



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 27 October 2015 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:46 P.M., 27 October 2015). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	6	■ Government Digital Service: Business Plans	12
ATTORNEY GENERAL	6	■ Ministers: Codes of Practice	12
■ Estate Agents: Money Laundering	6	■ Special Advisers Remuneration Committee	12
BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS	6	TREASURY	12
■ Business: Living Wage	6	■ A595	12
■ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Public Consultation	6	■ Bookmakers	13
■ Engineering Skills Review	7	■ Bookmakers: Money Laundering	13
■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Licensing	8	■ Business	13
■ Living Wage: Greater London	8	■ Income Tax: Tax Allowances	14
■ Public Houses	8	■ Living Wage	14
■ Shipping: Iron and Steel	8	■ Non-Domestic Rates	14
■ Small Businesses: Sunday Trading	9	■ Official Visits: Cumbria	15
■ United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority: Expenditure	9	■ Owner Occupation and Personal Savings	15
CABINET OFFICE	10	■ Public Expenditure: Wales	15
■ Business Appointments Advisory Committee	10	■ Regional Planning and Development: North of England	15
■ Civil Servants: Equality	11	■ Social Security Benefits: Children	16
■ Electronic Government	11	■ Tax Incentives: Personal Savings and Pensions	16
■ Government Departments: Living Wage	11	■ Treasury: Data Protection	16
		■ Welfare Tax Credits	17

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS	18	■ Schools: Cumbria	29
■ Church of England: Land	18	■ Sexual Offences: Schools	29
COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	18	■ Teachers: Recruitment	29
■ Communities and Local Government: Data Protection	18	ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE	30
■ Homelessness	19	■ Carbon Sequestration: Finance	30
■ Mental Health	20	■ Department of Energy and Climate Change: Data Protection	30
■ Non-domestic Rates: North West	20	■ Energy	31
■ Right to Buy Scheme	20	■ Energy: Billing	31
CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	21	■ Hinkley Point C Power Station	31
■ Cultural Heritage: Crime	21	■ Power Stations	32
■ Dept for Culture, Media and Sport: Public Consultation	21	■ Renewable Energy: Feed-in Tariffs	33
■ Gaming Machines	21	■ Tidal Power: Swansea	34
■ Underground Railways: Mobile Phones	22	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	35
■ World War I: Anniversaries	22	■ Agriculture: Carbon Emissions	35
DEFENCE	23	■ Angling: Licensing	35
■ Afghanistan: Interpreters	23	■ Animal Welfare: Circuses	37
■ Defence Equipment	23	■ Badgers: Hedgehogs	37
■ Defence: Expenditure	25	■ Birds	37
■ Syria: Military Intervention	25	■ Birds: Pest Control	38
EDUCATION	26	■ Bovine Tuberculosis	38
■ Children's Centres: Mental Health Services	26	■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Data Protection	39
■ Department for Education: Data Protection	26	■ Food Supply	39
■ Free School Meals	26	■ Food: Standards	40
■ Further Education	27	■ Pig: Sales	40
■ Primary Education: Assessments	27	■ Rural Areas: Economic Growth	41
■ Primary Education: Free School Meals	28	■ Trees: Diseases	41
■ Primary Education: Literacy	28	FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	42
		■ Burma	42

■ China: Capital Punishment	42	■ Drugs: Licensing	55
■ China: Human Rights	42	■ Health Professions: Sick Leave	55
■ China: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	43	■ Health Professions: Training	56
■ China: Prisoners	43	■ Hospitals: Admissions	56
■ China: Religious Freedom	44	■ Inflammatory Bowel Disease: Diagnosis	56
■ Cleaning Services	44	■ Liver Diseases	57
■ Egypt: Human Rights	44	■ Medical Treatments	57
■ EU Countries: Exports	45	■ Mental Health Services: Lancashire	58
■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Data Protection	45	■ Mental Patients: Social Security Benefits	58
■ Iran: Guided Weapons	45	■ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence	58
■ Iran: Nuclear Power	46	■ NHS: Innovation	59
■ Iran: Sanctions	46	■ NHS: Standards	59
■ Israel: Palestinians	47	■ NHS: Training	60
■ Palestinians	48	■ Offenders: Mental Illness	60
■ Qatar: Migrant Workers	48	■ Perinatal Mortality	61
■ Ray Whelan	49	■ Plastic Surgery	61
■ Saudi Arabia: Festivals and Special Occasions	49	■ Pregnant Women: Mental Illness	61
■ Territorial Waters	49	■ Radiotherapy	62
■ Yemen: Jews	49	■ Sepsis and Acute Respiratory Disease Syndrome: Drugs	63
HEALTH	50	■ Sugar: Taxation	63
■ Armed Forces Covenant: Health Services	50	HOME OFFICE	64
■ Breast Cancer	50	■ Domestic Violence: Greater London	64
■ Breast Cancer: Drugs	51	■ EU External Relations: Africa	64
■ Care Homes: Agency Nurses	51	■ Female Genital Mutilation: Emergency Calls	65
■ Carers	51	■ Forced Marriage	65
■ Clinical Commissioning Groups: Advisory Services	53	■ Fraud: Criminal Investigation	66
■ Department of Health: Data Protection	53	■ Home Office: Data Protection	66
■ Department of Health: Staff	54		
■ Drugs: Iran	54		

■ Home Office: Staff	67	■ Great Western Railway Line: Electrification	78
■ Immigration	67	■ Heathrow Airport	78
■ Marriage Certificates	68	■ High Speed 2 Railway Line	78
■ Moussa Koussa	68	■ High Speed Trains	79
■ Moussa Koussa: Extradition	68	■ Roads: Cumbria	79
■ Passports: Applications	69	■ Severn River Crossing	80
■ Rape: Prosecutions	69	■ Trolleybuses	80
■ Rape: Victim Support Schemes	70	WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	80
■ Stone: Theft	70	■ Civil Partnerships	80
■ Undocumented Migrants: Calais	70	■ Equal Pay	81
■ Undocumented Migrants: France	71	WORK AND PENSIONS	81
HOUSE OF COMMONS		■ Access to Work Programme	81
COMMISSION	72	■ Capita: Complaints	82
■ Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance	72	■ Department for Work and Pensions: Data Protection	82
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	72	■ Employment Schemes	82
■ Syria: Refugees	72	■ Employment Schemes: Young People	83
JUSTICE	73	■ Natural Gas: Safety	83
■ Courts: Chichester	73	■ Personal Independence Payment	84
■ Courts: Closures	73	■ Social Security Benefits: Carers	84
■ Family Proceedings: Wales	73	■ Vacancies: Internet	85
■ Foston Hall Prison	74	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	86
■ Magistrates' Courts: Grantham	74	BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS	86
■ Prisons: Crimes of Violence	75	■ Enterprise Bill: Extension of the Business Impact Target	86
■ Prisons: Saudi Arabia	75	DEFENCE	89
TRANSPORT	75	■ UK Military Support to Afghanistan	89
■ Bus Services	75		
■ Cycling	76		
■ Department for Transport: Data Protection	77		

Notes:

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

Questions with identification numbers of **90000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

ANSWERS**ATTORNEY GENERAL****■ Estate Agents: Money Laundering**

Bill Wiggin: [\[12788\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many estate agents have been prosecuted for money laundering in the last five years.

Robert Buckland:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) maintains no central record of the occupations of defendants prosecuted. This information could only be obtained by examining CPS case files, which would incur disproportionate cost.

BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS**■ Business: Living Wage**

Mr Mark Williams: [\[12652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what assessment he has made of the effect of the introduction of the Government's living wage on unincorporated businesses.

Mr Mark Williams: [\[12653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what fiscal steps he plans to take to help unincorporated businesses with the introduction of the living wage.

Nick Boles:

The Government believes that the new National Living Wage is affordable given the strength of the UK economy and labour market.

The Government will publish a full impact assessment for the introduction of the National Living Wage alongside the implementing regulations. This will contain a section on the impact on small businesses which includes many unincorporated businesses.

The Government is reducing Corporation Tax to 19% from 2017-18 and then to 18% from 2020-21; setting the Annual Investment Allowance at a new permanent level of £200,000; and increasing the Employment Allowance by £1,000 to £3,000 from 2016-17. The increase in the employment allowance means a business could employ four people on the National Living Wage and pay no National Insurance Contributions.

■ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Public Consultation

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[12303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what the average length of a consultation period is in his Department.

Joseph Johnson:

So far in this Parliament, the mean length of a Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) consultation is 50 days, so just over 7 weeks. BIS consultations follow the Government's consultation principles which can be viewed at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/255180/Consultation-Principles-Oct-2013.pdf

■ Engineering Skills Review**Chi Onwurah:**[\[12911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what progress he has made in implementing professor John Perkins' Review of Engineering Skills published by his Department in November 2013.

Nick Boles:

The Perkins Review of engineering skills made it clear that boosting the number engineers was not an agenda that Government could tackle alone. Engineering employers, the profession and educators should work together with Government to increase the supply of engineers in the UK.

Government published a one year on progress report in November 2014. This summarised all the actions taken by Government and the engineering community (led by RAEng) in response to the review. This can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/369566/bis-14-1164-engineering-skills-perkins-review-progress-report.pdf

Government interventions include:

Inspiring young people to consider engineering careers through the Tomorrow's Engineers week, STEM ambassadors in schools and improved careers advice. We are reforming the curriculum to support science and innovation with more rigorous science GCSEs, new Science A levels, Tech Level and Technical Baccalaureate qualifications and more University Technical Colleges specialising in technical and scientific subjects.

We are committed to 3m apprenticeship starts this parliament and many of the new employer-led trailblazer apprenticeships standards are in the engineering and manufacturing sector. We are rolling out more degree and higher level apprenticeships to deliver the high level technical skills employers need. We have introduced National Colleges to provide high level skills in sectors crucial for the economy.

We have invested in higher education for STEM teaching facilities (£200m) and the teaching of high cost subject such as engineering (£185m).

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Licensing

Robert Ffello: [R] [[12925](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, when he took the decision not to provide funding to trainees to support the cost of gaining a large goods vehicle licence.

Nick Boles:

There is a longstanding principle, dating back to 2005, which was communicated to the sector in the 2007/08 funding year, that, in general, we do not provide funding for provision that is either an employer or a statutory requirement. Instead, we believe that these costs should be met by employers or individuals themselves.

■ Living Wage: Greater London

Stephen Timms: [[12895](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what steps he is taking to encourage employers in London to pay the London Living Wage.

Nick Boles:

The Government encourages all employers to pay more than the National Minimum Wage and the National Living Wage where they can afford to. The Low Pay Commission's remit is to set the National Minimum Wage as high as possible without harming employment prospects.

According to Office for Budget Responsibility estimates, the National Living Wage will benefit 2.7 million low wage workers by 2020. The increase in April 2016 to £7.20 from the current NMW of £6.70 will mean a 7.5% increase in hourly pay, and a full time worker will earn £910 more per annum compared to today.

■ Public Houses

Greg Mulholland: [[12987](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, when he expects to begin the Government's consultation on a statutory pubs code.

Anna Soubry:

The Pubs Code and Adjudicator consultation will be published imminently.

■ Shipping: Iron and Steel

Mr Kevan Jones: [[12747](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how much UK-produced steel has been used in the manufacturing of the new icebreaking vessel being procured by his Department.

Joseph Johnson:

We announced on 12 October that UK shipyard Cammell Laird was the preferred bidder for the new polar research vessel. The vessel has not yet been built and negotiations

between Cammell Laird and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) are ongoing.

■ Small Businesses: Sunday Trading

Stephen Timms:

[13098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what research his Department has commissioned or undertaken to assess the potential effect on small businesses of proposed changes to Sunday trading laws.

Anna Soubry:

We have consulted on our proposals to devolve the power to extend Sunday trading hours to local areas, to which we received a large number of responses from a wide range of stakeholders. We will be publishing the Government's response shortly. In the consultation, we said we considered that devolving this power would enable local areas to determine the Sunday trading hours that better reflect the need of local people, providing greater choice over when and where they shop. People may choose small retailers, as for example, they offer a diverse range of products and services from convenient locations. This is perhaps why the convenience sector last year saw the opening of two new stores a day and growth in turnover of 5%.

■ United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority: Expenditure

Alan Brown:

[11509]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, with reference to the schedule of comparable programme objects in HM Treasury's publication, *Funding the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly: Statement of Funding Policy*, published in October 2010, what the total expenditure was on UKAEA- Decommissioning between 2010 and 2015; and what the forecast expenditure in which locations is on such decommissioning in each of the next five years.

Joseph Johnson:

The data in the HM Treasury publication *Funding the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales an Northern Ireland Assembly, Statement of Funding Policy* was compiled in 2010 using a different financial database system to the one subsequently in use by BIS and its delivery partners. This means that the information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost. However the UK Atomic Energy Authority, which is responsible for the UK fusion programme, has provided the following information.

YEAR	LEGACY COSTS ¹	JET DECOMMISSIONING COSTS ^{1,5}
2010/11	8,279	29
2011/12	10,798	37

YEAR	LEGACY COSTS ¹	JET DECOMMISSIONING COSTS ^{1,5}
2012/13	7,356	43
2013/14	6,814 plus 1,050 capital ²	62
2014/15	6,024 plus 1,554 capital ²	42
2015/16	8,315 (est.) plus 6,010 capital ² (est.)	166 (est.)
2016/17	See note 3	214 (est.)
2017/18	See note 3	943 (est.)
2018/19	See note 3	16,306 ⁴ (est.)
2019/20	See note 3	28,251 (est.)

Notes

1. Figures in £000s.

2. Capital costs cover new facilities on the Culham site such as the Materials Research Facility and RACE (Remote Applications in Challenging Environments) funded partly through the National Nuclear Users Facility and Oxford City Deal.

3. Subject to next Spending Review.

4. The costs rise substantially in 2018/19 due to the expected closure of JET in 2018 and start of decommissioning. However this date is under review with the European Commission with an extension proposed.

5. These costs are undiscounted and form part of the total undiscounted liability for decommissioning JET of £256,544k as stated in the 2014/15 UKAEA Annual Report and Accounts.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Business Appointments Advisory Committee

Louise Haigh:

[\[13108\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reasons the minutes of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments have not been published since February 2015.

Matthew Hancock:

The independent Advisory Committee on Business Appointments has confirmed that it met on 21 October, when the minutes of its previous meeting on 3 June were approved. The minutes of the June meeting have now been published on the Committee's website in the normal way at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=advisory-committee-on-business-appointments&publication_type=transparency-data

The minutes of the October meeting will be published in due course.

■ Civil Servants: Equality

Louise Haigh: [\[12342\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Champion is taking to ensure (a) improved engagement and (b) increased promotion rates of under-represented groups.

Matthew Hancock:

To govern modern Britain, the Civil Service needs to look and sound like modern Britain. We need access to the broadest possible pool of talent, drawing on people from all backgrounds and all parts of the country.

We have published the Talent Action Plan which introduced the 'Removing Barriers to Success' programme', overseen by the Diversity and Inclusion Champion, Sue Owen. We have introduced Shared Parental Leave, launched the Civil Service Job Share Finder and made sure all-male shortlists and selection panels for senior positions are by exception only. We are also increasing the number of places on our development programme aimed at disabled, BAME and LGB&T Civil Servants from 200 to 1000.

We are also implementing a number of initiatives to recruit individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds onto the Fast Stream and Fast Track Apprenticeship schemes, including internship programmes, schools and colleges mentoring and discovery days, work experience programmes and engagement with universities with a high representation of lower socio-economic students.

■ Electronic Government

Louise Haigh: [\[13088\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of efficiency savings arising from cross-departmental digital strategies in 2014-15.

Matthew Hancock:

As a result of cross government digital and technology strategies, £1.7 billion was saved in 2014-15. This sum was audited against a 2009-10 baseline.

■ Government Departments: Living Wage

Louise Haigh: [\[12343\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what provision his Department's procurement guidance makes to ensure contractors to Government departments pay the living wage.

Matthew Hancock:

The Government awards contracts on the basis of the best value for money for the taxpayer.

We are the first Government ever to deliver a National Living Wage. Every employer in the country will pay the National Living Wage, including all Government contractors, from April 2016.

■ **Government Digital Service: Business Plans**

Louise Haigh: [\[13089\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government Digital Service plans to publish its business plan for 2015-16.

Matthew Hancock:

The Government Digital Service will set out its business plan after the spending review.

■ **Ministers: Codes of Practice**

Andy Slaughter: [\[13073\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Ministerial Code updated in October 2015, what discussions he has had with the Cabinet Office on the removal from that code of reference to Ministers complying with international law, treaty obligations and upholding the administration of justice.

Matthew Hancock:

Information relating to internal discussion and advice is not normally disclosed.

■ **Special Advisers Remuneration Committee**

Louise Haigh: [\[13086\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Special Advisors Remuneration Committee last met.

Matthew Hancock:

Information relating to meetings of internal committees is not normally disclosed.

