



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 28 October 2015 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:23 P.M., 28 October 2015). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

Questions marked thus **[R]** indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.  
 Questions with identification numbers of **90000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Ministers: Codes of Practice

**Andy Slaughter:**

[[13253](#)]

To ask the Attorney General, what discussions he has had with his ministerial colleagues in the Cabinet Office on the removal from the Ministerial Code of a reference to Ministers having a duty to comply with the law including international law and treaty obligations and to uphold the administration of justice.

**Jeremy Wright:**

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

### BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

#### ■ Electronic Publishing: EU Action

**Ben Howlett:**

[[13272](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what discussions he has had with his European counterparts on the potential effect of the European Commission's Digital Single Market proposals on UK publishers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Edward Vaizey:**

The Digital Single Market is a stated priority for the Juncker Commission, which could deliver significant gains for both consumers and businesses. As such, Ministers across Government regularly hold discussions in Europe and the UK with our European counterparts on the Digital Single Market including its potential effects on UK's creative industries and publishers in particular.

Currently there are no Digital Single Market legislative proposals on the table, but we are encouraging the Commission to ensure that future proposals are carefully assessed to ensure that they do not damage incentives to invest in the production of creative content.

#### ■ Energy: Industry

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

[[12654](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, on how many occasions he has discussed the Energy Intensive Industry Compensation Package with the European Commission in the last six months; and what forthcoming meetings he has with the European Commission.

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [\[12870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what steps he is taking to encourage the European Commission to have measures approved to support UK steelmakers with their energy costs.

**Anna Soubry:**

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills spoke with Competition Commissioner Vestager on Friday 23 October, to raise the issue of state aid clearance for our proposed package of support for energy intensive industries.

Further discussions are planned this week, and next month. In addition, my officials have been in regular contact with the European Commission throughout this process, and have met with the Commission's case handler to help progress clearance of the support package.

#### ■ Food: Prices

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[12500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership on food prices in the UK.

**Anna Soubry:**

An independent assessment of the potential economic impact of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) on the UK was carried out for the Government by the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR). This assessment demonstrated that TTIP offers an enormous economic benefit: in growth, exports, high quality jobs and reduced prices, worth up to £10 billion a year to the UK economy.

The CEPR study did not look at food prices specifically but it projects that output in our agricultural sector will be largely unaffected by TTIP.

#### ■ Foreign Companies: Land

**Stuart Blair Donaldson:** [\[13201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, when he expects the Land Registry to publish data on which foreign companies own which land property titles in England and Wales.

**Anna Soubry:**

My Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister stated during a speech made in Singapore on 28 July that he has asked Land Registry from this autumn to publish data on which foreign companies own which land and property titles in England and Wales.

## ■ Overseas Trade: Israel

**Mr Andrew Smith:**

[11818]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what (a) advice and (b) guidance his Department gives on the risks of (i) investment in and (ii) business with Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestinian territory.

**Anna Soubry:**

Advice and guidance on business risk is provided via the online Overseas Business Risks guides.

These are a joint UK Trade & Investment and FCO resource and provide information for businesses on the potential risks of trading in specific countries. Guides cover political and economic risks, human rights issues, bribery, terrorism, criminal activity, and intellectual property.

The information for the Occupied Palestinian Territories can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-palestinian-territories>

## ■ Patents

**Kevin Brennan:**

[13205]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what comparative assessment he has made of the level of patents granted in the UK with other (a) EU, (b) OECD and (c) developed economies in each of the last three years for which data is available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Edward Vaizey:**

Figures for patents applied for and granted in different jurisdictions can be obtained from the website of the World Intellectual Property Organisation ([www.wipo.int](http://www.wipo.int)), which collates the figures from intellectual property offices around the world.

The table shows the number of patents granted by national offices and by the European Patent Office (EPO) as recorded by WIPO, for both resident and non-resident applicants.

Many applicants choose to apply for patent protection in the UK and other European states via the EPO. However these are not recorded as grants for the individual countries in the table. According to the EPO around 75% of granted EPs take effect in the UK.

The number of granted patents in any one jurisdiction is dependent on many factors including applicants' business models, local market structure, and the legal requirements of the jurisdiction, since patent law varies. It also reflects the capacity of patent offices to process applications.

