought to exploit a perceived loophole.

As section 58 of the Finance Act 2008, the legislation announced by BN66, retrospectively clarified existing legislation its introduction had no effect on any taxpayer's tax position.

The information is not available to answer Question 225153. HMRC records are not collated so as to aggregate all enforcement actions taken in respect of all taxpayers.

The information is not available to answer Question 225154. HMRC systems do not separately identify cases with status issues from the generality of Section 58 cases.

■ Tax Evasion

Pamela Nash: [\[224588\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have been (a) under investigation and (b) taken to trial for tax evasion in (i) the UK, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales, (iv) Northern Ireland and (v) England in each year since April 2010.

Mark Hendrick: [\[225634\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in (a) the UK, (b) the North West, (c) Lancashire and (d) Preston have been prosecuted for tax evasion in the last five years.

Mr David Gauke:

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) employs a variety of interventions to tackle tax evasion using both civil and criminal procedures. Investigations that commence as a civil intervention can become criminal and criminal can become civil if the circumstances dictate.

HMRC's Criminal Investigation Directorate is responsible for criminal investigations into suspected tax evasion. They do not split their reporting data by geographical region but record and report all data as a national statistic. Their methodology for recording data relating to numbers of criminal investigations for the year 2010-11 differs from that used for 2011-12 and onwards.

In 2010-11 the total number of criminal investigations relating to suspected tax evasion was 210. Each investigation included varying numbers of individuals.

From 2011-12 HMRC has recorded the number of individuals under criminal investigation. The number of those subject to criminal investigation for suspected tax evasion offences in each year was as follows:

2011-12 1332

2012-13 3430

2013-14 3905

2014-15 to February 2015 4723

HMRC is not a prosecuting authority. Where cases do proceed to the criminal courts the prosecution is carried out by the relevant independent prosecuting authority. This is the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in England and Wales, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) in Scotland, and the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPSNI).

The number of individuals prosecuted for tax evasion offences in each complete year since April 2010 was:

2010-11 372

2011-12 501

2012-13 739

2013-14 880

2014-15 to February 2015 1009

HMRC is not able to supply a time series of full year prosecutions resulting from their criminal investigations for years up to 2009-10. Complete, comparable data is only available from 2010-11 onwards.

There is no direct correlation between the numbers investigated and numbers prosecuted in any one particular year as not all investigations lead to prosecution and those that do are not necessarily prosecuted in the year that the investigation commenced.

As part of the additional £917M investment HMRC received in the 2010 spending review the number of prosecutions instigated as result of Mass Market Evasion Criminal Investigations (volume crime) has increased fivefold.

HMRC also investigates cases that do not involve tax evasion. These figures exclude cases prosecuted for money laundering, other prohibitions and restrictions and other non-fiscal offences.

■ Taxation: Self-assessment

Chi Onwurah: [\[228639\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, where he plans digital tax accounts will be held; how he plans to protect such accounts against cyber attacks; and what safeguards he plans to put in place for those accounts to protect privacy.

Andrea Leadsom:

The digital tax accounts will be accessible through Gov.UK and are therefore protected by the strong security built into that product to protect the accounts from cyber attacks. For anyone to access the digital accounts they will have to have authenticated their identity through the Government Gateway process or by the Verify route. These robust identity checks will enable customers to securely access their data within their account.

■ VAT

Pamela Nash: [\[227906\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many VAT-registered property rental companies there were in each year since May 2010.

Pamela Nash: [\[228302\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many VAT-registered property rental companies there were in each year since May 2010.

Andrea Leadsom:

Supplies of residential property letting are exempt from VAT, so businesses that only make such exempt supplies are not entitled to register for VAT.

In each of the relevant years, the number of VAT- registered businesses whose declared trade classification was Letting or Renting own or Leased Real Estate was as follows:

YEAR	NO OF VAT REGISTERED BUSINESSES
2005	4,089
2006	4,997
2007	6,264
2008	10,860
2009	14,701
2010	18,774
2011	22,520

YEAR	NO OF VAT REGISTERED BUSINESSES
2012	26,076
2013	29,149
2014	32,502

■ Welfare Tax Credits: Preston

Mark Hendrick: [\[228374\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have been contacted by (a) Sigma, (b) Rossendales and (c) other debt collection agencies instructed by HM Revenue and Customs to collect overpaid tax credits in Preston constituency in the last 12 months.

Priti Patel:

HMRC does not collect this information and therefore cannot say how many people in Preston have been contacted.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Natural History Museum

Chi Onwurah: [\[228562\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will hold discussions with the Natural History Museum on targeting boys and girls equally.

Jo Swinson:

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is in regular contact with the Natural History Museum and, following its recent collaboration with Marks and Spencer on a dinosaur-themed clothing line, the Museum has confirmed it is working with the retailer to expand the range to include products for girls. Products in the Museum shop are displayed without gender differentiation for children and the Museum's own children's clothing range is cut for a unisex fit.

It is vital that stereotypes and biases do not limit the potential of young people and the Government believes that children should be encouraged to explore the widest range of interests regardless of gender. The Museum's education programmes and exhibitions support this work, and its scientists are a diverse group of role models, helping to inspire the next generation.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Diesel: Health Hazards**

Stephen Timms: [\[228166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions he has had with the Health and Safety Executive on worker exposure to diesel fumes during roadworks.

Mr Mark Harper:

No Ministers have had recent discussions on worker exposure to diesel fumes during road works with the Health and safety Executive (HSE).

■ **Employment and Support Allowance**

Mr Nicholas Brown: [\[228543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what his policy is on providing employment and support allowance for claimants whose medical assessments are significantly delayed who are then judged to be fit for work, but may not have been for a part of the intervening period; and what mechanism his Department has in place for such claimants to make representations to his Department in such cases.

Mr Mark Harper:

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) continues to be paid to claimants whilst they await a Work Capability Assessment (WCA). Following the WCA, if the claimant is found fit for work, ESA will cease.

Where the claimant disagrees with the outcome of the WCA they can apply for a Mandatory Reconsideration to look at the decision again. If the decision remains unchanged, the claimant can appeal to an independent tribunal.

Stephen Timms: [\[228623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people waited more than (a) one month, (b) two months and (c) three months for a decision on their employment and support allowance claim in each year since May 2010.

Mr Mark Harper:

Official statistics for Employment and Support Allowance processing times are not readily available and to provide the information requested would incur disproportionate cost.

■ **Employment Schemes: Wales**

Stephen Timms: [\[228593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many times ministers or officials from his Department visited Wales since April 2012 to discuss the Jobs Growth Wales programme.

Steve Webb:

DWP Ministers or Officials have not visited Wales since April 2012 to discuss the Jobs Growth Wales Programme.

■ **Farms: Safety**

Jim Shannon:

[228016]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to (a) reduce accidental deaths on farms and (b) improve safety in the vicinity of slurry pits.