TREASURY

■ **A595**

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[13100\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy in the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review to provide ring fenced funding for a feasibility study into the trunk road section of the A595.

Greg Hands:

Highways England will soon start a new programme of Route Strategies, aiming to develop an investment programme for the years 2020-25. These will be the forum where MPs and members of the public can make the case for improvements in their area. If improvements to the A595 are proposed through this process, they will be considered carefully for investment in the next Road Investment Strategy.

Further details of Spending Review decisions will be announced on 25 November.

■ Bookmakers

Carolyn Harris: [\[12347\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make representations to the EU Commission on including bookmakers within the scope of the fourth money laundering directive.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive ("the Directive") was formally adopted in June 2015, and will be transposed into national law by June 2017. The Directive extends the scope of the UK's Money Laundering Regulations 2007 to cover all gambling providers.

The Government can exempt providers of certain gambling services from the requirements laid down in the Directive on the basis of proven low risk posed by the nature and scale of operations. Any exemption will need to take account of a risk assessment that includes factors such as the degree of vulnerability of the transaction and the payment methods.

We will be consulting on which sectors of the gambling sector can be proven to be low risk as part of the transposition process and we will be legislating accordingly. The Government plans to publish a consultation on the changes by the end of this year, and this will run for a full 12 weeks.

■ Bookmakers: Money Laundering

Carolyn Harris: [\[901817\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to categorise bookmakers as high risk in the draft regulations transposing the fourth Money Laundering Directive into UK law.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Fourth Money Laundering Directive extends its scope to cover all gambling providers. However, the Government can exempt providers of certain gambling services from the requirements laid down in the Directive on the basis of proven low risk.

We will be publishing a consultation towards the end of the year asking stakeholders to submit evidence on which sectors of the gambling sector can be proven to be low risk as part of the transposition process and will legislate accordingly.

■ Business

James Heappey: [\[901815\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to support businesses.

Mr David Gauke:

The government is committed to supporting businesses.

To support investment and drive productivity, the corporation tax rate will be reduced to 19% in 2017 and 18% in 2020. This will give the UK the lowest rate of corporation tax in the G20 and will save businesses a total of £6.6 billion by 2021.

The permanent level of the Annual Investment Allowance will be increased from £25,000 to £200,000, its highest-ever permanent level.

In addition, over one million employers have benefitted from the Employment Allowance which was introduced in April 2014. It allows businesses and charities throughout the UK to deduct up to £2000 off their employer National Insurance contributions (NICs) bill each year, rising to £3000 from April next year.

■ Income Tax: Tax Allowances

Johnny Mercer: [\[901814\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on earnings of the increase in the personal allowance planned for 2016-17; and how he plans to deliver an increase in that allowance to £12,500 by 2020.

Mr David Gauke:

Summer Budget 2015 confirmed that the personal allowance will increase from £10,600 in 2015-16 to £11,000 in 2016-17. These changes will benefit over 29 million individuals, taking 570,000 taxpayers out of income tax altogether. A typical basic rate taxpayer will see their income tax bill reduced by £905, compared to 2010.

This is the first step towards meeting our commitment to raise the personal allowance to £12,500 by the end of this parliament.

■ Living Wage

Stephen Metcalfe: [\[901819\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the National Living Wage on wage growth.

Damian Hinds:

The National Living Wage will mean a full-time minimum wage worker benefiting from the policy will earn over £4,800 more by 2020 in cash terms, a 40% rise on their current wage. Additionally, due to the ripple effect, up to a quarter of workers will see some benefit. The OBR estimate that economy wide wages will be on average 0.4% percentage points higher in 2020 due to the NLW.

■ Non-Domestic Rates

Iain Stewart: [\[901820\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to allow local authorities to retain business rate revenues.

Mr David Gauke:

The Chancellor set out a radical devolution reform package for local government in his conference speech. This included plans to allow local government to retain 100 per cent

of revenue from business rates to spend on local services, as well as giving local authorities the power to lower business rates to boost growth and support jobs.

While there will still be redistribution between Local Authorities to ensure those with a lower tax base do not lose out, local areas will be able to keep all local growth in their business rates.

■ Official Visits: Cumbria

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[12937\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many official visits he has made to (a) Copeland constituency and (b) Cumbria as part of the Northern Powerhouse initiative.

Greg Hands:

Last week the Chancellor of the Exchequer was in Manchester, Newcastle and Teesside and would hope to visit Cumbria in due course.

■ Owner Occupation and Personal Savings

Chris Green: [\[901811\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to support (a) people with savings and (b) home ownership.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Government is committed to helping people to own their own home and supporting savers of all incomes and at all stages of life. We have introduced the Personal Savings Allowance, which will take 95% of individuals out of tax on their savings, and created the Help to Buy scheme. This has already helped over 100,000 people purchase a home – 240 in Bolton West - and for those saving for their first home, we have introduced the Help to Buy ISA which will be available from December.

■ Public Expenditure: Wales

Jonathan Edwards: [\[12781\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received from the Welsh Government on the Barnett consequentials for Wales resulting from public expenditure on High Speed 2.

Greg Hands:

Treasury Ministers are in regular contact with Welsh Government Ministers on a variety of matters.

■ Regional Planning and Development: North of England

Peter Dowd: [\[901816\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the progress of the Northern Powerhouse.

Greg Hands:

This government is determined to maximise the potential of the North of England and reduce the decades-old gap between London and other cities. Employment in the Northern Powerhouse has risen by over 260,000 since the 2010 election, and in the last year alone there are 71,000 fewer people unemployed. We will continue to strengthen the Northern Powerhouse to ensure that this progress is sustained, bringing further benefits to people in the North, as well as the wider UK economy.

■ Social Security Benefits: Children**Carolyn Harris:**[\[12346\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of limiting (a) child tax credit and (b) the child element of universal credit on parents (i) in BME communities, (ii) who are considering fostering or adoption and (iii) who are the victims of domestic violence.

Damian Hinds:

The government is committed to a fair tax and welfare system and wants to move from a low wage, high tax and high welfare economy to a higher wage, lower tax and lower welfare society. The intended impact of these reforms is to incentivise work and ensure work always pays.

The government has fully assessed the impacts on equalities of the measures announced at Summer Budget, meeting our obligations as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty.

■ Tax Incentives: Personal Savings and Pensions**Richard Graham:**[\[901812\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of tax incentives for savings and pensions.

Mr David Gauke:

The government is committed to supporting savers at all stages of life and has taken a number of steps to support saving through the tax system, including making ISAs more generous and flexible and introducing a new Personal Savings Allowance from next April. We are also reviewing pension tax relief to make sure it provides the right incentives to save for retirement.

■ Treasury: Data Protection**Stephen Hammond:**[\[12431\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department has taken to prepare for the implementation of the proposed General Data Protection Regulation; which non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and agencies overseen by his Department will be affected by that regulation; and what estimate he has made of the potential liability of his Department, its agencies and NDPBs in connection with that proposed regulation.

Harriett Baldwin:

Negotiations on the proposed General Data Protection Regulation are still continuing and our negotiating position has taken into account the likely impact on Government Departments, NDPBs and agencies. Once the outcome of trilogue negotiations between the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Commission are complete, and the Regulation has been adopted, the liabilities will be further assessed. There will then follow a maximum implementation period of two years. Between now and then, Government departments who will be affected by the Regulation are closely involved in work led by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport to consider the implications of the text as it develops through the negotiating process.

Welfare Tax Credits**Grahame Morris:**[\[12916\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of changes to tax credits on family incomes.

Damian Hinds:

The Government provided an overall assessment of the impact of Summer Budget policies in *Impact on households: Distributional analysis to accompany Summer Budget 2015* available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/443229/P_U1822_Distributional_Analysis.pdf

The government provided an additional impact assessment on request of the House of Lords Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee. This can be found on the Committee's web site at

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/Secondary-Legislation-Scrutiny-Committee/DraftTaxCreditsRegs2015-ImpactAssessment.pdf>

Marie Rimmer:[\[901813\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of proposed changes to tax credits on child poverty.

Damian Hinds:

The Government is making changes to Tax Credits which will help put welfare spending on a more sustainable path. The Government wants to move from a low wage, high tax, high welfare society to a higher wage, lower tax, lower welfare society.

We know that work is the best route out of poverty. The intended impact of these reforms is to incentivise work, ensure work always pays, and then allow people to keep more of what they earn.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS■ **Church of England: Land**

Mr Stewart Jackson: [\[12406\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, what progress has been made on land disposals for residential housing by the Church Commissioners at (a) Paston Reserve and (b) Norwood urban extensions near Peterborough; and if she will make a statement.

Mrs Caroline Spelman:

The Church Commissioners have two strategic land sites at Peterborough; Paston Reserve and Norwood. Both sites are allocated as residential urban extension sites in Peterborough City Council's adopted Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Documents. It is the Commissioners' intention, over the long term, to make these sites available to facilitate the delivery of housing and other infrastructure.

The construction of Paston Reserve, which has planning permission for over 1,000 houses, local facilities (including a primary school), open space and other infrastructure, began in 2014. The first residential phase of development comprises 87 houses and the first houses on site were sold by the developer, Keepmoat Homes, in early 2015. Discussions in regard to a second phase of development on the site are underway and it is expected that work on site will commence in late 2016.

With respect to Norwood, the Commissioners worked with the local planning authority through the development plan process, which saw the site's allocation for 2,300 new houses, and are committed to bringing forward the land for development. Pre-application work is currently being progressed with the other landowners across the site and initial discussions have been had with Peterborough City Council about the site's delivery and potential timescales for an outline planning application.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT■ **Communities and Local Government: Data Protection**

Stephen Hammond: [\[12417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to prepare for the implementation of the proposed General Data Protection Regulation; which non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and agencies overseen by his Department will be affected by that regulation; and what estimate he has made of the potential liability of his Department, its agencies and NDPBs in connection with that proposed regulation.

Brandon Lewis:

Negotiations on the proposed General Data Protection Regulation are still continuing and our negotiating position has taken into account the likely impact on Government Departments, NDPBs and agencies. Once the outcome of trilogue negotiations between

the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Commission are complete, and the Regulation has been adopted, the liabilities will be further assessed. There will then follow a maximum implementation period of two years. Between now and then, Government departments who will be affected by the Regulation are closely involved in work led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to consider the implications of the text as it develops through the negotiating process.

■ Homelessness

Kate Osamor:

[12764]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to ensure that reviews decisions by local authorities to rule that a person is intentionally homeless are conducted by people independent of that authority.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The homelessness legislation gives households rights to request a review of local authority homelessness decisions. A review may be carried out by the housing authority itself or by someone acting as an agent of the housing authority. Where the review is to be carried out by an officer of the housing authority, the officer must not have been involved in the original decision, and must be senior to the officer who took the original decision.

Kate Osamor:

[12765]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what provisions are in place to safeguard vulnerable adults who are declared intentionally homeless and who do not want to be separated from family members also declared intentionally homeless in order to be rehoused.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Local authorities are under a duty to provide accommodation to vulnerable households who have made themselves intentionally homeless, for such time as will give the household a reasonable opportunity of securing their own accommodation. They must also provide them with advice and assistance to help them secure their own accommodation. There is no time limit on this duty and authorities should consider each case in light of its particular facts.

Local housing authorities are also under a duty to make arrangements to ensure that social services are aware of cases where households with children may be intentionally homeless.

Justin Madders:

[12857]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the homelessness prevention grant.

Mr Marcus Jones:

I refer the hon. Member to my answer on 15 October 2015, to the rt. hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Tom Brake), PQ 11365.

■ Mental Health

Mr John Baron: [\[12940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of measures taken by local authorities in tackling loneliness; and what support the Government has provided for such measures.

Mr Marcus Jones:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my rt. hon. Friend the Minister of State for Health (Alistair Burt) on 21 October, PQ 12272

In addition, a growing number of town and parish councils are involved in the delivery of work to support residents, in particular vulnerable elderly residents, through programmes such as village agent schemes, which can help older people feel more independent, secure, and cared for, and to have a better quality of life.

■ Non-domestic Rates: North West

Steve Rotheram: [\[13094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Government's proposed changes to business rates on (a) Liverpool Walton constituency, (b) Liverpool City Council, (c) the North West and (d) the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority area.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Liverpool City Council is forecast to collect £190 million in 2015/16, while for the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Area the total forecast is £466 million. The 45 local authorities that comprise the North West are expected to collect £2,588 million in 2015/16.

The Government intends to move to 100% business rates retention for the local government sector across England by the end of this Parliament. As part of the new system, there will continue to be a redistribution of local tax revenue between authorities, with protections in place for authorities that might see their business rates income fall significantly. Over the coming months we will work with local government on the detail of these reforms.

■ Right to Buy Scheme

Greg Mulholland: [\[12289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how much his Department has spent on marketing the Right to Buy scheme's extension to housing associations since 8 May 2015.

Brandon Lewis:

The Department recently set up a 'register of interest' to promote extended Right to Buy using our existing Right to Buy website and we also signposted the register across other channels, resulting in over 2,000 expressions of interest to date from existing housing association tenants. As the set up costs have been borne from existing Right to Buy

website hosting services, it would not be possible to disaggregate the costs of marketing extended Right to Buy alone but it is a very small proportion of the overall costs.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Cultural Heritage: Crime

Mark Pritchard: [\[11288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to prevent illegal online sales of portable antiquities discovered at archaeological sites in the UK.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

DCMS funds the Portable Antiques Scheme (PAS), which encouraged the voluntary recording over 100,000 objects in 2014. PAS has an MoU with eBay to monitor any unreported treasures - and calls in the sellers for questioning if illegal sales reported by third parties. PAS Finds liaison officers work closely with local police forces when investigating the illegal recovery of archaeological material from the UK. You can find more information on the PAS website - finds.org.uk.

■ Dept for Culture, Media and Sport: Public Consultation

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[12302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what the average length of a consultation period is in his Department.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

DCMS consults in line with Government's Consultation Principles, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>. As outlined in the guidelines, the amount of time required to consult will depend on the nature and impact of the proposal, and might typically vary between two and 12 weeks. It confirms that there is no set formula for the consultation length, and that this must be assessed on a case-by-case basis depending on the subject.

■ Gaming Machines

Carolyn Harris: [\[12521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to undertake the next triennial review of stakes and prizes for gaming machines.

Carolyn Harris: [\[12522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if he will take steps to reduce the maximum stake on fixed odds betting terminals from £100.

Carolyn Harris: [\[12876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to paragraph 7 of his Department's Triennial Review of gaming machine stake and prize limits, published in

October 2013, whether it is his policy that there is a serious case to answer in relation to the potential harm caused by category B2 gaming machines.

Tracey Crouch:

Following the last review, new measures were introduced in April 2015 to help players of fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) stay in control. Players of FOBTs who want to stake more than £50 in one play are now required to interact with staff over the counter or register a customer account card. My department are in the process of conducting an evaluation of these measures and I will publish the results in due course.

Carolyn Harris:

[12789]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that bookmakers have a code of conduct relating to fixed odds betting terminals.

Tracey Crouch:

It is a licence condition that bookmakers adhere to social responsibility requirements, as set out in the Gambling Commission's Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice, including specific requirements on fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs). In addition, the Association of British Bookmakers recently published its revised Code on Social Responsibility, which also requires its members to have in place measures on FOBTs to help players stay in control.

■ **Underground Railways: Mobile Phones**

Chi Onwurah:

[12790]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the level of mobile telephone coverage available to train passengers in tunnels; how that matches his Department's coverage targets; whether his Department classifies such coverage as in-building coverage; and what steps he is taking to improve that coverage.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

The Department for Transport is leading work on improving mobile coverage on the rail network and my department is working closely with them. A joint Call for Evidence was issued in June and responses received are currently being analysed.

This complements the ongoing improvements to mobile coverage arising from the Government's landmark agreement with mobile network operators in 2014, to provide coverage to 90% of the UK landmass, and the licence obligation on Telefonica to provide indoor 4G coverage to 98% of UK premises by 2017.

■ **World War I: Anniversaries**

Dan Jarvis:

[12795]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what progress his Department has made on commemorations for the First World War.

Tracey Crouch:

Since the Prime Minister set out plans for the Centenary in October 2012 (a transcript of the Prime Minister's speech can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/speech-at-imperial-war-museum-on-first-world-war-centenary-plans>) the Government has delivered two highly successful commemorative events for the start of the First World War and the Battle of Gallipoli. In 2016 commemorative events will be held for the Battle of Jutland in May and the Somme in July 2016. In 2017 the battle of Passchendaele will be commemorated followed by the Armistice in 2018. Other commemorations such as the UK Tour of the "poppies" and the national restoration of War memorials also continue, more details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/first-world-war-centenary>

DEFENCE**■ Afghanistan: Interpreters**

Maria Eagle: [13116]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many locally employed Afghan interpreters who worked alongside the British Army have (a) approached the Government for help under the ex-gratia redundancy scheme and (b) been relocated to the UK under the ex-gratia redundancy scheme.