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table the following is a link to the question and its answer:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-10-23/13205>

**■ Small Businesses: Living Wage**

**George Kerevan:** [\[12756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, if he will bring forward proposals to assist SMEs with higher labour costs by 2020 under the National Living Wage.

**Nick Boles:**

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.

**■ Students: Loans**

**James Cartlidge:** [\[10791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what plans he has to extend the loan system available for over 24 year olds for Level 3 vocational and technical programmes to people aged between 19 and 24 year olds.

**Nick Boles:**

In determining the way forward on Advanced Learning Loans, the Department will take into account the forthcoming outcomes of the current Spending Review and draw upon the responses that were gathered through an extensive loans consultation last year.

**■ Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership**

**Mr Nicholas Brown:** [\[11296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that EU and US car safety regulations are compatible under the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement.

**Anna Soubry:**

More closely aligning the regulations for the EU and US through the EU-US Free Trade Agreement could lead to an increase in UK automotive exports to the US by up to 25%. EU and US regulators are undertaking detailed technical analysis to identify which regulations have similar overall outcomes on safety and are working to enhance future regulatory cooperation. Negotiators will look to use the results of the technical analysis to agree areas for mutual recognition, without compromising EU safety standards.

**Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh:** [\[11960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what assessment the Government has made of the potential economic and employment effects of the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership on the (a) food and farming, (b) energy, (c) financial services, (d) technology, (e) textiles and (f) shipbuilding sectors.



**Anna Soubry:**

An independent assessment of the potential economic impact of proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership on the UK was carried out by the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR). The CEPR analysis includes an assessment of the impact on twenty broad sectors of the economy, with estimated impacts on output, trade and shifts in employment. This can be found on the GOV.UK website.

**Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh:**[\[11961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what assessment the Government has made of the potential economic and employment effects of the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership in each of the constituent parts of the UK.

**Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh:**[\[11962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, if he will assess the potential economic and employment effects of the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership in each of the constituent parts of the UK.

**Anna Soubry:**

An independent assessment of the potential economic impact of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) on the UK as a whole was carried out for the Government by the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR). This assessment demonstrated that TTIP offers an enormous economic benefit: in growth, exports and high quality jobs, worth up to £10 billion a year.

We are currently considering undertaking further research into effects of TTIP in each of the UK regions.

**■ UK Trade and Investment Defence and Security Organisation****Caroline Lucas:**[\[12128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, pursuant to the Answer to Question 3393 of 30 June 2015, when the UKTI Defence and Security Organisation priority markets list for 2015-16 will be published.

**Anna Soubry:**

UKTI Defence and Security Organisation expects to publish the next list of priority markets before the end of the financial year. Until then, the current list remains extant.

**■ UK Trade and Investment: Expenditure****Alan Brown:**[\[11508\]](#)

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 UK Trade and Investment between 2010 and 2015.

**Anna Soubry:**

UK Trade and Investment expenditure is published annually in the UKTI Annual Report and Accounts which are available in the libraries of the House.

■ **Visits Abroad: China****Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[12560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, who (a) he and (b) the Minister for Small Business met on his recent visit to China; and in which of those meetings he raised the effect of Chinese dumping of steel on the UK steel industry.

**Anna Soubry:**

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I attended the Economic and Financial Dialogue and joined my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer for a meeting with Premier Li Keqiang. We held bilateral meetings with the Minister for Industry and Information Technology and the Minister of Commerce. We discussed steel at the second. Separately we met representatives of a number of UK companies and institutions operating in China. I met with representatives of the World Steel Federation, European Chamber of Commerce in China Steel Working Group and steel industry analysts to better understand China's part in the issues affecting the global steel industry and the impact on the UK.

**CABINET OFFICE**■ **Cabinet Office: Digital Technology****Chi Onwurah:**[\[13244\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what (a) funding his Department is undertaking and (b) projects his Department has planned as part of the Government's Digital Inclusion Strategy.

**Matthew Hancock:**

Cabinet Office and other government departments currently fund the Digital Inclusion team which works across government and with the private, public and voluntary sectors to ensure that everyone in the UK has the basic digital skills needed to benefit from being online.