Mr Mark Harper:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) leads on matters of farm safety in Great Britain.

(a) In consultation with key industry stakeholders, HSE has developed an Agriculture Sector Strategy to reduce the number of fatal and non-fatal accidents and ill health across this sector. Amongst other things, this includes: HSE supporting the farm safety partnerships in England, Scotland and Wales, in their work to change the culture of the industry and promote professional modern farming – including improving management and control of health and safety risks through industry led farm safety campaigns, such as “Safe Stop” and “Farm Safety Week”; activities targeting young farmers entering the industry such as the NFU Mutual’s Farm Safety Workshops that are being rolled out to agricultural colleges and universities; and delivering an annual programme of Safety and Health Awareness Days for farmers targeted at small and medium sized farms to promote awareness and understanding of common risks and control measures.

(b) HSE has published an Agricultural Information Sheet [<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais9.pdf>] which gives guidance on preventing access to slurry storage areas, addressing the precautions necessary to prevent unauthorised access and to manage the risks associated with drowning in slurry stores. HSE’s Agriculture webpages also highlights the risks posed by slurry gas and confined spaces, and the precautions required to avoid being overcome or killed by these gases.

HSE has also worked closely with the Farm Safety Partnership in England in support of their campaign to address the risks from slurry gas. (Stop! Think! Slurry Gas! - <http://www.nfonline.com/business/farm-safety/farm-safety-partnership/campaigns/slurry-safety/>). The campaign was launched in May 2014 and includes a leaflet and posters to raise awareness of the risks presented by slurry gas and the precautions farmers should take to protect themselves. The GB partnerships, and the Northern Ireland partnership, which is chaired by HSE Northern Ireland, have freely exchanged campaign materials and information to ensure wide dissemination of the slurry safety message.

■ **Hearing Impairment**

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[228541]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the accessibility to his Department and its agencies to deaf people and people who use British Sign Language.

Mr Mark Harper:

Under the Equality Act 2010, DWP provide suitable services to enable claimants and customers to access benefits and use our services fully, including individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired. To support DWP customers who have a specific communication barrier and need a reasonable adjustment we assess their needs and provide tailored support. We have a variety of communication methods: face to face contact on our premises; home visits; telephony; online services; and written communications.

The Department can also provide British sign language (BSL) or non-spoken language interpreters; induction loops; E-mail; Lip reading; use of representatives and we do provide textphones. We are committed to supporting deaf customers to access our services and have recently provided guidance to staff on the use of email communication to disabled customers as a reasonable adjustment. In addition, DWP is currently investigating the benefits of a video relay service.

DWP is also committed to providing a high level of support to our own employees. Access is provided to specialist software and equipment and our dedicated internal reasonable adjustment support team offer help with arranging specialist services such as BSL interpreters.

■ Housing Benefit**Jeremy Corbyn:**[\[228631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average housing benefit paid in (a) Islington, (b) Greater London and (c) England was for tenants of (i) council property, (ii) housing associations and (iii) the private sector in each of the last three years.

Steve Webb:

The information we have is for the average weekly Housing Benefit award, by tenure and various geographies, up to November 2014 and this is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Stat-Xplore_User_Guide.htm

■ Jobclubs**Stephen Timms:**[\[228596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 18 March 2015 to Question 227535, how much his Department has spent on funding work clubs since April 2012.

Esther McVey:

The information requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Jobseeker's Allowance

Chris Williamson: [228572]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that there is no gap in funding for refugees between the ending of Home Office support and the start of jobseeker's allowance payments.

Esther McVey:

The Department for Work and Pensions is working in partnership with the Home Office and external stakeholders to improve processes for refugees claiming benefits. At the point a refugee is given the right to remain, they are provided with information about how to claim Jobseeker's Allowance. Once a claim is registered, Jobcentre Plus aims to make first payments quickly. Short Term Benefit Advances are available for those who need more immediate financial help.

■ MAXMIMUS Health and Human Services

Jessica Morden: [228324]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will place in the Library a copy of the service level agreement with Maximus relating to work capability assessments; what penalties exist under that agreement for a failure to adhere to the terms of the agreement; and what requirements exist under that agreement for the clearance of the backlog of existing cases.

Mr Mark Harper:

[Holding answer 24 March 2015]: As part of the Government's transparency agenda, a redacted version of the MAXIMUS Health and Human Services Ltd contract with the Department for Work and Pensions to deliver Health and Disability Assessments was published on the Contracts Finder website on 24 November 2014. This can be accessed at:

<https://online.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/Common/View%20Notice.aspx?site=1000&lang=en¬iceid=1644334&fs=true>

The Department has put in place a strong contract management and operational monitoring regime so that we will be able to hold the supplier to account in the event of under-performance. However, we are confident that we have selected the right provider for this service and we look forward to the delivery of a high quality service. The contract makes clear in what circumstances financial remedies will be incurred if performance does not meet the expected levels, as well as the other non-financial remedies available, up to and including termination. The Department has both Contract and Performance Managers in place for the contract who help ensure that all aspects of the contract are delivered, policy objectives are met and that performance is rigorously managed.

Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (operated by MAXIMUS) has not been allocated specific targets relating to the clearance of legacy work.

The Department and Centre for Health and Disability Assessments are committed to a close partnership, working to continuously improve waiting times for all assessment appointments.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**

Sir Hugh Bayley:

[228621]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the value was of payments for each type of benefit not paid as a result of sanctions against individual claimants in each year since 2010-11 in (a) Yorkshire and the Humber and (b) the City of York; and how many claimants were sanctioned in each such year in each such area.

Esther McVey:

The Department does not estimate the amount of benefit withheld as a result of benefit sanctions.

Information concerning sanctions by geographical area can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Stat-Xplore_User_Guide.htm

■ **Social Security Benefits: Preston**

Mark Hendrick:

[228554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many jobseeker's allowance claimants in Preston constituency are currently sanctioned.

Mark Hendrick:

[228555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many employment and support allowance claimants in Preston constituency are currently sanctioned.

Esther McVey:

The information as requested, for those who are currently receiving a sanction, is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The information we do have in respect of Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance sanction decisions, by various geographies, is published and available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Stat-Xplore_User_Guide.htm

Mark Hendrick:

[228556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Preston constituency claiming (a) jobseeker's allowance and (b) employment and support allowance currently have court costs, fines and victim surcharges deducted from their benefits.

Mr Mark Harper:

The information requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ **Trussell Trust**

Sir Hugh Bayley:

[\[228608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will meet the Chairman of the Trussell Trust before 7 May 2015.

Esther McVey:

We recognise the extremely valuable work of civil society in supporting local communities. Government officials and Ministers routinely meet with a range of civil society organisations.

■ **Universal Credit**

Stephen Timms:

[\[228592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of spending on the development of the Universal Credit digital service in (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15, (c) 2015-16, (d) 2017-18, (e) 2018-19 and (f) 2019-20.