Penny Mordaunt:

Some 840 former local Afghan staff are eligible for the Ex Gratia Redundancy Scheme, of which nearly 500 are eligible for the relocation option. Of these, nearly 200 have already relocated to the UK along with their immediate families. A further 60 have been awarded visas and are due to relocate in the coming months. The remainder are either going through the visa application process or are yet to be made redundant.

■ Defence Equipment

Mr Kevan Jones: [12989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 73 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the increase in planning spending on information systems and services; and on what items that additional funding will be spent.

Mr Kevan Jones: [12990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 69 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the decrease in planned spending on ISTAR; and how that decrease will be achieved.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[12991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 65 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the decrease in planned spending on helicopter capabilities; and how that decrease will be achieved.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[12992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 61 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the decrease in planned spending in the air support sector; and how that decrease will be achieved.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[12993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 57 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the decrease in planned spending on the combat air sector; and how that decrease will be achieved.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[12994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 11 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the decrease in unallocated headroom; and how that decrease will be achieved.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[12995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 11 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the decrease in contingency provision; and how that decrease will be achieved.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[12996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 11 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the increase in spending on support for existing in-service equipment; and on what items that additional funding will be spent.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[12997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 11 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the increase in spending on support arrangements for new equipment; on what items that additional funding will be spent.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[13111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 11 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the increase in centrally-held provision; and on what items that additional funding will be spent.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[13112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 45 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the increase in planned spending on submarines; and on what items that additional funding will be spent.

Mr Kevan Jones: [13113]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 53 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the increase in planned spending on the Weapons Programme; and on what items that additional funding will be spent.

Mr Kevan Jones: [13114]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 41 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the increase in planned spending on surface ships; and on what items that additional funding will be spent.

Mr Kevan Jones: [13115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 49 of his Department's Defence Equipment Plan 2015, what the reasons are for the increase in planned spending on land equipment; and on what items that additional funding will be spent.

Mr Philip Dunne:

I refer the hon. Member to the Defence Equipment Plan 2015, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-defence-equipment-plan-2015>.

Paragraph 11 explains the movements in the high level elements of the equipment plan from the previous financial year. Each of the operating centre breakdowns in Section C of the Equipment Plan contains an explanation of any increase or decrease in spending from the previous financial year.

■ Defence: Expenditure

Maria Eagle: [12949]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to make any further changes to the definition of defence expenditure in calculating the proportion of GDP spent on defence in (a) 2016-17, (b) 2017-18, (c) 2018-19 and (d) 2019-20.

Michael Fallon:

The NATO definition of defence expenditure is outlined in NATO guidance. NATO determines when changes to that guidance are required.

■ Syria: Military Intervention

Mr Jim Cunningham: [12980]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of unmanned drone missions flown over Syria in the last year; and if he will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

The net additional costs associated with REAPER operations over Iraq and Syria to the end of September 2015 were an estimated £43 million.

EDUCATION**■ Children's Centres: Mental Health Services**

Luciana Berger: [\[12440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many Sure Start children's centres offer perinatal mental health support for new and expectant mothers.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Department for Education does not routinely collect the information requested. While perinatal mental health is important to the government, we believe that children's centres are best placed to decide which services to offer, based on an assessment of local needs.

■ Department for Education: Data Protection

Stephen Hammond: [\[12420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department has taken to prepare for the implementation of the proposed General Data Protection Regulation; which non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and agencies overseen by her Department will be affected by that regulation; and what estimate she has made of the potential liability of her Department, its agencies and NDPBs in connection with that proposed regulation.

Nick Gibb:

Negotiations on the proposed General Data Protection Regulation are still continuing and our negotiating position has taken into account the likely impact on Government Departments, NDPBs and agencies. Once the outcome of negotiations between the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Commission are complete, and the Regulation has been adopted, the liabilities will be further assessed. There will then follow a maximum implementation period of two years. Between now and then, Government departments which will be affected by the Regulation will be closely involved in work led by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport to consider the implications of the text as it develops through the negotiating process.

■ Free School Meals

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[13005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 October 2015 to Question 11372, how many additional children are now in receipt of free school meals since the changes made to her Department's eligibility checking system.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The eligibility checking system has been revised and updated on a number of occasions, for example to reflect that universal credit had been added to the list of entitling benefits in 2012. Since 2010, the number of pupils entitled to, and claiming for free school meals has decreased from 1,212,320 (16.2%) to 1,198,494 (15.1%) in 2015. We expect the proportion of children eligible for, and claiming free school meals to continue to decrease as the economy continues to improve.

■ Further Education

Peter Kyle: [\[12988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many officials in her Department are working on its review of post-16 education and training institutions.

Nick Boles:

The Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), along with respective funding agencies, have re-prioritised staffing resources to support the review of post-16 education and training.

There are seven reviews in the first wave of area reviews which have either launched since September or will launch in the next few weeks. Each review will take 3-4 months to complete and will be supported by resource from the DfE, BIS, EFA and SFA.

Mike Wood: [\[901785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that good quality education is provided in (a) sixth form and (b) further education colleges.

Nick Boles:

We are introducing reforms to ensure that all post 16 institutions are providing high quality academic and technical education. We are reforming A levels and technical qualifications so that they match the best in the world and ensure that young people are gaining the skills and knowledge they need to progress into employment, apprenticeships or further study.

A levels are now linear and technical qualifications approved for inclusion in 16-19 performance tables meet rigorous standards and are backed by employers. We will further reform technical and professional education to simplify and streamline the number of qualifications so that individuals have a clear set of routes which allow for progression to high level skills.

■ Primary Education: Assessments

Ian Austin: [\[12508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools which signed up to the reception baseline providers that were subsequently not approved by her Department will have their costs reimbursed by her Department.

Nick Gibb:

On 3 July 2015, the Department for Education contacted schools which had selected suppliers that were not approved by the department. This communication confirmed that, should the school continue to use that supplier, no costs would be reimbursed.

Ian Austin: [\[12509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if the costs to schools of administering the reception baseline assessment will be funded by her Department in each year of the current Parliament.

Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education is currently considering all spending, as part of the ongoing spending review.

■ **Primary Education: Free School Meals**

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[12983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2015 to Question 12263, what estimate her Department has made of the number of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils who will qualify for free school meals in each of the next five years.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The continuation of free school meals was a commitment in the Conservative Party's election manifesto. The government is currently conducting a spending review across all its programmes. We are not able to report on free school meals until after the outcome of that review.

■ **Primary Education: Literacy**

Keir Starmer:

[\[12334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to improve levels of primary school literacy in England (a) generally and (b) among the poorest socio-economic groups.

Nick Gibb:

The government is committed to raising standards of literacy in schools so that every child masters the basics of reading and writing at a young age. Our primary national curriculum for English has been designed with the aim that all children leave primary school fully literate and ready to succeed at secondary school.

This government has placed phonics at the heart of the early teaching of reading. The result from this year's phonics screening check show that, three years on from its introduction, 120,000 more six-year-olds are now on track to become excellent readers.

This year's figures show that 99 per cent of pupils who reach or exceed the pass mark in the phonics check go on to achieve at least the expected standard in Key Stage 1 reading, underlining the importance of developing the ability to decode words effectively at an early age. The proportion of six-year-olds achieving the expected standard has risen by 19 percentage points to 77 per cent since 2012.

Over the next five years, we have set ourselves an ambitious challenge to make children in this country the most proficient readers in Europe. We are determined to make sure that every child, no matter where they live or what their background, learns to read well and read widely. We are working with David Walliams to support our mission to tackle child illiteracy and we are funding the Reading Agency to set up 200 new book clubs in schools.

The government is determined that every child receives an education which allows them to achieve to their potential. This is why we introduced the pupil premium in 2011,

giving schools extra funding to focus on their disadvantaged pupils. During the last Parliament, the government provided over £6 billion of additional funding to schools through the pupil premium. We are continuing to tackle educational inequality and we have committed to providing a further £2.5 billion of pupil premium this year alone.

The result of the government's reforms is that disadvantaged pupils are catching up with their peers at both primary and secondary level.

■ Schools: Cumbria

Mr Jamie Reed:

[\[12317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the current status is of schools placed in special measures in Cumbria.

Nick Gibb:

As of 30 September there are three schools in Cumbria judged by Ofsted as requiring special measures. Of these:

Two are local authority maintained; the first, a PRU is judged to be making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures. The second, a small community primary school, is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures. The third, a sponsored academy has recently been re-inspected. We are awaiting Ofsted's report from this inspection.

■ Sexual Offences: Schools

Jim Shannon:

[\[12483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many sexual offences have taken place in schools in each of the last five years.

Edward Timpson:

The department does not hold information on the number of sex attacks that take place in schools.

The closest information we do hold is the number of pupils excluded due to sexual misconduct. However, this may not cover all sex attacks and would not include those committed by non-pupils.

■ Teachers: Recruitment

Fiona Mactaggart:

[\[901769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help schools in areas with a housing shortage to recruit qualified teachers.

Nick Gibb:

We recognise that in some parts of the country teacher recruitment may be challenging, particularly as the economy improves, but we are committed to attracting top graduates and career-changers into teaching, and supporting schools to recruit and retain good

teachers. We have increased scholarships and training bursaries, in priority subjects; expanded Teach First and given graduates the chance to earn a salary while they train.

We have also given schools greater flexibility to use the pay system to attract and retain teachers in response to local circumstances.

The Secretary of State has asked the School Teachers' Review Body to consider whether a salary advance scheme for rental deposits on privately rented homes should be introduced for teachers to help with the cost of moving and so support recruitment.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

■ Carbon Sequestration: Finance

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[12596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what her preferred means of levy support is for the operation of Carbon Capture and Storage plants.

Andrea Leadsom:

The Contract for Difference is the means of providing support for all low carbon generation including Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS). The Supplier Obligation mechanism is a compulsory levy on electricity suppliers to meet the cost of Contract for Differences. Total funds used for this purpose are managed through the Levy Control Framework (LCF).

■ Department of Energy and Climate Change: Data Protection

Stephen Hammond: [\[12421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what steps her Department has taken to prepare for the implementation of the proposed General Data Protection Regulation; which non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and agencies overseen by her Department will be affected by that regulation; and what estimate she has made of the potential liability of her Department, its agencies and NDPBs in connection with that proposed regulation.

Andrea Leadsom:

Negotiations on the proposed General Data Protection Regulation are still continuing and our negotiating position has taken into account the likely impact on Government Departments, NDPBs and agencies. Once the outcome of negotiations involving the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Commission are complete, and the Regulation has been adopted, the liabilities will be further assessed. There will then follow a maximum implementation period of two years. Between now and then, Government departments who will be affected by the Regulation are closely involved in work led by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport to consider the implications of the text as it develops through the negotiating process.

■ Energy

Adam Afriyie: [\[12450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2015 to Question 7974, what research her Department has conducted into the ease of switching energy supplier.

Andrea Leadsom:

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has, as part of its investigation into the energy market, commissioned research into consumer experiences and views of the energy market including the ease of switching energy supplier.

The CMA investigation is still ongoing but the report it commissioned has already been published can be found at:

https://assets.digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk/media/54e75c53ed915d0cf700000d/CMA_customer_survey_-_energy_investigation_-_GfK_Report.pdf

■ Energy: Billing

Dr Poulter: [\[12312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, how many customers are on the standard tariffs of each of the Big Six energy suppliers; and in each case what the proportion of those customers are of the suppliers' total customers.

Andrea Leadsom:

Around 71 per cent of standard electricity customers, supplied by one of the big six, are on standard tariffs. This equates to around 17.7 million customers.

For those supplied by one of the big six for gas, around 70 per cent of customers are on standard tariffs. This equates to around 14.1 million customers.

We publish the proportion of fixed tariffs in tables 2.4.2 and 2.5.2 as part of our quarterly energy prices publication (QEP). This can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/domestic-energy-prices>

The data used to produce these figures has been provided to us in confidence, therefore we cannot provide these estimates for each of the individual big six companies.

■ Hinkley Point C Power Station

Alan Brown: [\[12498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, pursuant to the Answer of 15 October 2015 to Question 11217, what rate of non-guaranteed reasonable profit has been included in the calculated strike price.

Andrea Leadsom:

The forecast rate of return is commercially confidential and is naturally subject to change as it will depend on the performance of NNB Generation Company Ltd. (NNBG), given

that the Contract for Difference (CfD) is designed so that many of the risks belong to NNBG. The CfD contains a series of gainshare mechanisms in which consumers would benefit if the project construction costs or equity returns were more favourable than forecast.

However, although the actual number is confidential, the European Commission's Closing Decision for the Hinkley Point C State aid case, where they judged the Strike Price to be proportionate, gives an expected range for the project rate of return of between 9.25 and 9.75% as of October 2014.

http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/cases/251157/251157_1615983_2292_4.pdf

Paul Flynn: [\[13014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what proportion of the safety issues identified in the Generic Design Assessment for the European Pressurised Reactor that EDF Energy plans to build at Hinkley Point C have still not been resolved to the satisfaction of the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

Andrea Leadsom:

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) has advised me that safety issues remaining at the end of Step 4 of Generic Design Assessment (GDA) of the European Pressurised Reactor were captured either as GDA Issues or Assessment Findings. GDA Issues are items that ONR requires to be addressed before a Design Acceptance Confirmation can be issued, successfully ending the GDA process, or before nuclear safety related construction can commence on site. All of the GDA Issues were addressed and closed by ONR in 2012. These Issues, the resolution plans to address them and information on their closure are published on ONR's website:

<http://www.onr.org.uk/new-reactors/>

Assessment findings are addressed throughout the post GDA phase through routine regulation under the nuclear site licence.

■ Power Stations

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[12598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what the (a) fuel source and (b) capacity is of each of the new energy plants that obtained long term capacity contracts in the last capacity auction.

Andrea Leadsom:

The information requested can be found in the following table. This includes new build Capacity Market Units (CMUs) who have obtained 14 or 15 year capacity agreements.

PLANT TYPE	NUMBER OF CMUS	CAPACITY MW (DE-RATED)	FUEL SOURCE
CCGT	2	1,656	Gas
CHP	1	3	Gas

PLANT TYPE	NUMBER OF CMUS	CAPACITY MW (DE-RATED)	FUEL SOURCE
Energy from waste	2	31	Waste
Small generation - gas / diesel reciprocating engines consisting of:	59	733	
Gas (estimated)		615	Gas (est)
Diesel (estimated)		118	Diesel (est)
	64	2,423	

■ Renewable Energy: Feed-in Tariffs

Callum McCaig:

[12656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, if she will meet the organisations who wrote to the Prime Minister about the Feed-in Tariff and its effect on local investment in renewable energy on 21 August and 9 October; and when the Prime Minister will respond to both of those letters.

Andrea Leadsom:

DECC officials and Ministers have had extensive meetings with stakeholders from across the renewables industry during the feed-in tariff review consultation, including many of the organisations signing the letters of 21 August and 9 October. I held a roundtable in Parliament on Wednesday 21 October, with a wide ranging group of stakeholders. It was a highly productive meeting.

DECC replied to the letter of 21 August, and will respond to the letter of 9 October in due course.

Attachments:

1. FITs letter to PM 9.10.15 [Feed in Tariff PM Joint Letter Meeting Request.pdf]
2. Paul Barwell letter 21.08.15 [PAUL BARWELL 21 AUG.PDF]
3. SoS Reply to Paul Barwell 30.09.15 [Response to Paul Barwell (30th September).pdf]

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[12823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of reforms proposed in the review of the Feed-in Tariff scheme on the viability of future renewable energy projects.

Andrea Leadsom:

We published an impact assessment on our proposals, which included the deployment projections for each option proposed. This is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-a-review-of-the-feed-in-tariff-scheme>.

We will issue a revised Impact Assessment with the Government Response based on the evidence we received through the consultation. This will include information about the potential effects on the viability of future projects.

Joan Ryan: [\[12828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, if she will delay the implementation of the removal of the pre-accreditation scheme from the Feed-in Tariff.

Andrea Leadsom:

The removal of pre-accreditation was implemented as of 1 October. We consider this removal is important in maximising value-for-money deployment under the scheme.

We consider that the proposals set out in the FIT Review consultation, in particular the introduction of deployment caps, would be an appropriate means of enabling control of overall scheme costs. In this context, we consulted on the possible reintroduction of pre-accreditation for all participants or certain groups only, subject to wider affordability considerations.

Joan Ryan: [\[12875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what recent assessment she has made of the financial effect of the removal of pre-accreditation from the Feed-in-Tariff on businesses planning to pre-accredit renewable energy schemes before the end of 2016.

Andrea Leadsom:

The consultation on removing pre-accreditation contained a statement of impact, setting out an assessment of the effects of this change. The Government Response to the consultation makes references to the assessment of the impact of removing pre-accreditation, having considered the consultation submissions. In addition, the FIT review consultation's impact assessment contains projections which take into account the effect of removing pre-accreditation on scheme deployment, along with other measures proposed in the review.

■ Tidal Power: Swansea

Mr Charles Walker: [\[12580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, whether the plans for the Swansea Bay tidal lagoon have been delayed; and if she will make a statement.