The Digital Inclusion Strategy launched in 2014 outlined that by 2016 we will have reduced the number of people who are offline by 25% and by 2020 everyone who can be online should be online.

To date 85 organisations have signed up to the Digital Inclusion Charter and collaborate with government to deliver the Digital Inclusion Strategy. The Digital Inclusion team has worked with these stakeholders to develop products such as the cross-sector Digital Inclusion Outcomes Framework and initiatives like Digital Friends which promotes informal sharing of basic digital skills.

## ■ Cabinet Office: Welsh Language

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[12690\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when his Department will make available the first draft of the Cabinet Office's Welsh Language Scheme as required by the Welsh Language Act 1993.

**Matthew Hancock:**

*[Holding answer 23 October 2015]:* The Welsh Language Act does not require government departments to prepare Welsh Language Schemes.

The Government Digital Service works closely with the Wales Office to ensure that that the Welsh language content on GOV.UK is underpinned by high quality user research that provides a simpler, clearer and faster service for users. It also gives government departments and other organisations which publish material on GOV.UK the ability to publish Welsh-language content in line with the requirements of their individual Welsh Language Schemes.

## ■ Drugs: Death

**Andrew Stephenson:**

[\[13057\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many deaths in (a) Pendle, (b) the North West and (c) England have been caused as a result of people taking legal highs in each of the past three years.

**Mr Rob Wilson:**

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

### **Attachments:**

1. UKSA Letter to Member - Taking Legal Highs [13057 FINAL.pdf]

## ■ Government Departments: Contract Cleaning

**Helen Jones:**

[\[12665\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to issue guidance that staff employed by contract cleaning companies in government departments should not be disciplined for seeking a living wage; and if he will include this in future contracts.

**Matthew Hancock:**

We are the first Government ever to deliver a National Living Wage. From April 2016, every employer in the country will pay the National Living Wage, including all Government contractors, for workers aged 25 and above.

Consequently, we have no plans to issue the specified guidance.

**■ Interserve**

**Louise Haigh:** [\[12701\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what contracts Government departments hold with Interserve PLC and Developments.

**Matthew Hancock:**

*[Holding answer 23 October 2015]:* Since January 2011, as part of the Government's transparency programme, details of central government contracts above the value of £10,000 are published on Contracts Finder. Since 1 April 2015, wider public sector bodies, including local authorities, have also been required to publish details of contracts above the value of £25,000 on Contracts Finder.

Contracts published prior to 26 February 2015 can be viewed at:  
<http://data.gov.uk/data/contracts-finder-archive>

Those published after 26 February 2015 can be viewed at:  
<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>

**■ Mental Illness: Mortality Rates**

**Bob Stewart:** [\[13183\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which psychiatric disorder had the highest mortality rate in each of the last five years.

**Mr Rob Wilson:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Letter to Member - Mortality Rate [FINAL 13183.pdf]

**■ Public Sector: Procurement**

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [\[12561\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to promote local procurement targets for public projects; and what guidance he has issued to promote the adoption of the BES 6001 BRE standard in procurement decisions to ensure responsible sourcing of materials.

**Matthew Hancock:**

Following the steel summit held on 16 October, we have set up a working group which I chair to look specifically at the public procurement related issues facing the steel industry, and to drive forward solutions.

This group has representation from government and industry, and amongst the topics for discussion will be how steel standards could be integrated into procurement processes.

## ■ Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014

**Martin John Docherty:** [\[12773\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the effects of the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 on the activities of trades unions during the 2015 general election period.

**Martin John Docherty:** [\[12774\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the effects of the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 on the activities of charitable bodies during the 2015 general election period.

**John Penrose:**

Section 39 of the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 provides for a post-election review of the operation of the regulatory regime governing third parties at the 2015 General Election.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts CBE is currently conducting this independent review.

Ministers must lay a copy of his report before Parliament and publish it by November 2016.

## TREASURY

### ■ Business: Taxation

**Mr Mark Williams:** [\[12651\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support the Government is giving to unincorporated businesses via the taxation system.

**Mr David Gauke:**

The government is committed to supporting unincorporated businesses. At Budget 2015, the government announced that it would transform the tax system over the course of this Parliament by introducing digital tax accounts for everyone, removing the need for annual tax returns.