Mr Mark Harper:

The most recent National Audit Office (NAO) report "*Universal Credit Progress Update* (November 2014 HC786) set out the Departments' forecasts on the expenditure required to deliver the Universal Credit digital service.

■ **Work Capability Assessment**

Jessica Morden:

[\[228323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate he has made of the average time between a claim being made for employment and support allowance and the claimant receiving a work capability assessment.

Mr Mark Harper:

The Department is committed to reducing the time taken between claim and assessment for claimants of Employment and Support Allowance. The recent appointment of Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (operated by MAXIMUS) is integral to bringing improvement into the process as they bring both clinical expertise and a fresh approach that, over time, will significantly reduce waiting times and provide a better experience for claimants.

■ **Work Programme**

Stephen Timms:

[\[228594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what liaison his Department has had with HM Revenue and Customs since June 2011 to ensure that companies accepting Work Programme participants pay National Minimum Wage.

Esther McVey:

HM Revenue and Customs are responsible for enforcing payment of the National Minimum Wage for all people in employment..

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Community Relations

Lyn Brown:

[\[222232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 15 January 2015 to Question 219487, what funding was provided in financial year 2010-11 for the integration projects and activities listed in the Answer.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 2 February 2015. The correct answer should have been:

Stephen Williams:

There was no explicit integration programme in 2010/11. However, the following projects and activities received funding in 2010-11:

CONTEXTUALISING ISLAM	£65,000
Cornish Language	£150,000
Faith-based Regeneration Network	£130,000
Holocaust Memorial Day	£750,000
INFORM	£140,000
Inter Faith Network	£ 327 535,000
Inter Faith Week	£76,000
National Citizens Service - Young Advisers	£133,500
National Community Tensions Team	£96,000
Post-Holocaust Issues Envoy	£20,000

None of the other projects listed in the previous answer received funding that year.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Bank Services: Greater London

Sadiq Khan:

[\[226279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of people in London, and in each London borough, who do not have a bank account.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 9 March 2015. The correct answer should have been:

Steve Webb:

The information is not available in the format requested. Benefit and Pension recipients who do not have a bank account are paid by Simple Payment.

As of 15th January 2015, there were ~~45,911~~ **44,528** benefit recipients and pensioners in Great Britain being paid by Simple Payment.

■ **Offshore Industry: Safety**

Alex Cunningham:

[\[221934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many improvement notices were issued to oil and gas companies operating in the North Sea by the Health and Safety Executive in the period from 1 January 2014 to date; and in how many such cases the company has yet to comply with the improvement notice.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 29 January 2015. The correct answer should have been:

Mr Mark Harper:

Since January 2014, **in relation to oil and gas extraction operations in the North Sea**, HSE has served ~~64~~**36** Improvement Notices **have been served**. ~~relating to oil and gas extraction on the UK Continental Shelf.~~

Of these, ~~The period for compliance has expired for 40~~ **21** ~~of these notices and all have been complied with.~~ **10 have not yet expired, and five** ~~Four~~ notices are subject to appeal and so are suspended until the appeal process is complete.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

■ Performance Targets for the National Measurement & Regulation Office for 2015-2016

Minister of State for Business and Enterprise and Energy (Matthew Hancock):
[\[HCWS475\]](#)

I have tasked the National Measurement & Regulation Office (NMRO) to simplify technical regulation for the benefit of British business.

I have agreed with the NMRO that their objectives for 2015-2016 will be to:

- simplify the legislative framework for weights and measures and hallmarking to support well-functioning competitive markets, and use our strong international influence to shape new and existing EU legislation to ensure that burdens on UK business are minimised or eliminated and UK weights and measures protected,
- provide the assurance businesses need to understand and apply legislative requirements and give them confidence that their investments in research and development are protected against unfair competition,
- enforce technical regulations intelligently using the Regulators' Code to achieve better outcomes for British businesses,
- provide a legal metrology infrastructure to underpin trade measurement and confidence in the market, and certification services to enable businesses to export their products globally.

The performance targets I have set the Agency are as follows:

1. Identify an appropriate methodology to measure the benefit to UK business from simplifying technical regulation including guidance and enforcement, and achieve an upwards trend in benefit over the next three years.
2. Generate a positive 3:1 net contribution to consumers and the environment as well as the low carbon economy, through enforcement team activities.
3. Deliver enforcement services to meet the expectations of Government clients.
4. Implement the New Legal Framework for EU measuring instruments legislation by the target date of April 2016.
5. Support stakeholders by ensuring at least 95% of gas and electricity metering enquiries are answered within three business days of receipt of all necessary documentation.
6. Achieve a satisfaction rating among Certification Service customers of at least 95% of customers scoring satisfied or above, with at least 60% scoring 'very satisfied'.
7. Achieve a 5% increase in income from the 2014/15 financial year.
8. Reduce the per capita overhead rate from 2014/15.

9. Ensure the smooth transition of finances and records of NMS activities from NMRO to BIS by the end of December 2015.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Contingencies Fund advances

Minister of State for Housing and Planning (Brandon Lewis):

[\[HCWS486\]](#)

Durham Housing Stock Transfer

Durham County Council proposes to transfer its housing stock of some 18,500 council and 180 leasehold dwellings to a new social landlord, known as the County Durham Housing Group. The transfer has the support of the Council and council tenants, who have given a positive ballot result.

To facilitate this transfer (which is still subject to the necessary approvals and consents) and which will require funding support of up to £214,000,000 the Department is seeking to increase its Capital AME budget for 2015/16 by £120,000,000.

Parliamentary approval for the 2015/16 funding increase is being sought in the Main Supply Estimates for the Department for Communities and Local Government. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure will be met principally from a repayable cash advance of £205,000,000 from the Contingencies Fund.

Ebbsfleet Urban Development Corporation

At Budget 2014, the Chancellor set out plans for a new Urban Development Corporation to deliver a Garden City settlement of up to 15,000 homes at Ebbsfleet in Kent. This is being taken forward in consultation with local MPs, councils and residents.

Urban Development Corporations are established by means of a statutory instrument under section 135 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. Our aim is to lay such a statutory instrument later this month with a view to establishing the Ebbsfleet Urban Development Corporation in April 2015.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources for this new body will be sought in the Main Supply Estimates for the Department for Communities and Local Government. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £633,000 will be met by a repayable cash advance from the Contingencies Fund.

■ Planning Update

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Mr Eric Pickles):

[\[HCWS488\]](#)

I would like to update the House on further steps we are taking to streamline the planning system, protect the environment, support economic growth and assist locally-led decision-making.

Solar energy: protecting the local and global environment

Last year, the Coalition Government published a comprehensive solar photovoltaic strategy setting out our ambitions for the technology as an important part of the United Kingdom's energy mix. In doing so, the strategy underlines the importance of focusing growth on domestic and commercial roof space and previously developed land.