Andrea Leadsom:

The Government is currently in the first phase of a Contract for Difference negotiation with the developer of the proposed Swansea Bay tidal lagoon project. This process of due diligence will enable us to gain a better understanding of the potential of a tidal lagoon programme in the UK.

At present there is no timeframe for how long the negotiation process may take. The timeframe depends on a number of factors, many of which would be outside the control of the Department. Robust due diligence is needed to determine whether undertaking this proposed project would be in the best interests of the consumer long term.

Mr Charles Walker:

[12583]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, if she will consider the environmental impact of tidal lagoons in the Severn Estuary, Bristol Channel and Swansea Bay before granting permissions for these lagoons; and if she will make a statement.

Andrea Leadsom:

Before determining any consent applications for tidal lagoons that are nationally significant infrastructure projects, my rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State will consider their individual and cumulative environmental impacts alongside all other relevant information.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Carbon Emissions

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[13081]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the contribution of the agricultural industry to total UK carbon dioxide emission levels in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Rory Stewart:

Defra works closely with the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to identify carbon dioxide emissions from agriculture. We provide detailed farm statistics that DECC feeds into the UK Green House Gas Inventory, which contains the UK's official reported greenhouse gas estimates.

The Inventory indicates that:

- Only around 1% of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the UK are attributed to agriculture, these relate mainly to fuel use. Since 1990 there has been an overall decline in estimated carbon dioxide emissions from agriculture.
- CO₂ emissions from agriculture as a proportion of the UK total have fluctuated over the last 5 years between 1.0% and 1.2%. CO₂ emissions from agriculture are lower in 2013 compared to 2009 by around 6%.
- CO₂ emissions make up a very small portion of agriculture emissions (around 9-10%).

■ Angling: Licensing

Mr Charles Walker:

[12582]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many freshwater rod licence sales there have been for (a) junior anglers aged 12 to 16 years and (b) adult anglers in the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The number of annual and short term (one day or eight day) rod licences sold to junior anglers (aged 12-16 years inclusive) and adult anglers in each of the last five years are shown in the table below.

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table this is a link to the web version of the question and it's answer

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-10-20/12582>

Mr Charles Walker:[\[12584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what representations she has received from the Environment Agency and Angling Trust on removing the current £5 charge for a junior rod licence.

George Eustice:

The Environment Agency has submitted for Defra approval proposals for restructuring the rod licence charges from April 2017. This includes removal of the junior rod licence fee.

In making this proposal, the Environment Agency consulted stakeholders through its England Fisheries Group, which includes the Angling Trust.

Mr Charles Walker:[\[12585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will ensure that revenue raised by the sale of rod licences is used to maintain and improve fisheries and fish stocks.

George Eustice:

The revenue raised from the rod licence fee is classed as a hypothecated tax. The Environment Agency Financial Memorandum clearly sets out that this income is used for the provision of its fisheries service.

Mr Charles Walker:[\[12586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of the revenue from the sale of rod licences was not allocated to the maintenance and improvement of fisheries and fish stocks in the last five years.

George Eustice:

The revenue raised from the sale of rod licences is classed as a hypothecated tax. The Environment Agency Financial Memorandum clearly sets out that this revenue is used for the provision of the Environment Agency fisheries service. The Environment Agency Financial Memorandum clearly sets out that the rod licence fees are for maintaining, improving and developing salmon, trout, freshwater and eel fisheries under the Salmon and Fresh Water Fisheries Act 1975.

The Environment Agency Fisheries Service provides activities including; fisheries monitoring and enforcement, fisheries advice, preparing and responding to incidents and the necessary functions to support these services such as accommodation and legal advice.

■ Animal Welfare: Circuses

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[12822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she plans to bring forward a draft Wild Animals in Circuses Bill; and whether the definition of a travelling circus will be included in the Bill.

George Eustice:

A draft Wild Animals in Circuses Bill was published in April 2013 and received pre-legislative scrutiny by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee at the time. The draft bill did not include a definition of a travelling circus. As the explanatory notes to the draft bill said, 'travelling circus' is a well understood term that does not require a definition. The Government's view remains that by trying to define precisely the term 'circus', you are more likely to create potential loopholes. However, the introduction of a bill is a manifesto commitment and the Government will do so as soon as parliamentary time allows.

■ Badgers: Hedgehogs

Jim Shannon: [\[12472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with representatives of countryside organisations on the effect of the numbers of badgers on numbers of hedgehogs.

Rory Stewart:

Defra is working with partners to identify actions that will help the conservation of hedgehogs, particularly through the Terrestrial Biodiversity Group chaired by Natural England. The reasons for the decline of the hedgehog population are complex. Badgers are one of a number of potential factors in the decline in hedgehog numbers.

■ Birds

Jim Shannon: [\[12495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effect on agricultural land of invasive non-native waterfowl.

George Eustice:

A 2010 report produced by the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI) (part funded by Defra) estimated the annual costs of non-native geese and swans to agriculture to be approximately £1.5 million. These costs included damage to crops due to grazing, trampling and reduction in soil quality, as well as costs of applying mitigation measures.

■ Birds: Pest Control

Jim Shannon: [\[12494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to control populations of invasive non-native waterfowl.

Jim Shannon: [\[12496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what regulatory arrangements apply to potential measures to control and cull invasive non-native waterfowl.

George Eustice:

Defra, in conjunction with the Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat, takes the problems and risks associated with non-native waterfowl very seriously. Since the 1990s Defra has commissioned and invested in a range of research projects, carried out by the Animal and Plant Health Agency, on invasive non-native waterfowl, including an assessment of the options for large-scale control and field trials of removal techniques for Egyptian geese. Additionally, best practice management guidelines have been published for Canada geese.

Since 2005 Defra has also supported the UK Ruddy Duck Eradication Programme, and recently, established an Invasive Species Action Plan for the sacred ibis, and is developing an action plan for zoos to reduce the risk of escapes of all species, including waterfowl.

Section 14(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 makes it illegal to release or allow to escape into the wild, any animal or plant which is not ordinarily resident in Great Britain and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state, or is listed in Schedule 9 to the Act. This applies to all animals including waterfowl. An amendment to the 1981 Act, introduced this year in the Infrastructure Act 2015, introduced the provision of Species Control Orders, which can be used to remove any non-native species where they cause significant threats to biodiversity, the water environment, human health or the economy, in cases where a voluntary approach with landowners has otherwise failed.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis

Jim Fitzpatrick: [\[12739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of cattle have been tested for bovine TB in each of the last three years.

George Eustice:

Bovine TB is a devolved matter. The figures presented below are for England only.

YEAR	NUMBER OF CATTLE TESTED DURING YEAR (MILLIONS)	CATTLE POPULATION AT JUNE 1 (MILLIONS)
2012	3.4	5.4
2013	3.7	5.4

YEAR	NUMBER OF CATTLE TESTED DURING YEAR (MILLIONS)	CATTLE POPULATION AT JUNE 1 (MILLIONS)
2014	4.0	5.3

Figures for the number of cattle tested for bovine TB represent all cattle tested during a calendar year. Cattle population estimates are as at a single point in time (1 June 2015). It is not, therefore, possible to determine the proportion of the cattle population which was tested in each of these years. All herds in the designated High Risk and Edge Areas of England are subject to annual surveillance testing for bovine TB, except for herds in the part of Cheshire falling within the Edge Area, which is currently subject to six-monthly testing. In the designated Low Risk Area all herds are subject to four yearly surveillance testing for bovine TB, except for certain higher risk herds which are subject to annual testing. Herds in all risk areas may also be subject to additional TB testing as a result of TB breakdowns.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Data Protection

Stephen Hammond:

[12422]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to prepare for the implementation of the proposed General Data Protection Regulation; which non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and agencies overseen by her Department will be affected by that regulation; and what estimate she has made of the potential liability of her Department, its agencies and NDPBs in connection with that proposed regulation.

George Eustice:

Negotiations on the proposed General Data Protection Regulation are still continuing, led by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Defra is working closely with DCMS on this issue.

A high level assessment of the current draft proposals has been completed but we have not looked specifically at which bodies will be affected or the potential liabilities.

Once the outcome of trilogue negotiations between the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Commission are complete, and the Regulation has been adopted, the impact and liabilities will be assessed for Defra and its NDPBs and agencies.

■ Food Supply

Jim Shannon:

[12475]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to increase self-sufficiency in UK food production.

George Eustice:

The UK's current production to supply ratio is 76% for indigenous-type foods and 62% for all foods. This has remained steady over the last decade and is not low in the context of the last 150 years.

The Government is developing a 25 year food and farming plan to grow our food and farming industry. We want to export more and produce more for the domestic market. We aim to improve productivity and profitability through greater efficiency, the deployment of new technology and by building on the strong international reputation of the British brand at home and abroad.

Food: Standards**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[12466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of any potential effects of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership on food standards in the UK; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) could be worth £10 billion to the UK and is about encouraging exports and economic growth. It is not about lowering standards. All food entering the European Union (EU) from the United States of America must adhere to the EU's import rules and TTIP will not change that. Any changes to food safety standards in the EU must be subject to a robust scientific risk assessment and agreed by Member States.

Pig: Sales**Mr Henry Bellingham:**[\[12839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much revenue has been raised by the Agriculture and Horticulture Board through levies collected from the sale of pigs in the last 10 years.

George Eustice:

Levies are raised by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board on pigs slaughtered for human consumption within England. Approximately 81% of this levy is paid by the pig producer, with around 19% also paid by the pig slaughterer or live exporter.

Over the last 10 financial years ending 31 March 2015, £80 million in English pig levy has been collected. This is broken down as follows:

2014/15 £9.023m

2013/14 £8.735m

2012/13 £8.555m

2011/12 £8.235m

2010/11 £7.735m

2009/10 £7.564m

2008/09 £6.921m

2007/08 £7.986m

2006/07 £7.631m*

2005/06 £7.617m*

The figures are for gross levy before deduction of levy collection costs, and are sourced from Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board Audited Annual Report & Accounts. The 2005/06 and 2006/07 figures are sourced from the Meat and Livestock Commission Annual Report and Accounts.

■ Rural Areas: Economic Growth

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[12569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the functions are of the North East Rural Growth Network; and how much financial support it received from her Department in the last financial year.

George Eustice:

Pilot Rural Growth Networks were set up in 2012 to test out approaches to tackling the barriers to economic growth experienced in rural areas.

Defra provided funding of £3,201,290 in the financial year 2012/13 to support the pilot Rural Growth Network in the North East for three years.

The North East Local Enterprise Partnership has provided £1.75 million of Growth Deal funding in 2015/16 to enable the North East Rural Growth Network to continue to provide grants to rural businesses and support economic infrastructure projects.

■ Trees: Diseases

Jim Shannon:

[\[12470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to prevent diseases (a) contaminating and (b) spreading between horse chestnut trees.

Rory Stewart:

Horse chestnut trees have been affected by two particular organisms in recent years; the horse chestnut leaf miner (*Cameraria ohridella*) and horse chestnut bleeding canker (*Pseudomonas syringae* pathovar *aesculi*).

These are both well established in Great Britain and statutory action to destroy affected trees would be impractical.

Forest Research has been involved in several studies to understand the nature of the organisms and their spread. This work has been used to develop recommendations for evidence-based disease management.

The UK Plant Health Risk Register helps to identify new and revised threats to horse chestnut trees and priority actions in response. In collaboration with EU partners we have taken actions to reduce the risk of damaging pests, such as the citrus longhorn beetle, being introduced and causing damage to horse chestnut trees.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Burma

Jim Shannon: [\[12482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Burmese government on the persecution of Myanmar civilians.

Mr Hugo Swire:

Ministers regularly raise a broad range of human rights concerns with our Burmese counterparts. Most recently I did so during my visit to Burma in July, and again when I met the Burmese Foreign Minister at the UN General Assembly on 29 September, and at the UN Secretary General's Burma Partnership Group meeting the same day.

■ China: Capital Punishment

Tim Loughton: [\[12934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has requested that the Chinese government disclose the number of executions taking place in China.

Mr Hugo Swire:

The UK is against the use of the death penalty in all circumstances and we are committed to encouraging its global abolition. China has recently renewed the number of crimes punishable by death from 55 to 46, but it is still believed to be the biggest implementer of the death penalty with numbers estimated in the low thousands.

We continue to raise this issue with Chinese authorities and did so in detail during the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue in April. We have not asked China to disclose the full number of executions but instead focus our lobbying on urging China to reduce its use and ratify relevant international treaties – such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. A transparent legal system and reforms in the rule of law will go some way to helping China in this respect, and we will continue to encourage China to make positive developments in these areas.

■ China: Human Rights

Tim Loughton: [\[12932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of developments in the human rights situation in China since March 2015.

Mr Hugo Swire:

We pay close attention to the human rights situation in China and report on it regularly through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy. The latest update was published on 15 July and outlines a range of developments from January to June this year.

Whilst we recognise the improvements China has made to social and economic rights, we continue to have concerns about a range of restrictions to civil and political rights. The operating space for civil society groups is shrinking, and over 200 lawyers have been detained or questioned since July. We regularly raise our concerns with China, both through the annual UK-China Human Rights Dialogue and through bilateral meetings, and will continue to do so. We also work through international fora, such as the UN Human Rights Council, to highlight our concerns.

■ China: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**Tim Loughton:**[\[12936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with the Chinese government on that country's ratification of the International Covenant on civil and political rights.

Mr Hugo Swire:

We have regular discussions with the Chinese authorities on a range of human rights issues, and have raised China's ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on numerous occasions. We last discussed this in detail during the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue in April this year, and also raised it at China's most recent Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council in October 2013.

■ China: Prisoners**Tim Loughton:**[\[12935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many prisoners of conscience in China have been visited by UK diplomatic staff during 2015.

Mr Hugo Swire:

We closely monitor the human rights situation in China and report on individual cases of concern through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy. Working with international partners, UK officials talk to a wide range of human rights defenders. Sometimes it is not possible to meet an individual in person because they are in detention or under house arrest. In these cases, UK officials frequently work with family members and lawyers to maintain contact. We continue to raise cases of concern with the Chinese authorities, including during the annual UK-China Human Rights Dialogue.

■ China: Religious Freedom**Tim Loughton:** [\[12933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the level of freedom of religion or belief in Xinjiang Province.

Mr Hugo Swire:

Freedom of religion or belief remains one of the Government's top priorities and we are dedicated to its promotion and protection around the world. We remain concerned in particular by the restrictions placed on their right to celebrate Ramadan and wear Islamic dress. We raise this issue regularly with the Chinese authorities, and did so in detail during the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue in April this year. We will continue to raise this issue.

■ Cleaning Services**Greg Mulholland:** [\[12445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with Interserve about members of his Department's cleaning staff facing disciplinary action over a pay dispute.

Mr David Lidington:

Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials asked Interserve to comment in light of allegations from Citizens UK that Interserve cleaners had been disciplined because of a letter written to The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond) in July about the London Living Wage. Interserve replied to to say that they had carried out an investigation to establish whether the letter had breached their confidentiality agreement with their staff. Interserve has since confirmed that their investigation has concluded and that no disciplinary action will be taken against the staff members concerned.

■ Egypt: Human Rights**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[12841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the human rights situation in Egypt.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office published its annual Human Rights and Democracy Report on 12 March 2015, which provides an assessment of the situation in Egypt. The report is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-rights-and-democracy-report-2014/human-rights-and-democracy-report-2014>

■ EU Countries: Exports**Adam Afriyie:**[\[12310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the likely proportion of UK exports going to other EU member states in (a) 2020, (b) 2030 and (c) 2050.

Mr Hugo Swire:

In 2014, exports to the EU accounted for 44% of UK exports (ONS). The Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), sources that we typically refer to, only forecast at the aggregate level. Therefore the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has no estimates of the proportion of exports that the EU would account for in 2020, 2030 and 2050.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Data Protection**Stephen Hammond:**[\[12423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to prepare for the implementation of the proposed General Data Protection Regulation; which non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and agencies overseen by his Department will be affected by that regulation; and what estimate he has made of the potential liability of his Department, its agencies and NDPBs in connection with that proposed regulation.

Mr David Lidington:

Negotiations on the proposed General Data Protection Regulation are ongoing. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is closely involved in work led by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport to consider the implications of the text and to ensure that UK interests are reflected. Once the outcome of trilogue negotiations between the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Commission are complete, and the Regulation has been adopted, the liabilities will be further assessed. There will then follow a maximum implementation period of two years. We will also be considering the impact on our Executive Agencies (FCO Services and Wilton Park) and our Executive Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) (the British Council, the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission, the Great Britain China Centre and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy), all of which will be affected by the Regulation.

■ Iran: Guided Weapons**Dr Poulter:**[\[12315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent reports he has received about Iran testing a guided long-range ballistic missile.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Reports that Iran carried out a ballistic missile test earlier this month are highly concerning. We believe such a test constitutes clearly a violation of Iran's obligations

under UN Security Council Resolutions. We have taken appropriate action to bring this matter to the attention of the Security Council.