In addition, the government has introduced cash basis accounting so that the smallest businesses can report their income and expenses to HMRC in a simpler way.

Building on recommendations by the Office of Tax Simplification (OTS), the government will consult in autumn 2015 on abolishing Class 2 NICs and reforming Class 4 NICs. This will simplify the NICs system and reduce the administrative burden of NICs for millions of self-employed individuals. At Summer Budget 2015, the Chancellor announced the Annual Investment Allowance would rise to its highest ever permanent level from January 2016.

The allowance enables businesses, including unincorporated businesses, to write down 100% of all qualifying investment in plant and machinery against its taxable profits up to £200,000, providing a cash flow benefit to companies who invest.

#### ■ Income Tax: Tax Allowances

**Henry Smith:** [\[12640\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to raise the income tax personal allowance during this Parliament.

**Mr David Gauke:**

The government has committed to raising the income tax personal allowance to £12,500 by the end of this parliament, alongside our commitment to raise the higher rate threshold to £50,000. These changes will benefit over 30 million individuals.

Summer Budget 2015 set out the first step in meeting this commitment. The personal allowance will increase from £10,600 in 2015-16 to £11,000 in 2016-17, and £11,200 in 2017-18.

These changes will benefit over 29 million individuals and take 570,000 individuals out of income tax altogether by 2016-17. This will increase to over 660,000 by 2017-18. A typical basic rate taxpayer will see their income tax bill reduced by £905 by 2016-17, compared to 2010.

#### ■ Insurance

**Caroline Flint:** [\[13204\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the practice of insurers automatically signing up customers to annual renewals without the explicit consent of those policy holders.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

I refer my hon. Member to the answer given on the 26 October 2015 to Question UIN 12727.

#### ■ Non-domestic Rates: North East

**Mr Nicholas Brown:** [\[12524\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, by what mechanism he proposes to ensure that additional business rate revenue in the North East is allocated to infrastructure investment.

**Mr Nicholas Brown:** [\[12525\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what new mechanism he proposes to stimulate rural growth in the North East.

**Mr Nicholas Brown:** [\[12527\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what responsibilities are proposed for the (a) elected mayor, (b) North East Combined Authority and (c) North East local enterprise partnership in overseeing the adult skills budget for the North East.

**Mr Nicholas Brown:** [\[12528\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what governance and accountability arrangements are proposed for the North East Investment Fund.

**Mr Nicholas Brown:** [\[12529\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the proposed membership is of the skills board for the North East overseeing a comprehensive review of post-16 education, skills and employment.

**Greg Hands:**

On 23 October the Government signed a historic devolution deal with the North East Combined Authority. As part of the deal, and subject to the passage of the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill through parliament, a new directly-elected Mayor for the North East will be created. The Mayor will chair the existing North East Combined Authority. Powers and responsibilities will be devolved from central government to the Mayor and Combined Authority.

Full details of the deal are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/north-east-devolution-deal>

A detailed implementation plan will be agreed over the coming months between central government and the North East Combined Authority.

## ■ Spirits

**Stephen Hammond:** [\[12590\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many new distilleries have been registered in the UK since 2012.

**Damian Hinds:**

HM Revenue and Customs does not hold real time information on the number of distillery licenses issued.

**Stephen Hammond:** [\[12591\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support his Department is providing to the UK spirits industry.

**Damian Hinds:**

The government is committed to supporting the UK spirits industry. The duty on spirits was cut by 2% at March Budget 2015, building on the duty freeze at Budget 2014.

## ■ Tax Evasion

**Mr Nicholas Brown:** [\[12532\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of which are the principal methods of tax evasion; and what proposals he has for tackling each such method.

**Mr David Gauke:**

HMRC's latest estimates of the tax gap, which covers the tax lost due to all forms of non-compliance, including evasion was published on 22 October 2015. The tax gap in the 2013 to 2014 financial year (the latest year) was estimated to be £34 billion – 6.4% of the total tax that HMRC estimates was due. Tax evasion accounted for £4.4 billion of this. Tax evaders employ a wide range of methods, ranging from simply not recording taxable transactions to sophisticated sales suppression. HMRC continually reviews its approach to tackling different methods of evasion in the light of operational experience.

Since 2010 HMRC has delivered record compliance yield from tackling all forms of non-compliance, including evasion, avoidance and fraud.