My Department supported this by consulting on reforms to permitted development rights which will encourage the take up of much larger scale solar power generation (solar photovoltaic) on non-domestic buildings and complement the existing flexibilities for home owners. These reforms allow for a twenty-fold increase in the amount of solar that can go onto the roofs of non-domestic buildings such as warehouses and offices without having to submit a full planning application, subject to strict safeguards to protect local amenity. The proposals have been widely welcomed by the solar industry, and the measure will come into force from 15 April.

The National Planning Policy Framework includes strong protections for the natural and historic environment and is quite clear that local councils when considering development proposals should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Yet, some local communities have genuine concerns that when it comes to solar farms insufficient weight has been given to these protections and the benefits of high quality agricultural land. As the solar strategy noted, public acceptability for solar energy is being eroded by the public response to large-scale solar farms which have sometimes been sited insensitively.

Meeting our energy goals should not be used to justify the wrong development in the wrong location and this includes the unnecessary use of high quality agricultural land. Protecting the global environment is not an excuse to trash the local environment. When we published our new planning guidance in support of the Framework, we set out the particular factors relating to large scale ground mounted solar photovoltaic farms that a local council will need to consider. These include making effective use of previously developed land and, where a proposal involves agricultural land, being quite clear this is necessary and that poorer quality land is to be used in preference to land of a higher quality.

We are encouraged by the impact the guidance is having but do appreciate the continuing concerns, not least those raised in this House, about the unjustified use of high quality agricultural land. In light of these concerns we want it to be clear that any proposal for a solar farm involving the best and most versatile agricultural land would need to be justified by the most compelling evidence. Of course, planning is a quasi-judicial process, and every application needs to be considered on its individual merits, with due process, in light of the relevant material considerations.

Brownfield land: increasing support for councils

We are clear that brownfield land that is suitable for housing has a vital role to play in meeting the need for new homes and have challenged local authorities to have Local Development Orders in place on more than 90 per cent of brownfield land suitable for new homes by 2020. We have agreed funding for those local authorities who successfully bid for funding to help deliver 200,000 new homes on brownfield sites across the country. These

Councils will deliver Local Development Orders for housing on brownfield land which will help to speed up the delivery of housing on these sites.

Green Belt: protecting against inappropriate development

The Government continues to attach great importance to safeguarding the Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

We remain concerned about harm to the Green Belt where there is unauthorised development of land in advance of obtaining planning permission. In such cases, there is no opportunity to appropriately limit or mitigate the harm that has already taken place.

For these reasons, we will be seeking to introduce a new evidenced-based planning and recovery policy for the Green Belt to introduce early in the next Parliament to strengthen protection against unauthorised development.

Unauthorised encampments: ensuring fair play in the planning system

My Department, in conjunction with the Home Office and Ministry of Justice, is publishing an updated guide for councils, police and crime commissioners and police forces on unauthorised encampments, and the powers that public bodies have. We are making very clear that public bodies should not gold-plate human rights and equality laws and turn a blind eye to breaches of the rules. The cause of equality is assisted by taking firm and fair action against anyone who breaches planning rules, and stopping the small number of cases which undermine community relations and hinder integration.

We are also revoking today the following guidance from the last Administration which is now redundant following previous changes to planning policy and planning legislation: DCLG, *Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers: a guide to responsibilities and powers*, May 2007 and DCLG, *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies*, May 2007.

Parking: helping local shops and preventing congestion

This Government is keen to ensure that there is adequate parking provision both in new residential developments and around our town centres and high streets.

The imposition of maximum parking standards under the last Administration lead to blocked and congested streets and pavement parking. Arbitrarily restricting new off-street parking spaces does not reduce car use, it just leads to parking misery. It is for this reason that the Government abolished national maximum parking standards in 2011. The market is best placed to decide if additional parking spaces should be provided

However, many councils have embedded the last Administration's revoked policies. Following a consultation, we are now amending national planning policy to further support the provision of car parking spaces. Parking standards are covered in paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The following text now needs to be read alongside that paragraph: "Local Planning authorities should only impose local parking standards for

residential and non-residential development where there is clear and compelling justification that it is necessary to manage their local road network.”

Building on the success of our previous guidance to help householders rent out under-used car parking spaces, we have also updated planning guidance to local authorities to clarify that non-residential car parking space can be rented out. This will support the shared economy and increase the provision of competitively priced car parking spaces.

Planning applications: streamlining the process

As part of our commitment to streamline the planning application process, we have laid in Parliament a newly consolidated Development Management Procedure Order, to come into force on 15 April. The new Order consolidates the 15 amendments made to the 2010 Order in order to simplify and improve the planning process for all users of the system. It will also bring into force a number of important new measures including; changes to improve the process of statutory consultation and the introduction of a new ‘deemed discharge’ of conditions to ensure that planning conditions are cleared on time so that homes and other development granted planning permission can start on site without delay.

Short term lets: championing the shared economy

The Deregulation Bill takes forward our reforms to 1973 legislation which arbitrarily restricts the ability of Londoners to let out their homes on a short-term basis. The provisions in the Bill will commence two months after Royal Assent.

We set out our policy on short-term letting in London in a paper published on 9 February. The Bill allows for local authorities to request that the Secretary of State agrees to targeted localised exemptions from the new flexibility, where there is a strong amenity case to do so in exceptional circumstances.

Any application should be very localised – for example, specific properties or a specific street not for wider exemptions. Any local authority should consult with the public before making an application, and there should be clear evidence of specific harm once the new provisions have actually been introduced and operated. The Deregulation Bill contains provisions so that the flexibility can be withdrawn following a successful enforcement action against a statutory nuisance. We should be very clear that the broader goal of the policy is to deregulate, and to put London on a similar footing as the rest of the country.

Planning guidance: making the planning system more accessible

Alongside the consolidation of national policy through the National Planning Policy Framework, my Department has also been working to streamline associated planning guidance and make it more accessible.

Following the 2014 review of the nationally significant infrastructure planning regime, we are updating guidance on the pre-application and examination stages. These changes clarify aspects of guidance, benefiting users of the regime.

Planning practice guidance on hazardous substances (‘Seveso III’) is being updated to reflect changes to new regulations being introduced on 1 June 2015. My Department is producing draft guidance to help people understand and prepare for these changes. The guidance

explains planning controls for storage of hazardous substances in England, which will streamline the current system and bring regulations in line with international standards. The guidance follows technical consultation last year on the role of land-use planning in preventing major-accident hazards involving hazardous substances.

Planning practice guidance is also being updated to explain the changes to the environmental impact assessment screening thresholds which will come into effect on 6 April 2015. The changes will remove unnecessary gold-plating of a European directive, reduce costs for local planning authorities and developers and provide more certainty about when an assessment is required.

The Government is committed to tackling delays associated with Section 106 planning obligation negotiations. We have today published our response to the 'Section 106 Planning Obligations – speeding up negotiations' consultation which supports our view that Government should consider further strengthening the legislative framework for resolving delays in negotiating these agreements. Revised guidance will be published alongside this.