David Mackintosh: [\[12797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for his policies of recent Iranian television broadcasting footage of an underground missile base and long-range missiles and launcher units.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We believe Iran to have an extensive ballistic missile programme, which it is developing in contravention of UN Security Council resolutions. Provisions of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) endorsing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (UNSCR 2231) retain restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile programme for a further eight years.

■ Iran: Nuclear Power

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to fully implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK is committed to implementing fully the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran. Following 'Adoption Day' on 18 October, FCO officials attended the inaugural meeting of the Joint Commission, the body established to monitor implementation of the JCPOA. They will continue to work closely with their E3+3, EU and Iranian counterparts as we move towards Implementation Day to ensure that implementation of the JCPOA gives the international community confidence that Iran's nuclear programme is, and will remain, exclusively peaceful.

■ Iran: Sanctions

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policy of the Iranian government's decision to release from custody five senior members of Al Qaeda during international negotiations on the lifting of international sanctions against Iran.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We are aware of public reports that Iran released a number of senior Al Qaeda members. We continue to have concerns about Iran's role in fostering international instability. The recent nuclear agreement has not changed our view on this. As part of the nuclear agreement, Iran will now begin to take required steps on its nuclear programme. These must be verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency before Iran benefits from any financial and economic sanctions relief.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Byron Davies: [\[12568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Palestinian Authority on the recent violence in Israel and the West Bank.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Since the start of the current violence we have spoken regularly to both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government, urging them to use their influence to de-escalate the tensions. The most recent discussion with the Palestinian Authority was on 9 October when the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond) spoke to President Abbas about the violence. On 8 October, our Consul General in Jerusalem raised our concerns in his meetings with President Abbas' political adviser, Majdi Khaldi; Palestinian chief negotiator and Secretary-General of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, Sa'eb Erekat; and the Palestinian Chief of Police, Hazem Attallah.

Byron Davies: [\[12666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the Palestinian Authority in response to reports of incitement to violence against Israel.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We deplore all incitement to violence and have urged the leadership of both the Palestinian and Israeli authorities to avoid engaging in or encouraging the type of action and language which will make it more difficult to achieve a peaceful negotiated solution to the conflict. We continue to support the reinstatement of the Tripartite Committee as the appropriate channel to deal with allegations of incitement from either side. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond) also raised the importance of calming tensions when he spoke to President Abbas on 9 October.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[12815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations his Department has made to the Palestinian Authority on its involvement in direct peace talks without preconditions with the Israeli government.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK has made clear, in conversations with the Palestinian Authority, that the best way to achieve a two-state solution is through negotiations. However, in order to achieve this, there must be an environment conducive to peace, and that is why we are urging all parties to de-escalate current tensions across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond) emphasised the importance of resolving the current tensions when he spoke to President Abbas on 9 October. On 8 October, our Consul General in Jerusalem raised our concerns with President Abbas'

political adviser, Majdi Khaldi; Palestinian chief negotiator and Secretary-General of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, Sa'eb Erekat; and the Palestinian Chief of Police, Hazem Attallah; as well as with Amal Jadou, Palestinian Assistant Minister for European Affairs, on 21 October.

■ Palestinians

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[12814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage Palestinian Authority officials to address the issue of incitement to violence.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We deplore all incitement to violence and have urged the leadership of both the Palestinian and Israeli authorities to avoid engaging in or encouraging the type of action and language which will make it more difficult to achieve a peaceful negotiated solution to the conflict. We continue to support the reinstatement of the Tripartite Committee as the appropriate channel to deal with allegations of incitement from either side. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond) also raised the importance of calming tensions when he spoke to President Abbas on 9 October.

■ Qatar: Migrant Workers

Diana Johnson: [\[13106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether (a) the deaths of migrant construction workers engaged on building the infrastructure for the 2022 World Cup or (b) the kafala system of sponsoring migrant workers was raised by the Government during the Qatar-UK Sharaka bilateral dialogue in London on 15 October 2015.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Qatar-UK Sharaka bilateral dialogue included agreement on security cooperation and engagement around investment. We also agreed to work closely together to resolve ongoing conflicts in the region, tackle terrorism and counter extremism, in particular tackling the threat posed by ISIL. The issue of migrant workers was not included in the agenda for the meeting. The British Government takes seriously the issue of health and safety of construction workers building all infrastructure projects in the Gulf, including Qatar. We expect FIFA to do the same with regard to specific World Cup related projects. British officials promote the importance of local construction projects meeting international safety standards with their Qatari counterparts. I have had a number of discussions on human rights and the working conditions of foreign workers with my direct Qatari counterparts.

■ Ray Whelan

Damian Collins: [\[13107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether contact was made between officials at the British Embassy in Brazil and the Brazilian government regarding the arrest of Ray Whelan in Rio de Janeiro in July 2014; and whether the UK made any offers to assist the Brazilian authorities with their investigation into Mr Whelan.

Mr Hugo Swire:

The British Consulate General in Rio de Janeiro provided routine consular assistance to Mr Whelan following his arrest in July 2014. This included contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Brazilian Civil Police to request information at the time of his arrest. The Consulate also requested routine prison visits for Mr Whelan's family from the Prison Administration Secretary. National Crime Agency representatives in Brazil did discuss the case with the Brazilian authorities, but did not open an investigation.

■ Saudi Arabia: Festivals and Special Occasions

Kate Green: [\[12515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support the Government is offering to families of British people killed or injured during the 2015 Hajj in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

No British nationals were killed or injured in the Hajj crush in Mina on 24 September 2015. However, three British nationals died in a separate incident prior to the Hajj when a crane collapsed in the Grand Mosque in Mecca on 11 September. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office provided consular assistance to all British nationals affected.

■ Territorial Waters

Jim Shannon: [\[12502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect the integrity of British territorial waters (a) in relation to Spain and (b) otherwise.

Mr David Lidington:

The United Kingdom has a range of measures in place to defend British territorial waters, including British Gibraltar Territorial Waters (BGTW). The Royal Navy challenges all unlawful incursions by Spanish state vessels into BGTW, the United Kingdom makes diplomatic protests to Spain in respect of all such incursions. Incursions are violations of, rather than threats to, UK sovereignty over BGTW.

■ Yemen: Jews

Jim Shannon: [\[12574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Yemeni government on treatment of the Jewish community in that country.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We remain deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Yemen. The conflict and temporary suspension of Embassy operations in Sana'a in February 2015 has hampered our ability to pursue human rights work. The UK has previously lobbied the Yemeni Government – both bilaterally and through the Human Rights Council – on a wide range of human rights issues. We continue to raise the importance of compliance with human rights law with all sides to the conflict and to find a political solution to the conflict, which will help create the conditions for the legitimate Government to improve its capacity to protect human rights. The UK welcomes Yemen's commitment at the last Human Rights Council session to cooperate with the UN on protection of human rights.

HEALTH**■ Armed Forces Covenant: Health Services**

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[12938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department has taken to ensure the healthcare chapter of the Armed Forces Covenant has been implemented.

Ben Gummer:

The Department and NHS England are committed to meeting the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant and have established a number of services specifically tailored to meet the needs and requirements of the armed forces community. There are regular communications on the Covenant commitment to National Health Service trusts, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and health professionals.

As set out in the NHS Mandate for England CCGs are responsible for general healthcare for veterans and for the delivery of the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant. NHS England assures CCGs' delivery of their commitments and many CCGs are joint signatories to their local community covenants.

The NHS Constitution has recently been updated to strengthen this accountability by stating that 'the NHS will ensure that in line with the Armed Forces Covenant, those in the armed forces, reservists, their families and veterans are not disadvantaged in accessing health services in the area they reside.'

The Department and the NHS in England are held to account by the Ministry of Defence and UK Departments of Health Partnership Board and the Armed Forces Covenant Reference Group.

■ Breast Cancer

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[13077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2015 to Question 12247, on breast cancer, what assessment his Department has made of the 26 recommendations produced by charities on access to off-patent, repurposed drugs following the roundtable event of February 2015.

George Freeman:

The Government hosted a Roundtable Event to explore the issues around off-label prescribing as part of its response to a Private Member's Bill presented in the last Parliament. The Government's position on the current Off Patent Drugs Bill and how that relates to issues identified at the Roundtable Event will be shared at the Bill's second reading on 6 November 2015.

Breast Cancer: Drugs

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[12952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he has taken to make bisphosphonates routinely available on the NHS to prevent the spread of breast cancer to bones.

George Freeman:

Where there is a clinical need to do so for a patient, clinicians are legally able to prescribe bisphosphonates for breast cancer prevention.

NHS England's Breast Cancer Clinical Reference Group (CRG) has included the use of bisphosphonates in their draft service guidance for breast cancer. The CRG has highlighted bisphosphonates as a key issue for potential improvement in survival outcomes.

NHS England expects the draft service guidance to be finalised and available for dissemination in the autumn of 2015. It will then be up to clinical commissioning groups to consider how they adopt this in to their local commissioning activities.

Care Homes: Agency Nurses

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[12950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will take steps to monitor the cost to nursing homes of employing agency nurses; and if he will make a statement.

Alistair Burt:

The Government has no plans to monitor agency costs to nursing homes.

Care providers are independent businesses and agreements with agency staffing providers are commercial contractual arrangements.

Carers

Alex Cunningham: [\[12327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans his Department has to assess whether unpaid carers are receiving their new rights to support as introduced by the Care Act 2014.

Alex Cunningham: [\[12328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if his Department will create a new duty on NHS primary care providers to identify unpaid carers.

Alex Cunningham:

[12329]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policy of the Carers Trust report on local authority support for carers, published on 16 September 2015; and if he will make a statement.

Alistair Burt:

The Government recognises the valuable contribution made by carers, many of whom spend a significant proportion of their life providing support to family members or friends.

That is why we continue to support implementation of the improved rights for carers enshrined in the Care Act 2014. The Department has provided £104 million of funding to local authorities for these rights in 2015/16, which include an extended right to assessment and, for the first time, a duty on local authorities to meet carers' eligible needs for support.

To support implementation of the reform programme, we have established a joint Programme Management Office between the Department, Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Adults Social Services (ADASS). This unprecedented partnership is driving collaborative working with the sector, influencing the local implementation of these changes to support a consistent and coherent approach. This approach was recognised by the National Audit Office as best practice and should be adopted by other programmes.

The programme includes a series of stocktakes of Local Authority readiness and the latest, from June 2015, demonstrates an overall positive picture on implementation:

- Councils' confidence in their ability to deliver the Care Act Reforms in 2015/16 remains high, with 99% very or fairly confident.
- 89% of councils say that they are 'on track' with their implementation. The remaining 11% report themselves as only slightly behind.

We have also produced a suite of implementation support documents around the new carers' rights, one of which is *The Economic Case for Investment in Carers*, a short factsheet for local authorities to use in considering whether to put in place a policy of charging carers, setting out the evidence that charging would be a false economy. This expands on the position set out in the Care Act statutory guidance, which at paragraph 8.50 states that:

"Local authorities are not required to charge a carer for support and indeed in many cases it would be a false economy to do so. When deciding whether to charge, and in determining what an appropriate charge is, a local authority should consider how it wishes to express the way it values carers within its local community as partners in care, and recognise the significant contribution carers make."

The Care Act replicates the previous position where charging carers was permissible. It would not have been appropriate to impose a blanket ban on charging for carers services, because in some cases small charges are necessary to the viability of services. However, the Care Act provides additional protection to carers by making it clear that

local authorities cannot charge carers for services provided to the person being cared for. This means that carers may only be charged for services provided directly to them.

Most local authorities do not routinely charge carers in recognition of the valuable contribution carers make to their local communities, and the Carers Trust report confirms that this is still the case. We will continue to make the case against routine charging of carers and to monitor the situation closely through the implementation monitoring process set out above.

We have no plans to create a new duty around NHS identification of carers. The Care Act requires NHS bodies and local authorities to co-operate with each other in the exercise of their respective functions relevant to care and support, including those relating to carers, so we would expect local authorities and NHS bodies to cooperate in identifying and signposting carers. The Department is working with ADASS and NHS England to produce a "local pathway" for carer identification and support that will set this out in more detail.

The Department has also provided over £2 million in recent years to the professional bodies such as the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Nursing, as well as Carers UK and the Carers Trust, to develop initiatives to raise awareness of carers among healthcare professionals and to help identify and support carers.

The Department is also leading on the development of a new National Carers' Strategy that will be looking at the best of international practice and examine what more we can do to support existing carers and the new carers.

■ Clinical Commissioning Groups: Advisory Services

Emily Thornberry:

[12338]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much and what proportion of its budget each clinical commissioning group in England has spent on employment support services in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Alistair Burt:

NHS England has advised that this information is not collected centrally.

■ Department of Health: Data Protection

Stephen Hammond:

[12424]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department has taken to prepare for the implementation of the proposed General Data Protection Regulation; which non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and agencies overseen by his Department will be affected by that regulation; and what estimate he has made of the potential liability of his Department, its agencies and NDPBs in connection with that proposed regulation.

George Freeman:

Officials from the Department of Health are working closely with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, which leads on the negotiations with the European Union on the United Kingdom's behalf, ensuring that stakeholders are engaged on the key issues.

■ Department of Health: Staff

Justin Madders: [\[12984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many members of staff his Department plans will be employed by each of his Department's three success regimes; and what the job titles and salary level will be of each member of such staff.

Ben Gummer:

The Department is not responsible for the operational delivery of the Success Regime, which is delivered by NHS England and NHS improvement.

The information is not available in the format requested. However, information is available on the transformation funding allocation to establish each of the success regime sites, and the expectation set by NHS England and NHS Improvement to recruit individuals to lead each regime.

Each of the first three sites that are part of the Success Regime has received an initial £700,000 from NHS England's transformation fund for start-up costs. Further funds will be released on a case-by-case basis and allocated in-line with local requirements. The precise make-up of the local teams will vary, but the key central appointments in Success Regime sites will be the programme directors and/or programme chairs. NHS England and NHS Improvement have set the expectation that programme directors will be paid in line with the National Health Service contract for Very Senior Managers unless in exceptional circumstances. The programme chairs are likely to be provided by third party suppliers as part of a wider package of support.

■ Drugs: Iran

Mark Pritchard: [\[12335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will take steps to work with his Iranian government counterpart to share best practice in drug rehabilitation programmes.

Jane Ellison:

The late Hamid Ghodse, Professor of Psychiatry and Addictive Behaviour at St George's University of London, was an Iranian citizen, and helped promote links between British addiction experts and their counterparts in the Islamic Republic of Iran for the sharing of clinical expertise in the treatment of drug dependence. Such links between United Kingdom and Iranian experts continue and best practice is also shared in meetings

organised by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

■ Drugs: Licensing

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[13134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether addressing barriers to licensing off-patent, repurposed drugs in an aim of the current Accelerated Access Review.

George Freeman:

The Accelerated Access Review, chaired by Sir Hugh Taylor, will make recommendations to government on reforms to accelerate access for National Health Service patients to innovative medicines and medical technologies (including devices, diagnostics and digital), making our country the best place in the world to design, develop and deploy these products. This will cover products that may already be on the market and off patent but are being innovatively repurposed to treat conditions other than those in remit of the existing license.

■ Health Professions: Sick Leave

Luciana Berger: [\[12441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many NHS (a) doctors and (b) nurses have been signed off work due to (i) stress and (ii) other mental illness in each of the last five years.

Ben Gummer:

The Department does not collect centrally data on how many doctors and nurses have been signed off work due to stress and other mental illness.

Employers across the National Health Service are responsible for reducing staff absences due to stress and mental illness through local sickness absence policies.

NHS England recently launched "A healthy NHS workforce"[1], a commitment in its Five Year Forward View[2] "to ensure the NHS as an employer sets a national example in the support it offers its own staff to stay healthy".

Working with Public Health England and NHS Employers, NHS England aims to improve NHS staff health spearheaded by a group of provider and commissioner organisations. Work will include ensuring board level leadership and engagement as well as line manager training to increase awareness of mental health issues, helping them manage staff in a way which is supportive to health and wellbeing.

The Department continues to commission NHS Employers to help trusts improve staff mental health and wellbeing through advice, guidance and good practice[3].

The launch in July of NHS Employers' *How are you feeling NHS?* Toolkit[4] enables staff to talk more openly about their emotional health, helps trusts improve the assessment of the impact emotional wellbeing has on staff and patients and supports action planning to improve staff emotional health and wellbeing.

[1] <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2015/09/02/nhs-workplace/>

[2] <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/5yfv-web.pdf>

[3] <http://www.nhsemployers.org/search-results?q=supporting+staff+who+are+experiencing+mental+health+issues>

[4] <http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/retain-and-improve/staff-experience/health-work-and-wellbeing/protecting-staff-and-preventing-ill-health/how-are-you-feeling-nhs-toolkit>

■ Health Professions: Training

Justin Madders: [12985]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many post-graduate training places were (a) commissioned and (b) filled for each of Health Education England's medical and dental foundation programme in (a) 2014-15 and (b) 2015-16.