**■ UK Membership of EU**

**Mr Douglas Carswell:** [\[12567\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many officials in his Department are engaged in planning steps to secure trade and other beneficial economic exchanges in the event of a vote to leave the EU.

**Mr David Gauke:**

The Government is focused on delivering a successful renegotiation: it believes it can and will succeed in reforming and renegotiating our relationship with the EU and campaigning to keep the UK in the EU on that basis. Departments are appropriately resourced to support the Government's priorities in Europe.

**■ Veterans: Welfare Tax Credits**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[13031\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many former members of each branch of the armed forces are in receipt of (a) child and (b) working tax credits.

**Damian Hinds:**

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

**■ Welfare Tax Credits**

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[12578\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in (a) Lewisham, Deptford constituency, (b) the London Borough of Lewisham, (c) London and (d) England receive tax credits.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[12589\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people under 25 years old in (a) Lewisham, Deptford constituency, (b) the London Borough of Lewisham, (c) London and (d) England receive tax credits.



**Damian Hinds:**

The latest information on Child and Working Tax Credits statistics is available on the Gov.uk website. Link provided below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-provisional-awards-geographical-analyses-december-2013>

**CHURCH COMMISSIONERS****■ Church Commissioners: Credit Unions****Gareth Thomas:****[13505]**

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church Commissioners are taking to promote the use of credit unions in the work of the Church of England; and if she will make a statement.

**Mrs Caroline Spelman:**

The Church of England's work in support of credit unions has been led by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Task Group on Responsible Credit and Savings, chaired by Sir Hector Sants. Nationally, the Task Group has developed a number of strategic, church-led initiatives, including matching the resources of local churches with the diverse needs of local credit unions through the Church Credit Champions Network. To date, the pilot scheme has engaged over 200 churches, trained 150 Credit Champions and is on target to bring in 3,000+ new credit union members across London, Southwark and Liverpool dioceses, with plans to roll out to 30 more dioceses from next year.

The Church of England is also running the 'LifeSavers' programme which is piloting a holistic financial education programme linked to savings clubs in primary schools. This was trialled successfully in Church of England primary schools during 2015 and will be rolled out to a further 120 church and community schools from early 2016, helping to raise the profile of credit unions in these communities.

Locally, dioceses and churches are involved in a wide range of activities in support of credit unions, from running mass sign-ups and marketing campaigns and recruiting volunteers to the board of credit unions to hosting access points in church building and promoting payroll saving through links with local employers. According to a Church Urban Fund survey, 17% of Anglican parishes are actively involved in supporting credit unions in various ways. This activity has generated widespread coverage in national and local media, raising public awareness of credit unions. Further information is available on our dedicated website: [www.toyourcredit.org.uk](http://www.toyourcredit.org.uk)

## COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Coastal Communities Fund

**Dr Paul Monaghan:** [\[12744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, when he expects the Coastal Communities Fund to reopen for a further round of funding.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

Details of future funding arrangements for the Coastal Communities Fund are currently being considered as part of the 2015 Spending Review. An announcement about the timing of future funding rounds is expected after the Autumn Statement.

### ■ Communities and Local Government: Labour Turnover

**Louise Haigh:** [\[13208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the level of staff turnover was in (a) his Department and (b) his Department's digital team in each of the last 12 months for which data is available.

**Brandon Lewis:**

*[Holding answer 28 October 2015]:* The turnover figures requested are as follows:

MONTH	DCLG	DCLG DIGITAL TEAM
October 2014	0.8%	0.0%
November 2014	1.0%	0.0%
December 2014	0.6%	0.0%
January 2015	0.8%	0.0%
February 2015	0.5%	0.0%
March 2015	2.5%	0.0%
April 2015	4.6%	0.0%
May 2015	1.0%	11.1%
June 2015	0.4%	0.0%
July 2015	0.6%	0.0%
August 2015	1.0%	0.0%
September 2015	1.4%	0.0%

The overall turnover rates in the 2014-15 financial year were 12.8% and 11.1% respectively. The turnover figures include all staff leaving the organisation, including

those who transferred to another Government Department but remained in Civil Service employment, including those that transferred as a result of machinery of government changes. The Department's Digital team is only made up of 9 staff, therefore small numbers of leavers heavily skew the turnover figures.