We have previously revised national policy on Section 106 thresholds to help small builders and to encourage empty buildings to be brought back into use. Some councils have misinterpreted the Written Ministerial Statement of 28 November 2014, *Official Report*, Column 54WS as just a change in guidance – to clarify, this was a change in national policy and we will be updating the online planning guidance/policy website to make this crystal clear. We are also publishing guidance tomorrow on the vacant building credit to assist in the delivery of the new policy.

We are also to publish guidance on the new social housing relief rules under the amended Community Infrastructure Levy regulations which will help increase the delivery of affordable housing; on supporting the provision of dedicated student accommodation to take pressure off the private rented sector; on supporting the Built to Rent sector and increasing institutional investment in new build rented accommodation; on ensuring effective pre-application discussions; and improving awareness of the New Homes Bonus – taking forward recommendations from our New Homes Bonus evaluation.

In response to our commitment made during the passage of the Infrastructure Bill (26 January 2015, *Official Report*, Column 644), the Government is also updating planning guidance to make clear that up to date assessments of housing need should not normally need to be updated for a full twelve months, and that untested assessments of housing need are inevitably less robust than those which have been subject to examination.

Change of use: supporting brownfield regeneration

To further reduce unnecessary planning regulations, we have brought forward new permitted development rights in line with our 'third way', reducing the number of development types which are required to go through the full planning process.

We consulted in the 'Technical consultation on planning' on a range of measures to support housing, the high streets and growth. We have laid the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 to introduce new permitted development rights from 15 April 2015.

These permitted development rights allow more development to take place without the need for a planning application. Where appropriate, the development may require prior approval, allowing consideration by the local planning authority of specific planning matters. These new measures will benefit businesses and householders.

The changes we are announcing today include:

- Supporting mixed and varied high streets by allowing more change of use between shops and financial and professional services, allowing the change of such uses to restaurants or leisure use, and allowing retailers to adapt their facilities more freely to support click and collect;
- Increasing housing supply by allowing change of use from some business uses to residential and continuing to allow larger, rear domestic extensions; we have also clarified the wording on front extensions following requests by some local authorities.
- Supporting growth by allowing commercial filming for longer periods, allowing larger capacity solar panels on non-domestic buildings, making permanent larger business extensions, allowing like-for-like replacements within waste management facilities and allowing equipment housings for sewerage undertakers;
- Introducing this regulation also meets our Red Tape Challenge commitment to simplify and reduce planning regulation, by consolidating the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 and its 22 amendments; and
- Delivering on our commitment in gambling protections and controls, we are also introducing a new requirement to enable local consideration of a planning application for any change of use to a betting shop or pay day loan shop.

The Government will further consider the case for extending the office to residential reforms, which are helping provided more new homes on brownfield land.

Zero Carbon Homes: Supporting small builders

We are committed to implementing the zero carbon homes standard in 2016 and in addition to the future strengthening of minimum on-site energy performance requirements we have introduced in the Infrastructure Act 2015 the powers needed to enable off-site carbon abatement measures (Allowable Solutions) to contribute to achieving the zero carbon standard. However we recognise that achieving the zero carbon standard will be a challenge for home builders and in particular smaller home builders and so last year we consulted on how an exemption for small sites could operate and we will publish the Government's response shortly.

We have decided there will be an exemption for small housing sites of 10 units or fewer, which are most commonly developed by small scale home builders and can be more expensive to develop irrespective of the size of the builder, from the allowable solutions element of the zero carbon homes target. This means that all new homes will be required to meet the strengthened on-site energy performance standard but those building on small sites will not be required to support any further off-site carbon abatement measures. We will also put in place legislation to ensure that this exemption is not abused.

Housing standards: streamlining the system

New homes need to be high quality, accessible and sustainable. To achieve this, the Government has created a new approach for the setting of technical standards for new housing. This rationalises the many differing existing standards into a simpler, streamlined system which will reduce burdens and help bring forward much needed new homes.

The new system will comprise new additional optional Building Regulations on water and access, and a new national space standard (hereafter referred to as “the new national technical standards”). This system complements the existing set of Building Regulations, which are mandatory.

To implement this new regime, this Written Ministerial Statement sets out the Government’s new national planning policy on the setting of technical standards for new dwellings. This Statement should be taken into account in applying the National Planning Policy Framework, and in particular the policies on local standards or requirements at paragraphs 95, 174, and 177, in both plan making and decision-taking.

Plan making:

From the date the Deregulation Bill is given Royal Assent, local planning authorities and qualifying bodies preparing neighbourhood plans should not set in their emerging Local Plans, neighbourhood plans, or supplementary planning documents, any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings. This includes any policy requiring any level of the Code for Sustainable Homes to be achieved by new development; the Government has now withdrawn the Code, aside from the management of legacy cases. Particular standards or requirements for energy performance are considered later in this Statement.

Local planning authorities and qualifying bodies preparing neighbourhood plans should consider their existing plan policies on technical housing standards or requirements and update them as appropriate, for example through a partial Local Plan review, or a full neighbourhood plan replacement in due course. Local planning authorities may also need to review their local information requirements to ensure that technical detail that is no longer necessary is not requested to support planning applications.

The optional new national technical standards should only be required through any new Local Plan policies if they address a clearly evidenced need, and where their impact on viability has been considered, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Guidance. Neighbourhood plans should not be used to apply the new national technical standards.

For the specific issue of energy performance, local planning authorities will continue to be able to set and apply policies in their Local Plans which require compliance with energy performance standards that exceed the energy requirements of Building Regulations until commencement of amendments to the Planning and Energy Act 2008 in the Deregulation Bill. This is expected to happen alongside the introduction of zero carbon homes policy in late 2016. The Government has stated that, from then, the energy performance requirements in Building Regulations will be set at a level equivalent to the (outgoing) Code

for Sustainable Homes Level 4. Until the amendment is commenced, we would expect local planning authorities to take this statement of the Government's intention into account in applying existing policies and not set conditions with requirements above a Code level 4 equivalent. This statement does not modify the National Planning Policy Framework policy allowing the connection of new housing development to low carbon infrastructure such as district heating networks.

Measures relating to flood resilience and resistance and external noise will remain a matter to be dealt with through the planning process, in line with the existing national policy and guidance. In cases of very specific and clearly evidenced housing accessibility needs, where individual household requirements are clearly outside the new national technical standards, local planning authorities may ask for specific requirements outside of the access standard, subject to overall viability considerations.

Decision taking, Transition and Compliance:

From the date the Deregulation Bill is given Royal Assent until 30 September 2015 : The Government's policy is that planning permissions should not be granted requiring, or subject to conditions requiring, compliance with any technical housing standards other than for those areas where authorities have existing policies on access, internal space, or water efficiency.

Planning permission may still be granted on the basis of existing Local Plan and neighbourhood plan policies on access, internal space, and water efficiency, even though they may have a degree of conflict with the new national technical standards.