Ben Gummer:

The training places that were commissioned and filled are available in the Annual Reports on the UK Foundation Programme Office website:

www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/index.asp?page=home/keydocs

At this time, data for England only is not available.

■ Hospitals: Admissions

Mr Jamie Reed: [12939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many hospital admissions occurred due to consumption of legal highs in (a) Copeland constituency, (b) Cumbria and (c) England in each of the last five years.

Jane Ellison:

There is no separate classification for this type of drug, so it is not possible to separate out admissions from new psychoactive substances from other types of drugs.

■ Inflammatory Bowel Disease: Diagnosis

Mr Jim Cunningham: [12981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the diagnosis levels of inflammatory bowel diseases in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [12982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of NHS treatment options for patients with inflammatory bowel diseases; and if he will make a statement.

Jane Ellison:

The two main forms of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) are Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Ulcerative colitis only affects the large intestine whereas Crohn's disease affects the whole of the digestive system.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance indicates that ulcerative colitis has an incidence in the United Kingdom of approximately 10 per 100,000 people annually, and a prevalence of approximately 240 per 100,000. This amounts to around 146,000 people in the UK with a diagnosis of ulcerative colitis. In addition to this, there are currently at least 115,000 people in the UK with Crohn's disease.

The Department does not hold information on diagnosis levels in Wales specifically; this is a matter for the devolved administration.

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. These set out best practice in the management of these conditions.

Treatment for both Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis is largely directed at symptom relief to improve quality of life, rather than cure. Management options include drug therapy, dietary and lifestyle advice and, in severe or chronic active disease, surgery. The aims of drug treatment are to reduce symptoms and maintain or improve quality of life.

■ Liver Diseases**Mr Andrew Smith:**[\[12286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an assessment of the potential of minimum unit pricing of 50 pence per unit of alcohol to improve liver disease health outcomes in England.

Jane Ellison:

The 2015-16 remit letter from the Department of Health asked Public Health England to review the evidence and provide advice on the public health impacts of alcohol and possible evidence-based solutions.

Jim Shannon:[\[12481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people have been diagnosed with liver disease in each of the last five years.

Jane Ellison:

Information is not available in the format requested.

■ Medical Treatments**Robert Neill:**[\[12411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, in which months the implementation of commitments to increase access to treatments contained in the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme has been discussed in NHS England accountability meetings.

George Freeman:

Improving patients' access to innovative, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence approved treatments is part of an objective set out in the Government's mandate to NHS England. Performance against the mandate is discussed in NHS England accountability meetings chaired by the Secretary of State. The minutes of the meetings are published on the Government's website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-commissioning-board-accountability-meeting-minutes>

■ Mental Health Services: Lancashire

Mr Mark Hendrick: [13101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many in-patient NHS beds for mental health patients there were in Lancashire on 1st June (a) 2010, (b) 2011, (c) 2012, (d) 2013, (e) 2014 and (f) 2015; and what the locations of beds were on each such date.

Alistair Burt:

The information is not available in the format requested.

■ Mental Patients: Social Security Benefits

Luciana Berger: [12442]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have had with the Department for Work and Pensions on the time taken to discharge patients from mental health inpatient care due to delays in the payment of benefits.

Alistair Burt:

There have been no discussions between the Department and the Department for Work and Pensions at either ministerial or official level about the time taken to discharge patients from mental health inpatient care due to delays in the payment of benefits.

■ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Robert Neill: [12412]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, which organisation provides the secretariat for the NICE Implementation Collaborative; what the Collaborative's current priorities and work programmes are; what funding the Collaborative has received from the public purse since it was established; and if he will make a statement.

George Freeman:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has advised that it has provided the secretariat function for the NICE Implementation Collaborative (NIC) since January 2014 as part of a wider memorandum of understanding with NHS England. This year, the NIC agreed to undertake work in the following four areas, each of which was agreed because of their potential to generate learning about how to support uptake of NICE guidance:

- Improving patient outcomes for patients with non ST Elevation acute Coronary Syndromes;
- Improving Tuberculosis screening and data collection across health and social care;
- Identifying appropriate treatment pathways for people with moderate alcohol consumption across health and social care; and
- Increasing the knowledge base about the factors that increase use of technologies building on previous National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) research.

NHS England has responsibility for funding any project costs and projects liaise with NHS England to access these funds.

NHS England has advised that it provided £4,000 in 2014-15 and up to £10,000 in 2015-16.

■ NHS: Innovation

Robert Neill:

[\[12413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information his Department holds on when the Health and Social Care Information Centre expects its innovation scorecard to attain the status of non-experimental statistics; what steps that centre is taking to improve the data quality of that scorecard; and if he will make a statement.

George Freeman:

The Health and Social Care Information Centre is working towards the removal of the experimental status of the innovation scorecard during the first half of 2016. The data already complies with the UK Statistics Authority's *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*.

■ NHS: Standards

Robert Neill:

[\[12414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, for what reasons his recent assessment of NHS England's performance against the Mandate in 2014-15 did not address NHS England's performance in meeting the requirement contained in the Mandate to ensure that people have access to the right treatment when they need it.

George Freeman:

The Secretary of State's annual assessment of NHS England's performance in 2014-15 sets out specifically his evaluation of NHS England's performance in meeting the access standards set out in the NHS Constitution.

In addition, the Secretary of State's annual assessment sets out that he agrees with NHS England's own assessment, as set out in its annual report for 2014-15, that it has made

good progress against delivering its objectives in the mandate, which includes ensuring that people have the right treatment when they need it.

Robert Neill: [12415]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he has taken to assess the progress of NHS England in meeting the requirement in the 2014-15 NHS Mandate that people should have access to the right treatment when they need it.

George Freeman:

NHS performance for the core access standards are published monthly by NHS England, and are available at the following link:

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/>

These standards cover accident and emergency performance, ambulance response times, waiting times for diagnostic tests, and referral to treatment for consultant led elective care, and cancer services.

Progress in these areas is discussed regularly with the NHS England and NHS Improvement Chief Executives to monitor performance against these standards.

Improving patients' access to innovative, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence approved treatments is part of an objective set out in the Government's mandate to NHS England. Performance against the mandate is discussed in NHS England accountability meetings chaired by the Secretary of State. The minutes of the meetings are published on the Government's website.

Uptake of medicines generally is discussed at the Ministerial Industry Strategy Group. The minutes are published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/ministerial-industry-strategy-group>

■ NHS: Training

Greg Mulholland: [13079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2015 to Question 11322, on NHS training, for what reasons the materials were withdrawn from the Library.

Jane Ellison:

Due to an administrative error, the wrong documents were placed in the Library. We are looking into this as a matter of urgency and an update will be provided to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

■ Offenders: Mental Illness

Luciana Berger: [12444]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people diagnosed with a mental health condition received a custodial sentence in each of the last five years.

Ben Gummer:

This information is not available centrally.

Health Needs Assessments of all prisons and young offender institutions in England, which are being conducted by Public Health England, NHS England and the National Offender Management Service, will provide an analysis of the prevalence of mental health diagnosis amongst people of all ages held in custody and the services needed to support their needs.

■ Perinatal Mortality**Jim Shannon:**[\[12478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with the Royal Colleges on the prevention of still births.

Ben Gummer:

Since May 2015, Ministers at the Department have not held any meetings with the Royal Colleges to specifically discuss the prevention of stillbirths. However, the Department has been working in partnership with Sands (the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death charity) and a range of key organisations, including NHS England, Public Health England, the Royal College of Midwives and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, to drive forward a stillbirth prevention work programme.

■ Plastic Surgery**Jim Shannon:**[\[12477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he plans to bring forward legislation to regulate cosmetic surgery.

Ben Gummer:

All medical doctors, including those carrying out cosmetic surgery, must register with the General Medical Council, hold a license to practise and meet set professional standards to work in the United Kingdom.

We want to raise the standards of care in the cosmetics industry so patients can feel confident they are getting the best care from highly-qualified professionals. There are examples of high-quality cosmetic interventions provided by trained staff to high standards of care and satisfaction. The Department and its delivery partners have implemented a range of non-regulatory actions which we are reviewing and monitoring before confirming whether new legislation would add significant value to safeguards for people choosing cosmetic procedures.

■ Pregnant Women: Mental Illness**Luciana Berger:**[\[12443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what public information campaigns his Department funds on perinatal mental illness; and how much such campaigns cost.

Alistair Burt:

Perinatal mental illness is an important topic area covered by the Start4life NHS Information Service for Parents (ISP) which is led by Public Health England. The service includes information about health and wellbeing and includes short videos on how to spot the signs of perinatal mental illness and how to seek further help.

Advice is also included in emails at key stages of pregnancy and post birth for both parents.

The Start4Life ISP was developed as a universal NHS-branded resource to help provide support and advice for expectant and new parents. The service provides regular emails and text messages during pregnancy and for the first three years of a child's life.

The total Start4life ISP programme budget in 2014/15 was £2 million and in 2015/16 it is £2.3 million. This is used to promote a range of relevant health messages for new parents and parents to be through the Information Service for Parents, the Start4Life website and other channels including materials for healthcare professionals to use with families, online advertising and social media.

Information is also available online via NHS Choices and can be found here:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/feeling-depressed-after-birth.aspx>

Radiotherapy**Jim Shannon:****[12479]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make available on the NHS cyber-knife technology to treat cancer and reduce time spent in hospital by cancer patients.

Jane Ellison:

Cyber-knife technology is one of three treatment platforms that can be used to treat a number of cancers, together with some benign conditions. The treatment platforms deliver stereotactic radiotherapy, both to the body (stereotactic ablative body radiotherapy) which is commissioned for the treatment of non-small cell lung cancer, and to the head (stereotactic radiosurgery/radiotherapy) for a range of cancer indications covered by clinical commissioning policies which can be found at:

www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/spec-services/npc-crg/group-d/d05/

It should be noted that NHS England commissions on the basis of clinical indication and not specifically for treatment platforms. The choice of treatment platform used is ultimately a decision made by trusts themselves.

Jim Shannon: [\[12480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what criteria are applied for the use of intraoperative radiotherapy for treating cancer by the NHS.

Jane Ellison:

NHS England does not currently commission intraoperative radiotherapy for the treatment of cancer. To date it has been undertaken in a small number of centres in England as part of a clinical trial.

■ Sepsis and Acute Respiratory Disease Syndrome: Drugs

Jim Shannon: [\[12490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, by when he plans for new drug treatments for sepsis and Acute Respiratory Disease Syndrome to be available on the NHS.

George Freeman:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is currently developing a clinical guideline on the recognition, diagnosis and management of severe sepsis. The guideline will consider the full range of treatment options for sepsis. NICE currently plans to publish this guidance in July 2016.

There are no plans for NICE to develop technology appraisal guidance on the use of new drug treatments for sepsis or acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS).

NHS England has advised that there have been many trials of new treatments for ARDS but no consistent benefit has been found in any of these.

In the absence of NICE guidance, funding decisions for individual treatments should be made by the relevant National Health Service commissioner, based on an assessment of the available evidence. Commissioners are also required to have processes in place for the consideration of exceptional funding requests.

■ Sugar: Taxation

Mr Andrew Smith: [\[12287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an assessment of the potential of introducing tax on sugar-sweetened drinks to improve liver disease health outcomes in England.

Mr Andrew Smith: [\[12288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects Public Health England's Evidence into Action review of the evidence on reducing sugar consumption to be published.

Jane Ellison:

There are no plans to introduce a tax on sugar-sweetened drinks. However all taxes are kept under review, with decisions being a matter for the Chancellor as part of the Budget process.

Public Health England's (PHE) report *Sugar Reduction: The evidence for action* was published on the GOV.UK website on 22 October. We continue to work very closely

with PHE and this evidence is integral to our ongoing policy development. We will publish our childhood obesity strategy in the new year.

Sugar Reduction: The evidence for action is available at:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470179/Sugar_reduction_The_evidence_for_action.pdf

HOME OFFICE

■ Domestic Violence: Greater London

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[12649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the rise in cases of domestic violence in London.

Karen Bradley:

Tackling domestic abuse is a key priority for this Government.

The Office for National Statistics has ascribed national increases in police recorded violent crime to improvements in police recording.

The Government is providing £10 million to fund specialist domestic and sexual violence services and national helplines up to April 2016, including part-funding to 23 Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and eight Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Coordinators in London. New guidance for the police has been published by the College of Policing, new training has been piloted and for the first time police are collating domestic violence data against a national standard.

The Government recognises that local areas are best placed to meet local need.

■ EU External Relations: Africa

Tim Farron: [\[12094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if (a) she and (b) other Ministers in her Department plan to attend the joint conference between the EU and African partners in Valletta, Malta, on 11 November 2015, on migration.

James Brokenshire:

The Valletta Summit on Migration will take place on 11-12 November in Malta. It will bring together the EU and Member States, partners from West, North and East Africa and international organisations to enhance cooperation on migration and to better address the dangerous and illegal crossings in the central Mediterranean.

Our attendance will reflect the importance of this vital opportunity to build a partnership with Africa on these crucial issues. The Home Secretary is closely engaged on preparations for the Summit, as are the Prime Minister and other key Cabinet colleagues.

■ Female Genital Mutilation: Emergency Calls

Colleen Fletcher: [\[12881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what training 101 call-handlers receive on (a) female genital mutilation (FGM) and (b) information governance relating to the handling of information about FGM.

Colleen Fletcher: [\[12924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what account she has taken of the introduction of a dedicated specialist police line for professionals to report highly sensitive information about cases of known FGM under the Serious Crime Act 2015.

Karen Bradley:

A mandatory reporting duty for regulated health and social care professionals and teachers will come into force at the end of October. We recently published guidance to support its introduction.

The guidance sets out that reports can be made using the 101 service. The Government has opted to recommend the use of an existing cost effective, simple and clear reporting route for professionals rather than introduce a dedicated specialist police line. Calls to 101 are answered by trained police officers and staff in the control room of the local police force. All 101 call handlers are fully trained to handle all calls received and specific call-handling instructions on FGM will be issued to them by the National Policing Lead before the duty comes into force. Upon receipt of a report, the police will record the information and initiate a multi-agency response in line with local safeguarding arrangements. Police forces have responsibilities regarding the management of information, including a statutory responsibility to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The College of Policing will also shortly update its Authorised Professional Practice Guidance on FGM with information and advice on the mandatory reporting duty.

■ Forced Marriage

Andrew Rosindell: [\[12451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to prevent young people from being forced in to arranged marriages overseas.

Karen Bradley:

The UK is a world-leader in the fight to stamp out forced marriage, with our Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) leading efforts to combat this brutal practice. The FMU can provide support and assistance to anyone in the UK at risk, and to British nationals overseas. The Unit works with our High Commissions and embassies overseas to assist with protection and repatriation of vulnerable victims.

o To date, over 800 Forced Marriage Protection Orders have been made to prevent people from being forced into a marriage and to assist in repatriating victims;

o In 2014, the FMU gave advice or support related to a possible forced marriage in 1,267 cases.

■ Fraud: Criminal Investigation

Damian Green:

[12259]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of calls received by Action Fraud result in a police investigation; and if she will make a statement.

Mike Penning:

It is the responsibility of the local Chief Constable, in conjunction with their Police and Crime Commissioner, to determine the resources they devote to tackling fraud and cyber crimes locally. The Government does not hold data on the proportion of calls received by Action Fraud which result in a police investigation.

Action Fraud is the national reporting centre for fraud and cyber crime, and takes reports on behalf of all police forces in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Action Fraud was set up to improve reporting of what has traditionally been an underreported crime type. Official figures support the decision to centralise reporting: in the year ending June 2015, recorded fraud offences more than trebled from 72,000 before the centralisation of reporting to over 230,000.

Action Fraud works in conjunction with the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB): both are operated by the City of London Police, the national lead force for fraud. The NFIB analyses Action Fraud crime reports, spotting links between victims in different force areas, and preparing intelligence packages for police forces to consider for enforcement action. As fraudsters and cyber criminals can target multiple victims across different police force areas at the same time, connecting these crimes gives the best chance of suspects being identified.

Not all crimes recorded by Action Fraud and analysed by the NFIB will have viable investigative leads: fraudsters and cyber criminals may be based overseas or use false details to mask their identities. Nevertheless, in 2014/15 the number of crimes sent to police forces was almost 62,000. This was an increase of over 50% on 2013/14. Reports made to Action Fraud also support disruption of the enablers of fraud and cyber crime, including websites and telephone numbers. The NFIB has a programme of work with industry to take this forward. NFIB also issues intelligence assessments of the fraud threat which helps the police determine their response. Neither Action Fraud nor the NFIB carry out investigations: it remains the responsibility of local police forces to decide whether and how to proceed with an investigation of the crimes they are sent by the NFIB.

■ Home Office: Data Protection

Stephen Hammond:

[12425]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to prepare for the implementation of the proposed General Data Protection Regulation; which non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and agencies overseen by her

Department will be affected by that regulation; and what estimate she has made of the potential liability of her Department, its agencies and NDPBs in connection with that proposed regulation.