## ■ Community Assets

**Sir Nicholas Soames:** [\[13194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Community Right to Bid scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

Since introduction in 2012, uptake of the Community Right to Bid has increased year-on-year. More than 2,600 much loved assets are now listed across the country, including nearly 900 pubs; and 150 assets have been transferred into community ownership.

## ■ Homelessness: Young People

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[12601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to improve supported accommodation for homeless young people in (a) Lewisham Deptford constituency, (b) London Borough of Lewisham, (c) London and (d) England.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

The Government is committed to preventing homelessness and is taking specific action across England to support young homeless people into stable accommodation, education, training or employment.

We have invested £14 million to enable Crisis to support 10,000 vulnerable single people into privately rented tenancies, of which 41 projects are specifically targeted at young people.

Our £15 million Fair Chance Fund payment by results scheme is supporting 1,600 vulnerable homeless 18-25 year olds into accommodation, education, training and employment. Projects for the scheme are being delivered across England including Greenwich.

In addition, the Government is investing £40 million in Platform for Life, a lower rent shared accommodation programme to provide young homeless people with a stable base for work and study.

We have also implemented the 'Youth Accommodation Pathway' good practice model that supports young people to remain in the family home where it is safe to do so and offers tailored support for those who cannot. This has been disseminated across all English local authorities.

**■ Housing: Derelict Land**

**Chris Green:** [\[13137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what proportion of new residential addresses have been created on brownfield sites since 2010.

**Brandon Lewis:**

Statistics for 2013/14 were published in August 2015 and are available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/land-use-change-statistics-2013-to-2014>

These statistics show that, in 2013/14, 60 per cent of new residential addresses, including conversions to residential use, were created on previously developed land.

The figures in the 2013/14 publication are the first in a new series. The Department holds no historical figures for the proportion of residential addresses on previously developed land prior to this.

**■ Shared Ownership Schemes**

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[13154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to make shared housing ownership schemes more accessible for buyers in (a) central London and (b) other areas with fast-rising house prices; and if he will make a statement.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Government is committed to helping hard working people across the country to own their own home. We believe that shared ownership has an important role to play to help those who aspire to home ownership but may be otherwise unable to afford it, especially in London and other high value areas. We know there is an appetite among providers and developers to deliver more shared ownership. We are currently considering a range of ways in which shared ownership can be made more accessible to first time buyers and increase its attractiveness to lenders and investors.

**CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Broadband**

**Neil Gray:** [\[12762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding has been returned to his Department by BT following take up beyond 20 per cent under the Broadband Delivery UK contract.

**Mr Edward Vaizey:**

The rollout of superfast broadband is delivering value for customers and for the taxpayer - BT has committed to return up to £129 million to local authorities and devolved administrations to further fund local broadband projects, as take-up of broadband services is likely to exceed the 20 per cent assumed in BT's initial financial model.

## ■ Dept for Culture, Media and Sport: Data Protection

**Stephen Hammond:**

[12418]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, 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 Edward Vaizey:**

Negotiations on the proposed General Data Protection Regulation are still continuing and we are taking 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.

## ■ Entertainments: Insurance

**Mrs Louise Ellman:**

[12904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what the requirements are on places of public entertainment to have public liability insurance in place; and if he will make a statement.

**Tracey Crouch:**

The Licensing Act 2003 (which is the responsibility of my Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department) sets out the types of regulated entertainment that require a licence, primarily live music and indoor sporting events. Any requirements in the 2003 Act are separate to any requirement around public liability insurance to be in place. Any requirements on public liability insurance is a contractual matter and is not required by law.

Guidance for organisers of events has been produced by the Cabinet Office and can be seen on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk). This includes the following relating to insurance:

There is no law that says you must buy insurance for a voluntary or community event – but you might want to make sure you are covered in case something goes wrong and someone makes a claim against you. Having [public liability insurance](#) may give you peace of mind, but it's good planning, not insurance that stops things going wrong.