Where there is an existing plan policy which references the Code for Sustainable Homes, authorities may continue to apply a requirement for a water efficiency standard equivalent to the new national technical standard, or in the case of energy a standard consistent with the policy set out in the earlier paragraph in this Statement, concerning energy performance.

From 1 October 2015 : Existing Local Plan, neighbourhood plan, and supplementary planning document policies relating to water efficiency, access and internal space should be interpreted by reference to the nearest equivalent new national technical standard. Decision takers should only require compliance with the new national technical standards where there is a relevant current Local Plan policy.

Planning policies relating to technical security standards for new homes, such as door and window locks, will be unnecessary because all new homes will be subject to the new mandatory Building Regulation Approved Document on security (Part Q). Policies relating to the external design and layout of new development, which aim to reduce crime and disorder, remain unaffected by this Statement.

Where policies relating to technical standards have yet to be revised, local planning authorities are advised to set out clearly how the existing policies will be applied in decision taking in light of this Statement.

If, in the light of experience in implementing this policy statement, the Government considers that it is not being accorded sufficient weight by planning authorities, we will consider bringing forward new legislation to secure implementation.

Conclusion

This package of measures will help deliver more homes in a locally-led planning system, protect the environment, provide certainty for local residents and business, and contribute to the Government's long-term economic plan and economic growth.

We will be placing in the Library of the House copies of the documents associated with these announcements.

DEFENCE

■ **Armed Forces Pay Review Body—Medical and Dental Officers**

Secretary of State for Defence (Michael Fallon):

[\[HCWS483\]](#)

The Supplement to the 2015 Report of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB) making recommendations on the pay of Service Medical and Dental Officers has been published today. I wish to express my thanks to the Chairman and members of the Review Body for their Report.

In line with the Government's 2013 Budget Statement, which announced that public sector pay awards would be increased by an average of up to one per cent for 2015-16, the AFPRB has recommended an increase of one per cent to base military salaries for all ranks within the Medical and Dental cadre for 2015/16. In addition, the AFPRB has recommended a one per cent increase in General Medical Practitioner and General Dental Practitioner Trainer Pay and Associate Trainer Pay, and the retention and expansion of the Golden Hello scheme for Medical Officers.

The AFPRB's recommendations are accepted in full with implementation effective from 1 April 2015.

Copies of the AFPRB Supplementary Report are available in the Vote Office.

■ **Royal Navy Nuclear Reactor Prototype Review**

Secretary of State for Defence (Michael Fallon):

[\[HCWS482\]](#)

On 6th March 2014, my predecessor announced his decision to refuel the nuclear reactor in HMS Vanguard, one of the UK's four ballistic missile submarines, during its planned deep maintenance period. This was a prudent precaution following the discovery of a microscopic breach in the cladding around one of the fuel cells in the prototype reactor plant at our Shore Test Facility at Dounreay in Scotland. My predecessor also asked the MOD Chief Scientific Adviser to review again the evidence on which the decision was taken not to prototype the next generation PWR3 reactor, due to be fitted in the Successor ballistic missile submarines.

The review was undertaken by three eminent nuclear experts, Professor Robin Grimes, Professor Dame Sue Ion and Professor Andrew Sherry. I have received the review Panel's report and am grateful for the Panel's efforts and insights.

The Panel concluded that it was a valid decision not to prototype PWR3. They also agreed that there was no practical course of action that would have enabled a prototype facility to be built ahead of the first Successor submarine.

The Panel have advised that, with no PWR3 shore test facility, far greater requirements will need to be placed on other elements of the submarine enterprise to provide data, experience and assurance to underpin safety and availability especially those elements that are unique to the UK. As such, I have agreed to their recommendation that the Department undertake a Nuclear Propulsion Capability Review to ensure the necessary capability and capacity is in place to sustain these requirements. This review will form part of the Department's routine work to ensure that continuous at sea deterrence can be sustained now and in the future.

The review confirms that the Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment will not be required to support reactor core prototyping activity beyond 2015, as set out to Parliament on 2 November 2011 (Official Record, Col 37WS). It is anticipated that defueling and fuel management activities will continue at the site until 2022. The Vulcan Defuel and Decommissioning project is assessing detailed options which range from placing the prototype facilities into care and maintenance (while retaining the site's strategic capabilities), to decommissioning the site and returning it to Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. Initial decisions on the future of the site are expected around 2016.

EDUCATION

■ Voluntary and Community Sector National Prospectus Grants

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Childcare and Education (Mr Sam Gyimah):

[\[HCWS479\]](#)

I am pleased to announce, together with my colleague Edward Timpson, Minister responsible for children and families, that today we are publishing the results of the National Prospectus grants competition to fund voluntary organisations working with children and their families.

After a highly competitive application process we have chosen 94 projects that I believe will have a significant impact on children's lives. This represents an investment of almost £25m in 2015-16 across seven key priority areas. The money will be spread between organisations specialising in adoption, children in care, early education and childcare, family advice and support, mental health, safeguarding and special educational needs and disabilities. The grants are additional to existing government funding that supports these areas.

For the first time we identified mental health as a theme in the National Prospectus. I am very pleased to say that we received a number of high quality bids under this theme, and will be funding 17 projects worth almost £5m in total.

These projects will help children and young people, from the early years through to those making the transition to adulthood. We are also continuing to provide funding to the Young Minds helpline for parents worried about the emotional problems, behaviour or mental health of their children. Support will be given in a number of different ways including face-to-face, peer support, by telephone, online and through apps. They will also help specific

groups of children who face particular issues: those who have suffered brain injury; homeless young people; bereaved children; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people.

Many of these projects will make vital links to schools. To support this, we are today also issuing two pieces of guidance which will help schools to make themselves places where mental health issues can be learned about and discussed openly and safely, and where effective early support is given for mental health issues through high quality counselling.

We have funded the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Association to produce guidance that will help schools provide age-appropriate teaching on mental health problems from anxiety and depression to eating disorders and self-harm. This will be supplemented by specific lesson plans over the coming months so that schools can use them to plan for teaching from September.

We are also providing a new blue-print for schools on counselling services - developed in conjunction with experts in the field – which provides head teachers with practical advice on how to secure high-quality school based counselling services that meet the needs of those it intends to support

A list of all the organisations receiving funding through the National Prospectus grants is attached to this statement.

Attachments:

1. National Prospectus grant awards [National Prospectus grant awards.pdf]

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ March's Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Parliamentary Under Secretary, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (George Eustice): [\[HCWS476\]](#)

I represented the UK at the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 16 March in Brussels. Rebecca Evans AM and Richard Lochhead MSP were also present.

There were only agriculture items on the agenda.