Karen Bradley:

Negotiations on the proposed General Data Protection Regulation are still continuing and we have taken into account the likely impact on Government Departments, NDPBs and agencies. Once the outcome of trilogue negotiations between the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Commission are complete, and the Regulation has been adopted, the liabilities will be further assessed. There will then follow a minimum implementation period of 2 years. Between now and then, Government departments who will be affected by the Regulation are closely involved in work led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to consider the implications of the text as it develops through the negotiating process.

■ **Home Office: Staff**

Mr Christopher Chope:

[12246]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people are engaged in the Organised Immigration Crime Task Force; and in which countries those people are deployed.

James Brokenshire:

[Holding answer 21 October 2015]: The Organised Immigration Crime Taskforce brings together officers from the National Crime Agency, Border Force, Immigration Enforcement and the Crown Prosecution Service to pursue and disrupt organised immigration crime. The Taskforce builds on existing extensive law enforcement capability in the UK and overseas to tackle organised immigration crime and target criminal networks in source and transit countries. The Taskforce will exploit every opportunity to smash the gangs' criminal operations. There are currently 52 officers in post. It is expected that 89 of the operational posts will be filled by the end of 2015 with all posts in place by the end of March 2016. In addition to posts in the UK, officers have been deployed to Europe and East, West and North Africa. While we continue to fill the additional posts we have temporarily flexed resources from across Organised Immigration Crime Taskforce partners to prioritise tackling people smuggling.

■ **Immigration**

Andrew Rosindell:

[12446]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of German policy on working with the Turkish government to tackle migration on her Department's objective to reduce net migration to the UK.

James Brokenshire:

The Government supports Turkey's efforts to manage the flow of illegal migration, and maintain an effective border between Turkey and the EU. Any progress made on these areas, with the support of individual Member States or the EU as a whole, is welcomed.

In line with the Government's commitment, any nations who aspire to accede to the EU in future, including Turkey, should not gain free movement rights until that accession state's economy has converged more closely with existing Member States.

■ Marriage Certificates

Steve McCabe: [\[12409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has made on implementing the Prime Minister's proposal that mothers' names should be added to marriage certificates.

James Brokenshire:

[Holding answer 27 October 2015]: The Home Office is working with all interested parties to confirm the most efficient and effective way to enable mothers' names to be recorded on marriage certificates.

Achieving this is likely to require additional funding and changes to legislation, IT systems and administrative processes.

The Government will confirm a timetable for the transition to a new system to introduce the changes in due course.

■ Moussa Koussa

Lady Hermon: [\[11996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Moussa Koussa met UK police forces or security agencies between his entry into the UK at Farnborough airfield on 30 March 2011 and departure to Qatar three days later; and if she will make a statement.

Mr John Hayes:

It is the longstanding policy of successive Governments not to comment on intelligence matters.

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service stated in April 2011 that Police Service of Scotland officers met Moussa Koussa in 2011 in relation to the investigation into the Lockerbie bombing.

■ Moussa Koussa: Extradition

Lady Hermon: [\[11997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to secure the extradition of Moussa Koussa in connection with IRA/Libyan-sponsored terrorism in the UK; and if she will make a statement.

James Brokenshire:

It is a matter of long-standing policy and practice that the Government will neither confirm nor deny whether an extradition request has been made or received prior to the arrest of the person concerned pursuant to that request.

■ Passports: Applications

Kate Osamor: [\[10913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of applications to renew or modify a passport took more than six months in each of the last five years; and what the reasons were for the time taken in such cases.

James Brokenshire:

Due to the way that data on passport applications is captured, it is not possible to show the proportion of applications taking over six months. However, the numbers and proportions of straightforward properly completed passport applications taking over 20 days are represented in the attached table. Passport applications occasionally take longer to process than the published expected processing time of three weeks. This can be for a variety of reasons, including that additional checks need to be made due to fraud concerns. Repatriation of international passport processing back to HMPO took place in 2013/14 therefore processing data for overseas applications is unavailable prior to that date and is not included in the attached table for years prior to 2013/14.

Attachments:

1. Data for overseas applications [Table for PQ10913.docx]

■ Rape: Prosecutions

Jim Shannon: [\[12486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to increase the number of successful prosecutions for incidences of rape.

Karen Bradley:

Rape and sexual violence are devastating crimes which we remain committed to tackling. We continue to work with the police to look at ways to improve their response to rape and sexual assault. We have supported the publication of data on rape for every police force in the country as a basis for improving recording and investigations of rape. The Rape Action Plan, led by the Crown Prosecution Service, ensures that investigators and prosecutors have both the right tools for handling rape cases, and improved referrals from the police to prosecutors to increase successful prosecutions.

We want victims to have the confidence to report these crimes to the police, knowing they will get the support they need and that everything will be done to bring offenders to justice. Police recorded rape increased by 43% (to 31,621 offences) in the year ending June 2015 compared with the previous year. This significant rise in the reporting of rape is the result of a renewed focus on the quality of crime recording and a greater willingness of victims to come forward. These can only be positive developments in our fight to end abuse.

■ Rape: Victim Support Schemes

Jim Shannon: [\[12487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that (a) practical and (b) emotional support is provided to rape victims.

Karen Bradley:

Rape and sexual violence are devastating crimes which we remain committed to tackling. We have made protecting women and girls from violence and supporting victims and survivors of sexual violence a key priority. A refreshed version of the previous Government's strategy, A Call to End Violence against Women and Girls, will be published later this year.

We recognise the importance of specialist services for victims.

Since 2010 the Government has placed funding for rape support centres on a sustainable footing, and in 2015/16 is spending £4.7m to fund 86 rape support centres across England and Wales, including 15 new centres opened since 2010.

We have set up a dedicated fund specially to support male victims of rape and sexual violence, funding 12 male rape support centres, a support line and a website. We have also ring-fenced £1.72 million per year since 2010 up to 2016 to part-fund 87 Independent Sexual Violence Advisers who provide appropriate and independent support for victims.

■ Stone: Theft

Greg Mulholland: [\[12717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations she has received from local authorities in Yorkshire about stone theft.

Greg Mulholland: [\[12718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of legislation to prevent stone theft.

Mike Penning:

We have received no recent representations from local authorities in Yorkshire on this issue.

Existing legislation provides the police and courts with sufficient powers to respond to stone theft.

■ Undocumented Migrants: Calais

Tim Farron: [\[12086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many additional UK police and Border Force personnel have been deployed to join 24/7 freight search teams in Calais since 20 August 2015.

James Brokenshire:

For border security reasons the Home Office does not publicly disclose details of operational deployments at the UK border. Border Force continually monitors the pressures of illegal immigration at the UK border. Joint work is undertaken with French law enforcement agencies and port operators to bolster security and ensure staff from respective organisations are deployed to meet operational needs.

Tim Farron:[\[12087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many translators and analysts in the UK specialising in (a) Pashtun, (b) Oromo, (c) Tingrinya, (d) Amharic and (e) Tamil have contributed to supporting policing efforts in Calais.

James Brokenshire:

Inclusive of 16 October 2015, the UK have contributed the following translators and analysts in response to requests from the French Border Police to assist in Calais

- a) Pashtun - 1
- b) Oromo - 1
- c) Tingrinya - 19
- d) Amharic - 0
- e) Tamil - 0

In line with the terms of the joint Ministerial Declaration on UK/French co-operation on Managing Migratory Flows in Calais, support will be provided on an ongoing basis.

Please note that the figures on the provision of interpreters are not provided under National Statistics protocols and have been derived from local management information. They are therefore provisional and subject to change.

■ Undocumented Migrants: France**Tim Farron:**[\[12089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraph 13 of the joint ministerial declaration on UK/French cooperation in tackling ongoing illegal migration in Northern France and across Europe, issued on 20 August 2015, when she plans to publish the study of other Channel and appropriate North Sea ports that could be used by criminal gangs exploiting migrants, referred to in that declaration.

James Brokenshire:

The Home Office has no intentions to publish the study of Channel and North Sea ports that is referenced in the Joint Ministerial Declaration of 20 August. Publishing such a report could reveal security vulnerabilities that might be exploited by criminals groups that seek to transfer illegal migrants and contraband material into the UK via clandestine means.

Tim Farron:

[12095]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the joint ministerial declaration on UK/French co-operation in tackling ongoing illegal migration in northern France and across Europe, issued on 20 August 2015, how many of the security audit recommendations made by a British and French specialised team on 10 August 2015 have been fully implemented.

James Brokenshire:

The Joint Security Audit which was undertaken with the French Authorities in August identified priority risk areas from migrant activity and work is continuing at pace to complete priority physical measures. These include fencing of shuttle platforms at the Eurotunnel site and the freight approach road as well as anti-intrusion measures in-and-around the Channel Tunnel itself. A number of these measures have been completed and the remainder will be completed in the coming weeks.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance

Neil Gray:

[13110]

To ask the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington representing the House of Commons Commission, what progress has been made on confirming the final cost of the Options Appraisal Report into the refurbishment of the Palace of Westminster.

Tom Brake:

This information was provided in a Written Statement made by my predecessor on 16 December 2014, cols 86–87WS:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmhansrd/cm141216/wmstext/141216m0001.htm#14121636000008>

The final cost of the Independent Options Appraisal was £2.02 million, excluding VAT.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Syria: Refugees

Peter Grant:

[13071]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which countries in the Middle East and North Africa her Department has assessed as able to provide safe refuge and access to essential services to refugees from Syria; and what estimate she has made of how many such refugees each of those countries could accommodate.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

The countries in the Middle East assessed as able to provide safety and access to essential services are those where we currently support the host Governments to provide

refuge: Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. The UK is also monitoring the treatment of Syrian refugees who have arrived in small numbers in Egypt and other part of North Africa.

The UK has been at the forefront of the response to the crisis in Syria and the region. The UK has pledged over £1.1 billion, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. Of this, we have allocated £559 million to support refugees in the region, including £304 million in Lebanon, £193 million in Jordan and the remainder across the region.

JUSTICE

■ Courts: Chichester

Mr Andrew Tyrie: [\[12237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much Chichester (a) County Court, (b) Crown Court and (c) Combined Court Centre collected in court fees in the 2014-15 financial year.

Caroline Dinenage:

Court fees of £0.5m were collected in County Court and the Combined Court Centre in Chichester in 2014-15 financial year. This figure is net of fee remissions. Court fees were not payable in the Crown Courts during 2014-15 so no court fees were taken.

■ Courts: Closures

Craig Whittaker: [\[12890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government plans to take into account proposals put forward that will save money in ways other than proposals for closures, when analysing feedback on its recent consultation on the Provision of Court and Tribunal Estate.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

No decision has been taken to close any court. The consultation closed on 8 October and we will carefully consider all responses submitted.

■ Family Proceedings: Wales

Jessica Morden: [\[12954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many private family law cases there were in the (a) Gwent and (b) Wales civil and family tribunals cluster between April 2013 and April 2014; and in how many such cases both parties had legal representation.

Caroline Dinenage:

For family court cases Ministry of Justice publishes quarterly figures on the number of disposals and the average time taken for their disposal by case type, and by the legal representation of the parties. The latest figures up to quarter 2 (April to June) 2015 can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-court-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2015>

Breaking down the parties representation figures for Wales nationally and for Gwent locally, private law disposals in Family Proceedings Courts and County Courts are as below:

REPRESENTATION	WALES	GWENT
	Financial Year 2013-14	Financial Year 2013-14
Both	2,665	536
Other	3,962	635
Total	6,627	1,171

■ Foston Hall Prison

Jess Phillips: [\[12324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what guidance or direction his Department has given on the amount of time that inmates at Foston Hall Prison, Derbyshire, should spend outside their cells; and what monitoring of such time his Department carries out.

Caroline Dinenage:

At Foston Hall, prisoners are expected to spend 6.25 hours a day out of their cells in order to take part in work, training or education opportunities that support their rehabilitation. This daily activity structure was implemented on 31 August 2015 and is monitored at local, regional and national levels.

In addition to the activity structure, as with all prisons in England and Wales, there is a statutory requirement to give prisoners 30 minutes in the open air on a daily basis. There is also an agreement with National Offender Management Commissioners which applies to all prisons in their Service Level Agreements, that prisoners should receive 2.5 hours per week PE. These national requirements are also in place at Foston Hall

■ Magistrates' Courts: Grantham

Stephen Phillips: [\[12467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, further to the Answer of 9 October 2015 to Question 11183, if he will estimate the market value of the freehold buildings used by Grantham Magistrates' Court.

Caroline Dinenage:

There is no estimate of the market value of Grantham Magistrates' Court. No decision has been taken to close the court.

Disposal strategies will be developed once a decision is made on individual courts following the outcome of consultation.

■ Prisons: Crimes of Violence

Steve Rotheram:

[13109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many assaults on on-duty prison officers have occurred in (a) HM Prison Liverpool, (b) HM Prison Altcourse and (c) all other prisons in England and Wales in each year since 2010.

Andrew Selous:

NOMS does not tolerate violence of any kind in prison and any assault is treated extremely seriously. Any prisoner who commits an act of violence can expect to have action taken against them.

Statistics for assaults on staff by establishment are published in Table 3.15 of the Safety in Custody statistics bulletin. This can be found in the 'Assaults in prison custody 2000 to 2014' statistics at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/safety-in-custody-statistics>

■ Prisons: Saudi Arabia

Andy Slaughter:

[13078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the overseas security and justice assistance guidance that was issued before the Government entered into the contract to provide training needs analysis to the Saudi penal system.

Andrew Selous:

I refer the hon member to the Secretary of State's statement of 13 October 2015. We have no plans to publish the overseas security and justice assistance (OSJA) guidance in relation to the bid to provide a training needs analysis to the Saudi Arabian prison service. No contract was entered into and the bid was withdrawn before the contract with the Saudi Government was signed.

TRANSPORT

■ Bus Services

Lilian Greenwood:

[13102]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to page 7 of his Department's publication, Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) Information pack and Conditions of Eligibility, how much his Department has spent on (a) the eight per cent ITSO smartcard BSOG supplement and (b) the two per cent Automatic Vehicle Location BSOG supplement in each year from 2010-11 to 2014-15; and what his Department's projected expenditure is in 2015-16 on those items.

Andrew Jones:

This information is set out in the table below.

£ million

YEAR	SMARTCARD	AUTOMATIC VEHICLE LOCATION
2010/11	1.365	0.592
2011/12	9.501	1.662
2012/13	15.664	4.296
2013/14	16.247	4.109
2014/15	16.169	4.138

Since 2010, these two supplements have helped lead to real benefits for passengers. Over 86% of buses in England outside London are now smart-equipped and 93% of buses outside London now have automatic vehicle location equipment compared to 45% in 2009-10.

At this stage it is too early to estimate the likely payments for 2015/16.

■ Cycling

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[13103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2015 to Question 12187, which organisations were represented at the High Level Cycling Group's meeting on 13 July 2015.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Representatives from the following organisations attended the High Level Cycling Group's meeting on 13 July 2015:

- Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC)
- Bicycle Association
- British Cycling
- Cyclists Touring Club (CTC)
- Department for Transport
- PTEG (Passenger Transport Executive Group) - Dialled in
- Sustrans
- The AA
- Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) – Dialled in
- Transport for London (TfL)

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[13105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October to Question 12230, if he will provide a breakdown by English region of the figures provided in

the first table contained in that Answer under the headings (a) his Department's spend per head and (b) total spend per head.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The table below details spend per head per region on cycling. These figures are made up of the following Government funded programmes: Cycle-Rail, Cycle Safety, Linking Communities, Cycle Ambition Cities, Cycle Ambition National Parks and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.. The figures for total funding consist of DfT funding plus matched funding. Matched funding comes from a range of public and private sources, for example local authority budgets, private partnerships or third party grants.

We do not hold a regional breakdown for the £4.8m spent in 2013/14 by the Highways Agency. The table also does not include the £11m a year spent on Bikeability cycle training, as we do not hold a regional breakdown of this funding. These funding streams have therefore been excluded from the below calculations. Further, as we are still in financial year 2015/16 we cannot confirm exact expenditure and we have therefore excluded the 2015/16 financial year from the figures.

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table below is a link to the web version of the questions and its answer

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-10-22/13105>

■ **Department for Transport: Data Protection**

Stephen Hammond:

[12430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to prepare for the implementation of the proposed General Data Protection Regulation; which non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and agencies overseen by his Department will be affected by that Regulation; and what estimate he has made of the potential liability of his Department, its agencies and NDPBs in connection with that proposed Regulation.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Negotiations on the proposed General Data Protection Regulation are still continuing and our negotiating position has taken into account the likely impact on Government Departments, NDPBs and agencies. Once the outcome of tripartite negotiations between the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Commission are complete, and the Regulation has been adopted, the liabilities will be further assessed. There will then follow a maximum implementation period of two years. Between now and then, Government departments who will be affected by the Regulation are closely involved in work led by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport to consider the implications of the text as it develops through the negotiating process.

■ Great Western Railway Line: Electrification

Lilian Greenwood: [\[13104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Chief Executive of Network Rail's letter to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee of 19 October 2015, what the component cost headings of Network Rail's revised £2.5 billion to £2.8 billion cost estimate for Great Western Main Line electrification are.

Claire Perry:

As the Department's Permanent Secretary, Philip Rutnam, stated at the Public Accounts Committee of 21 October 2015, the estimate provided by Mr Carne has not yet been subject to detailed scrutiny, either by the Department or the Office of Road and Regulation (ORR). We expect to receive details of the estimate as part of the Hendy Review which will cover the entire 2014-2019 enhancements portfolio. This is expected later in the Autumn and it would be premature to comment on costs before the report is finalised.

■ Heathrow Airport

Adam Afriyie: [\[12311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of moving the Lakeside Energy from Waste Plant from its current site; and what his policy is on whether that cost would be met by Heathrow Airport or the Government.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Government is currently considering the large amount of very detailed analysis contained in the Airports Commission's final report before taking any decisions on next steps.

The Airports Commission considered the costs associated with the Lakeside Energy from Waste Plant in its assessment of land acquisition costs. This is included in the report "[Cost and Commercial Viability](#): Cost and Revenue Identification Update Heathrow Airport North West Runway".

It is important to note that no decisions have been taken, but if the Government was minded to support the need for new runway capacity and concluded that the North-West runway at Heathrow was the preferred option for meeting this requirement, the planning and costs of moving the Energy from Waste Plant would be a matter for the airport to take forward with the owners of the site.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Antoinette Sandbach: [\[12283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the effect of noise from High Speed 2 on rural communities is minimised.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

HS2 applies the aims of the Noise Policy Statement for England (2010) which seeks to avoid, minimise and mitigate significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.

This is undertaken through the design, construction and operation of HS2 infrastructure. Phase One includes extensive noise mitigation to reduce impacts on communities, including rural ones.

■ High Speed Trains

Lilian Greenwood:

[13080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the transfer of Intercity 125 sets from the Great Western franchise to the Scotrail franchise in 2017-18 is conditional on Network Rail meeting its current regulated output targets on the Great Western Main Line electrification project.

Claire Perry:

The lease for the Intercity 125 sets is a commercial matter between Great Western Railway (GWR) and the owner of the fleet. Under current plans, the transfer of the rolling stock is not conditional on Network Rail meeting its current regulated output targets on the Great Western Main Line electrification project.

The planned schedule for the introduction of the InterCity Express Programme fleet to replace the Intercity 125 sets will see the new trains enter service from 2017 on the Great Western Main Line.

■ Roads: Cumbria

Mr Jamie Reed:

[13099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what investment in the road network the Government plans to make in (a) Copeland constituency and (b) Cumbria as part of the Northern Powerhouse initiative.

Andrew Jones:

The Government is working with Transport for the North to determine future transport investment priorities for the next road and rail investment periods in the North of England. This work builds on the "Northern Powerhouse: one Agenda, One economy, One North" report published in March this year with a further report focussing on investment priorities due in March 2016.

In the meantime, Government is undertaking a Northern Trans-Pennine strategic study to examine the case for improving or dualling one or both of the A66 and A69 between the A1(M) and M6. Improvements to either of these routes would benefit the economy of Cumbria and further help the development of a northern powerhouse.

Government is also providing £7.638m for integrated transport improvements and £75.981m for highways maintenance to Cumbria council for the three years 2015/16 to 2017/18, both of which can be used to invest in the road network in Cumbria and Copeland. Over £8m of Local Growth Funding has been provided to the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership for three local road projects in Kendal, Ulverston and Workington, although none of these are in the Copeland.

■ Severn River Crossing

Jessica Morden: [\[12955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he expects the Severn bridges to return to public ownership.

Andrew Jones:

The Severn River Crossings concession is expected to end in the first half of 2018. At the end of the concession, the Severn Crossings will revert to public ownership.

■ Trolleybuses

Greg Mulholland: [\[12300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the cost of the public inquiry into the New Generation Transport trolleybus scheme; and what he expects the final cost of that inquiry to be.

Claire Perry:

Leeds City Council and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority as promoters of this scheme are responsible for providing the inquiry venue and facilities; paying for professional experts to present their case; and meeting the Planning Inspectorate's costs in providing an Inspector. The Planning Inspectorate charged £157,162 for this inquiry, based on the time spent by the Inspector preparing for, travelling to and holding the inquiry; the time spent by the Inspector writing his report; and his travelling and subsistence. Other parties to the inquiry were responsible for meeting their own costs.

Greg Mulholland: [\[12301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he expects the public inquiry into the New Generation Transport trolleybus scheme to report.

Claire Perry:

We are considering the Inspector's Report following the public inquiry, and will announce our decision shortly. My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State has delegated responsibility for this decision to my Noble Friend Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Civil Partnerships

Tim Loughton: [\[13132\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether plans to amend the Civil Partnership Act to allow opposite sex partnerships.

Caroline Dinage:

I refer the Right Honourable Member to the answer I gave on 14 July to the written question below.

Answer referred to : Civil Partnerships Act 2004: written question - 5833

Tim Loughton: To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she has any plans to bring forward an amendment to the Civil Partnerships Act 2004 to permit opposite sex civil partnerships.

Caroline Dinenage: The Government has no plans to extend the Civil Partnership Act 2004 to opposite sex couples.

The Government carried out a review of the operation and future of the Civil Partnership Act 2004 required by The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, which included a full public consultation inviting views on potential changes to civil partnership.

The Government published a report, following the review, which concluded that the Government would not make any changes.

(14 July 2015 : written question 5833)

■ Equal Pay

Stephen Timms: [\[13095\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what plans her Department has to close the gender pay gap.

Caroline Dinenage:

The gender pay gap has fallen to its lowest ever level, and our ambition is to eliminate it within a generation. That is why we will require large employers to publish information on the differences between men and women's pay and bonuses. Gender pay gap reporting will also be extended to the public sector. We will continue taking action to inspire girls and young women; modernise workplaces; and support older working women.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Access to Work Programme

Steve McCabe: [\[12410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what (a) guidelines and (b) recommended timescales exist for processing last-minute Access to Work extra support requests.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Access to Work guidance and policy for fast track application requests is that applications are identified and marked as urgent then allocated to an advisory team on the same day. This includes the Access to Work adviser making contact with the customer on the same day to ensure that their request is progressed as far as possible to the point of decision on the level of support if possible.

■ Capita: Complaints

Steve McCabe: [\[12407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints his Department has received about the assessment assistance offered by CAPITA.

Justin Tomlinson:

Complaints about the assessment service offered by Capita are processed by Capita and not the Department for Work and Pensions.

Capita has received a total of 1,288 complaints for 2015 in relation to their contractual delivery of the Personal Independence Payment Assessment process. This represents 1% of their total assessment referral volume.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Data Protection

Stephen Hammond: [\[12433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department has taken to prepare for the implementation of the proposed General Data Protection Regulation; which non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and agencies overseen by his Department will be affected by that Regulation; and what estimate he has made of the potential liability of his Department, its agencies and NDPBs in connection with that proposed Regulation.

Justin Tomlinson:

Negotiations on the proposed General Data Protection Regulation are still continuing and our negotiating position has taken into account the likely impact on Government Departments, NDPBs and agencies. Once the outcome of trilogue negotiations between the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Commission are complete, and the Regulation has been adopted, the liabilities will be further assessed. There will then follow a maximum implementation period of two years. Between now and then, Government departments who will be affected by the Regulation are closely involved in work led by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport to consider the implications of the text as it develops through the negotiating process.

■ Employment Schemes

Stephen Timms: [\[13096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of lessons from the experience of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in the US to inform his plans to replace the Work Programme when the current contracts come to an end.

Priti Patel:

We continuously review our employment programmes and consider global good practice examples.

Many features of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act are consistent with the current Work Programme framework and with Universal Credit which ensures work always pays and enables earnings tracking.

We are considering how proposed improvements in the structure of US services could benefit UK employment support in the design of our future offers, for example our cross government look into supporting collaborations between services at a local level.

■ Employment Schemes: Young People

Emily Thornberry:

[12462]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his Department's press release Hancock: Every young person should be earning or learning from April 2017, published 17 August 2015, (a) what the evidential basis is for the effectiveness of each of the proposals of the Earn or Learn taskforce referred to in that press notice; (b) what he plans the criteria for referral to the three-week programme referred to in that press notice to be; (c) by what measures the success of that programme will be assessed; (d) when he plans for contracts for that programme to be put out to tender; (e) if he will launch a consultation on the design of such contracts; (f) what additional funding he plans to make available for skills training for programme participants lacking basic qualifications; (g) how much his Department has set aside to fund that programme; and (h) whether he plans for funding for skills training to be ring-fenced within the overall grant made to providers.

Priti Patel:

The Youth Obligation for 18-21 year olds includes a 3 week intensive activity programme at the start of the claim to Universal Credit. The detailed policy design is still under development.

All spending decisions on skills training for 2016-17 and beyond will be taken as part of the Spending Review, which is due to be concluded in November.

■ Natural Gas: Safety

Mr Nigel Evans:

[13083]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what sanctions the HSE can place on companies breaching gas safety.

Justin Tomlinson:

Sanctions that can be put in place by HSE range from verbal and written advice, improvement notices which require companies to take specified measures to achieve compliance and prohibition notices that stop companies from carrying out specified activities. Ultimately there is prosecution where unlimited fines are available in the Courts. (13083)

Mr Nigel Evans:

[13084]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of complaints about gas safety to the HSE are (a) validated and (b) prosecuted.

Justin Tomlinson:

Over five years 2010/2011 – 2014/15 the Health and Safety Executive has (a) investigated 99.17% of cases; (b) with 1.38% (166 cases) having led to a prosecution. (13084)

Mr Nigel Evans: [13085]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of cases of complaints about gas safety are investigated by the HSE.

Justin Tomlinson:

Over five years 2010/2011 – 2014/15 the Health and Safety Executive has investigated 12,000 of 12,100 gas safety cases.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Mr Roger Godsiff: [12318]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2015 to Question 11269, whether a personal independence payment assessment provider would be breaking the terms of its contract with his Department if it were to provide audio equipment for use in assessments which complied with the required specifications.

Justin Tomlinson:

There is no contractual agreement between DWP and assessment providers around the provision of audio equipment. If claimants wish for their assessments to be recorded they may do so using their own equipment, provided they comply with the conditions put in place which were outlined in the response provided to your previous question on this subject on 9 September 2015 and 16th of October 2015.

Steve McCabe: [12408]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people who had previously been in receipt of disability living allowance have been found ineligible for personal independence payments following assessment assistance by CAPITA.

Justin Tomlinson:

Information on Personal Independence Payment clearances by disallowance type (which includes 'Disallowed post-referral to the AP') is published on a quarterly basis and is available for both new claims and Disability Living Allowance reassessment claims from Stat-Xplore at <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>. Data is available at regional, parliamentary constituency and local authority level and can be broadly aggregated to give assessment provider level totals. Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore is available at <https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html>.

■ Social Security Benefits: Carers

Dr Eilidh Whiteford: [13076]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of proposals for a lower benefit cap on carers.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Government set out its assessment of the impacts of the policies in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill on 20th July. A link to the impact assessment is included.

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA15-006.pdf>

■ **Vacancies: Internet****Stephen Timms:****[13097]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans to continue the Universal Jobmatch service after the contract expires in April 2016; and if he will make a statement.

Priti Patel:

DWP intends to exercise its right under the current contract to extend the service for a further 12 months. Commercial discussions are currently underway with the supplier.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

■ Enterprise Bill: Extension of the Business Impact Target

Minister of State for Business, Industry and Enterprise (Anna Soubry):

[\[HCWS272\]](#)

My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (Baroness Neville-Rolfe) has today made the following statement.

The Enterprise Bill was introduced in this House on 16 September. It is a Bill that brings forward measures to support businesses to set up and grow. One of those measures extends the Business Impact Target (BIT) to include the activities of statutory regulators. We will require those regulators to assess and report on the impact of their regulatory activities on business. It is intended that this measure will help contribute to this Government's commitment to reduce the regulatory burden on business by £10bn over the life of this Parliament.

The Enterprise Bill will extend the BIT brought in by the Small Business Enterprise and Employment 2015 Act. This will ensure that statutory and non-statutory national regulators - undertaking regulatory activity that has an impact on business relating to matters reserved to UK Ministers - operate within a system where there is transparent reporting of the costs to business of their regulatory activities underpinned by statute

The Bill itself does not specify which regulators are being brought into scope of the BIT; that will be set out in secondary legislation following a public consultation in early 2016. The Government is carefully considering the position of each regulator, and final decisions have yet to be made. However to assist the House in considering the clauses before it I am providing an indicative list of the bodies that are currently being considered for inclusion. This list is not definitive and the views of business, regulators and other respondents to the consultation will inform the legislation to be submitted to the House in 2016.

REGULATORS IN SCOPE OF BUSINESS IMPACT TARGET

STATUTORY (under consideration to be brought into scope under Enterprise Bill)

- Architects Registration Board
- Assay Offices (Sheffield, Birmingham, London, Edinburgh)
- British Hallmarking Council
- Care Quality Commission
- Charity Commission for England and Wales
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Coal Authority

-
- Commissioners of Irish Lights (in relation to their regulatory activity in Northern Ireland)
 - Registrar of Companies (England and Wales), Registrar of Companies (Scotland)
 - Competition and Markets Authority
 - Equality and Human Rights Commission
 - Environment Agency
 - Financial Conduct Authority
 - Financial Reporting Council
 - Food Standards Agency
 - Forestry Commission
 - Gambling Commission
 - Gangmasters Licensing Authority
 - Groceries Code Adjudicator
 - Health and Safety Executive
 - Higher Education Funding Council for England
 - Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England)
 - Homes and Communities Agency
 - Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority
 - Human Tissue Authority
 - Information Commissioner
 - Marine Management Organisation
 - Natural England
 - Northern Lighthouse Board
 - Oil and Gas Authority
 - Office of Communications
 - Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner
 - Office for Fair Access
 - Office for Nuclear Regulation
 - Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
 - Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
 - Office of Rail and Road
 - Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies
 - Office of Gas and Electricity Markets

- Payment Systems Regulator
- Pensions Regulator
- Security Industry Authority
- Sports Grounds Safety Authority
- Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain
- Trinity House Lighthouse Services
- Water Services Regulation Authority

REGULATORS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION (may be brought into scope under Enterprise Bill)

- Professional bodies listed in Schedule 3 to the Money Laundering Regulations 2007
- Bodies regulated by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care
- Monitor
- Farriers Registration Council

NON-STATUTORY (for information only, already in scope under SBEE Act 2015)

- Animal and Plant Health Agency
- Animals in Science Regulation Unit
- Claims Management Regulation Unit
- Drinking Water Inspectorate
- Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency
- DVLA
- Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate
- Fish Health Inspectorate, CEFAS
- Insolvency Service
- Intellectual Property Office
- Land Registry
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency
- National Measurement and Regulation Office
- Rural Payments Agency
- Vehicle Certification Agency
- Veterinary Medicines Directorate

DEFENCE**■ UK Military Support to Afghanistan**

Secretary of State for Defence (Michael Fallon):

[\[HCWS273\]](#)

In January 2015 following 13 years of combat operations, NATO started its new non-combat train, advise and assist mission in Afghanistan. At the same time, the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF), which the UK and our NATO partners have played a key role in developing, assumed the lead for security in their country.

In their first fighting season since the drawdown of international combat troops, the ANDSF have been tested in parts of the country, but they have also shown themselves to be an increasingly professional, competent and dedicated fighting force.

The UK Government recognised it would take time for the ANDSF to develop into a fully-fledged fighting force capable of providing complete security for the people of Afghanistan. We therefore made plans to review our commitment in light of its performance over the year and the overall security situation.

I would like to inform the House that we have now concluded that we should maintain the scale of the UK's current military mission in the country in 2016, to help build a secure and stable Afghanistan.

The scope and role of the UK mission are unchanged. We will continue to help develop Afghanistan's future military leaders through our work at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy, to build capacity within the Afghan security ministries, and to provide vital support to NATO operations in Kabul. Around 450 UK personnel will work in close coordination with our NATO Allies and partners in the delivery of these important tasks.

This decision follows President Obama's announcement on 15 October that the United States is delaying the drawdown of US troops and will maintain its current force level in Afghanistan through most of next year. Both the US and our own decisions underline NATO's continued commitment to training and assisting Afghan forces as they grow stronger.

Finally, I wish to record my immense gratitude and admiration for all of our brave men and women who have served, or are currently serving, in Afghanistan. We will never forget the ultimate sacrifice made by each and every one of the 456 members of the Armed Forces who have died during operations in Afghanistan. Their sacrifice has helped to protect our country and our citizens from the threat of terrorism, as well as giving the people of Afghanistan the chance of a better future.