Organic production and labelling of organic products

The Council held an orientation debate on the proposal for a Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products. Most Member States agreed that good progress had been made. Austria and the Netherlands, however, repeated their calls for the proposal to be withdrawn, arguing that it would hinder rather than support development of the organic sector. I, along with a number of other Member States, argued for the removal of the requirement for annual physical inspections in favour of a risk based approach. I also stressed that the Commission's proposal to move to an import regime based on compliance with EU rules should not impact negatively on developing countries and that a significant transition period should be included. The Presidency confirmed work on the proposal would continue with the aim of reaching a Council position in May.

Milk Sector: market situation, trends and EU measures

The Council discussed the milk sector focussing on the market situation, trends and EU measures. Poland stressed that its producers were finding the current market situation tough and France and Spain repeated their request for the Commission to consider stronger crisis management tools. I stressed that further work was needed to identify and develop new markets and urged the Commission to come forward with its feasibility study on dairy country of origin labelling as soon as possible. Commissioner Hogan acknowledged the difficulties in some parts of the sector but expressed optimism about global demand in the future. He also said he would consider suggestions for broadening the scope of the Milk Market Observatory.

CAP implementation and simplification

Commissioner Hogan opened the session on CAP by announcing that he would consider extending the 15 May deadline by when farmers had to submit their Basic Payment Scheme applications given the administrative demands of the new regime. I supported Italy and other Member States in calling for that extension and I stressed that it should be a minimum of a month. The Commissioner also confirmed that his services were examining all of the ideas submitted by Member States in response to his simplification exercise. Ministers then proceeded to highlight a wide range of priorities for change, including the new greening requirements. I called for more realistic greening mapping and control regimes and argued that Member States' own interpretations and implementation should be respected. The Presidency confirmed that they would seek to agree Council Conclusions on CAP simplification at the May Council.

International agricultural trade issues

The Commission provided an update on EU agricultural imports and exports and the progress of a range of bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations during a Minister-only lunch session. I agreed with those Member States who stressed that the EU's high production standards and system of geographical indications should not be undermined. However, I underlined that global trade could boost economic growth across Europe and that significant opportunities were available to the EU, in particular in negotiations with the US and Japan.

AOB: Angora wool and fur from maltreated rabbits and furred animals

The Netherlands highlighted the issue, mainly in China, of plucking live angora rabbits for wool and furred animals being maltreated. I shared their concern and stated that UK officials would approach our textile and clothing industry to better understand their position. The Commission noted that the World Trade Organization rules currently prevent the EU from imposing its animal welfare standards on third countries and agreed that a business to business approach would be best.

AOB: Xylella fastidiosa in Southern Italy and risk of further spread in the EU

Commissioner Andriukaitis underlined the seriousness of the threat of the Xylella fastidiosa bacteria not only for olive trees but also potentially to the wider agriculture sector. Italy

explained what measures had been taken and that the eradication of host plants was now underway. I supported the need for stronger EU emergency measures as well as updating the Plant Health Directive, to provide better protection against all strains, from all countries and on all host plants.

■ Red Tape Challenge

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (George Eustice):

[\[HCWS477\]](#)

As part of the Government's Red Tape Challenge initiative, Defra will complete this Parliament an ambitious programme of reform to improve and simplify its regulation. These reforms will reduce regulatory costs to business by around £300m per year, thus helping to promote growth, whilst maintaining our high standards of environmental, animal and plant health protection.

In total, 650 legislative reforms will have been made which will reduce the number of regulations in force by more than 20% compared to May 2010. I am today placing a full list of these legislative reforms in the Libraries of the House.

Reforming the amount of guidance that accumulated over many years has also been an important priority. In May, Defra and its regulator network will have reduced their guidance by more than 70,000 pages, which is a reduction of over 80%. I am placing in the Libraries of the House the current Impact Assessment to support this reform.

All Defra's legislation in force is now accessible to the public via DefraLex, an on-line portal on legislation.gov.uk/defralex. This is designed to make legislation more accessible and easier to locate by businesses and the public.

HEALTH

■ Health Services in the East of England

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr Jeremy Hunt):

[\[HCWS484\]](#)

In November 2011 Hinchingsbrooke Health Care National Health Service Trust entered into a franchise management contract with Circle Hinchingsbrooke Limited. Circle Hinchingsbrooke Limited has issued a termination notice to the contract, and arrangements have been put in place for the Trust to revert to operating independently again with effect from 1 April 2015.

Hinchingsbrooke Health Care National Health Service Trust has always remained an NHS Trust with all of the buildings and equipment owned by the Trust, and all full-time staff apart from some of the executive leadership employed by the NHS. Responsibility for running the Trust will return to the NHS as of 1 April. A new Board has been appointed to run the Trust, led by Alan Burns as the Chair.

To ensure minimal disruption to services at the Trust, Circle will continue to provide certain procurement services for a limited period to allow for a long term plan to be put in place.

As for every provider of NHS services, the priority at Hinchingsbrooke Health Care NHS Trust will continue to be the provision of safe, high quality services to patients. To address the

concerns raised by the Chief Inspector of Hospitals in the CQC report, the NHS Trust Development Authority has appointed an Improvement Director as part of the special measures regime now in place at Hinchingsbrooke Health Care Trust.

The Trust will be supported to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements and to ensure continuity of all services provided by the Trust, protecting care for patients and providing security for Trust staff.

■ **Infected blood**

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr Jeremy Hunt):

[\[HCWS480\]](#)

In January 2011, my predecessor, the Rt. hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire (Andrew Lansley) recalled with sadness how what happened during the 1970s and 1980s, when thousands of patients contracted hepatitis C and HIV from NHS blood and blood products, is one of the great tragedies of modern health care. I would like to say on behalf of this Government how sorry we are for what happened, and express my sympathy for the pain and grief suffered by many infected people and their families.

Since 1988, the Government has established a number of schemes to provide financial support to people affected by that tragedy. The system has evolved in an ad hoc and incremental manner, now comprising five infection focussed schemes that operate according to their own individual criteria. In January 2011, this Government acknowledged the system then had shortcomings and introduced a number of improvements. Despite these improvements, there have been continued criticisms of the system, as reflected in the reports produced earlier this year by the hon. Member for North East Bedfordshire (Alistair Burt), and by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Haemophilia and Contaminated Blood, and described by honourable friends and members across the House during the Back Bench Business Committee debate held on 15 January 2015.

From listening to a range of views on the current system, it is apparent that there might be some people who are experiencing significant ill health which may result from their infection(s) who feel they are not well supported by the existing system. However, it is important to recognise there are elements of the current system which do find favour among the beneficiary community. The challenge for any future Government will be to identify the most appropriate way of targeting financial assistance, whilst ensuring that any system can be responsive to medical advances and is sustainable for Government in financial terms.

I thank both the hon. Member for North East Bedfordshire (Alistair Burt) and the APPG for their reports, both of which we are considering carefully. It is with frustration and sincere regret that our considerations on the design of a future system have been subject to postponement whilst we awaited publication of Lord Penrose's final report of his Inquiry in Scotland. We had hoped to consult during this Parliament on reforming the ex-gratia financial assistance schemes, considering, amongst other options, a system based on some form of individual assessment. However, I felt that it was important to consider fully Lord Penrose's report before any such consultation. Given its publication today, we clearly are not in a position to launch a consultation, on one of the last sitting days of this Parliament.

However, Lord Penrose's report has now been published. It can be found on the Inquiry website at: <http://www.penroseinquiry.org.uk/>. Whilst it will be for the next Government to consider all of Lord Penrose's findings, I would hope and fully expect proposals for improving the current complex payment system to be brought forward, with other UK Health Departments.

In the meantime I am pleased to announce that I will be allocating up to an additional one-off £25 million from the Department of Health's 2015/16 budget allocation to support any transitional arrangements to a different payment system that might be necessary in responding fully to Lord Penrose's recommendations. We intend this to provide assurances to those affected by these tragic events that we have heard their concerns and are making provision to reform the system.

Finally I can formally announce that, in line with our consistent policy of openness, we are now preparing for transfer to the National Archive remaining Department of Health documents relating to blood safety for the period from 1986 to 1995. These documents, which will be open for public scrutiny, will be followed by subsequent tranches of documents covering later years.

Whilst I recognise that this statement does not immediately fulfil the desires of all who campaign on this matter, I hope that it signposts this Government's positive direction on these matters.

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS AUTHORITY

■ IPSA's estimate 2015-16

representing the Speaker's Committee for the IPSA (Mr Charles Walker):
[\[HCWS478\]](#)

The Speaker's Committee for the IPSA is established under the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009. Under statute it must review IPSA's estimate before it is laid before the House and decide whether it is satisfied that the estimate is consistent with the efficient and cost-effective discharge by the IPSA of its functions.

The Committee has approved IPSA's draft estimate for 2015-2016 without modification, in line with the advice provided to it under statute by HM Treasury.

TREASURY

■ Progress against the Coalition's commitment to increase the proportion of revenue accounted for by environmental taxes

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS481\]](#)

Over the Parliament this government has introduced reforms to the tax system to make it more competitive, simpler, fairer, and greener. As part of this, in May 2010 government

committed to increasing the proportion of tax revenue accounted for by environmental taxes.

In 2012, the government published its definition of environmental taxes which set the baseline for achieving that commitment. This statement provides an annual update of the government's progress against that commitment, using the independent OBR forecasts published alongside the Budget.

The government classifies environmental taxes as those that meet the following three principles:

- The tax is explicitly linked to the government's environmental objectives; AND
- The primary objective of the tax is to encourage environmentally positive behaviour change; AND
- The tax is structured in relation to environmental objectives (for example: the more polluting the behaviour, the greater the tax levied).

The government has defined the following as environmental taxes based on these principles:

- Climate Change Levy
- Aggregates Levy
- Landfill Tax
- EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)
- Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme
- Carbon Price Floor

TAX	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Climate Change Levy and Carbon Price Floor (£bn)	0.7	0.7	0.6	1.1	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.5
Aggregates Levy (£bn)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Landfill Tax (£bn)	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1
EU ETS (£bn)	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.8
Carbon Reduction Commitment (£bn)	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6

TAX	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Total Revenue from Environmental Taxes (£bn)	2.5	2.3	2.7	3.5	3.9	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.3
Total Current Receipts Forecast (£bn)	572.5	593.4	601.4	624.1	646.9	667.4	700.9	731.2	764.5	804.3
Proportion of total tax receipts	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%

■ Public Services

Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Danny Alexander):

[\[HCWS485\]](#)

On 5 March 2015 I published the conclusions of HM Treasury's second evaluation of departments' compliance with the rules governing off-payroll appointments in central government.

The evaluation raised a number of concerns regarding implementation of the guidance at UK Export Finance. I stated that I had asked the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury to commission the Government Internal Audit Agency to carry out an independent audit of the implementation of the off-payroll guidance at UK Export Finance, following which further consideration would be given to the need for any sanction.

The independent audit is now complete and has identified that the off-payroll guidance was not properly implemented at UK Export Finance. As a result I shall be issuing a fine against UK Export Finance of £500,000 for breaches of the guidance which involve the failure to seek proper assurance regarding the tax arrangements of a number of individuals.

While the vast majority of off-payroll contracts are in place for legitimate reasons, I am committed to ensuring that the public sector demonstrates the highest standards of integrity in this area and that public sector employers meet all their tax obligations. The Treasury will continue to monitor compliance to ensure this is the case.

■ The UK 2015 National Reform Programme

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr David Gauke):

[\[HCWS487\]](#)

Under Council Recommendation 2010/410 of 13 July 2010, Member States send National Reform Programmes each year, which report to the Commission on their structural reforms and plans.

The UK 2015 National Reform Programme reports on actions taken by the UK as a whole, including by the government and by the Devolved Administrations where policy responses are of a devolved competence.

The 2015 National Reform Programme:

- puts the UK's structural reforms in the context of deficit reduction, the 2014 Autumn Statement and Budget 2015;
- reports on the broad macroeconomic context;
- reports on policies to tackle the six Country-Specific Recommendations addressed to the UK by the July 2014 Council of the European Union on: fiscal consolidation; housing market reforms; youth employment; low-income households, child poverty and childcare; access to finance; and the National Infrastructure Plan;
- and sets out the UK's approach to national monitoring, in line with the five headline Europe 2020 targets agreed by the Council of the European Union in June 2010.

The National Reform Programme is based heavily on the announcements and forecasts of Budget 2015 and the Autumn Statement 2014. It is, furthermore, drawn entirely from information already in the public domain.

The UK's National Reform Programme will be available electronically via HM Treasury's website after it is sent to the European Commission.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Relationship Support

The Minister for Pensions (Steve Webb):

[\[HCWS474\]](#)

We will be extending seven contracts with organisations delivering relationship support provision and related services. These services include preventative support for couples during key transition points in their relationships; targeted support for parents with complex needs; work to promote healthy relationships and encourage the take-up of support services; help for couples experiencing difficulties; training for health visitors to recognise and respond to the signs of relationship distress; training for relationship support specialists; and policy development work.

In addition we will be launching a pilot to test the inclusion of relationship education in perinatal classes in eight areas of the country. The objectives of this pilot are to test the effectiveness of this approach in:

- preparing couples for the impact having a baby will have on their relationship;
- normalising the fact that relationship changes in this period are common; and
- providing strategies on how to manage any differences/conflict.

These contracts will be worth just over £7.2m with further funding earmarked to help Local Authorities develop strategies to help improve the quality of family relationships. This will bring total funding for 2015/16 to just under £8m.

In addition, we will also be offering a 6 month extension to all of the 16 Help and Support for Separated Families Innovation Fund projects, which focus on helping parents going through separation to resolve conflict and work together in the interests of their children. The extending projects will share in a total of £2.5m which will enable further work with families and the opportunity to gather more data to evaluate the success of these projects.