**DEFENCE**■ **Afghanistan: Interpreters**

**Maria Eagle:** [\[12975\]](#)

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 and (b) been resettled in the UK under his Department's intimidation policy.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Since June 2013 around 330 locally employed staff have approached our dedicated team in Kabul for assistance under the Government's Intimidation Policy. As the Intimidation Policy is open to all staff, regardless of their role, not all of these staff are interpreters: they carried out a variety of roles in support of our operation in Afghanistan. All cases are investigated thoroughly by experienced and trained police officers, in the majority the risk can be successfully mitigated in country, through provision of bespoke security advice and guidance to the former staff member. We consider relocation to the UK if it is assessed the individual would not be safe if they remained in Afghanistan. We have offered financial support to over 30 staff to move to a new location within Afghanistan to maintain their safety, and one former staff member has been relocated to the UK.

■ **Armed Forces: Human Rights**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[12563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he plans to take to ensure that (a) UN membership of the European Convention on Human Rights and (b) other human rights measures do not adversely affect the ability of service personnel to discharge their duties in conflict zones.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Government is committed to upholding civilised standards in armed conflicts, and our view is that international humanitarian law, as embodied in the Geneva Conventions, set those standards. We are concerned that legal developments have the potential to impose unacceptable constraints on the Armed Forces when they are deployed to defend the UK and its interests. A commitment to address this problem was made in the Government's Manifesto this year. Accordingly, we are considering the options available to safeguard the ability of our Armed Forces to do their job. We want to ensure that our Service personnel are not pressured to become unduly risk averse because of the fear of litigation or by the prospect of legal harassment, and that commanders are able to take the rapid and often high risk decisions necessary during military operations. We will announce our proposals in due course.

## ■ Army: Recruitment

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[13240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of Army (a) officers and (b) regular soldiers are recruited from (i) Scotland, (ii) England and Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland.

**Mark Lancaster:**

The proportion of regular Army officers and soldiers recruited from each country of the United Kingdom for 2014-15 is shown below:

REGULAR	OFFICER	SOLDIER
England	88.4%	80.6%
Scotland	4.7%	8.9%
Wales	4.7%	6.3%
N Ireland	1.4%	2.5%
Other	0.8%	1.7%

The locations shown reflect the contact addresses recorded and may not be the home address. 'Other' refers to non-UK contact addresses, or those not identifiable, but does not include Gurkhas.

## ■ China: Nuclear Power Stations

**Maria Eagle:** [\[13129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with colleagues in other Departments about the national security implications of Chinese state involvement in the UK's domestic nuclear operations.

**Michael Fallon:**

I have regular discussions with Ministerial colleagues on national security matters.

## ■ Commonwealth War Graves Commission: Pensions

**Vernon Coaker:** [\[13202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department has made on resolving the dispute between the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and its employees on that body's pension scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mark Lancaster:**

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is a Royal Charter body and while we were consulted and in agreement with the Commission's approach, its pension arrangements are ultimately a matter for the Commission's senior management and the Trustees of the scheme.

I understand the Commission has proposed the closure of its defined benefit pension scheme to future accrual in the face of rising costs. Following a period of consultation, the Commission is now considering the range of responses received but no decision has yet been taken.

#### ■ Ministry of Defence: Legal Costs

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[12510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of legal costs to his Department in defending service personnel in relation to actions carried out in the course of duty; what estimate he has made of the proportion of such costs which relate to cases where the accused service personnel are acquitted; and if he will make a statement.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The total legal costs borne by the Ministry of Defence relating to actions carried out by Service personnel while on duty are over £100 million. The costs of providing the defence for Service personnel facing specifically Courts Martial or a Service Civilian Court, amounted to approximately £750,000 in financial year 2014-15. The costs of providing the defence for current and former Service personnel facing criminal investigations relating to operations in Northern Ireland during the "Troubles" period, has amounted to approximately £142,000 since 7 February 2014. The expenditure on behalf of defendants in Courts Martial or Service Civilian courts related to 394 individuals, of whom 95 were acquitted. The relevant criminal proceedings in Northern Ireland are ongoing.

The vast majority of Defence litigation expenditure relates to civil cases. As an example, £31 million was spent on the Al-Sweady Public Inquiry which concluded that all of the serious allegations that were raised, were wholly without foundation.

#### ■ Ministry of Defence: Mott MacDonald

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[13251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Ministers in his Department were made aware of the Mott Macdonald report 2012 submitted to his Department.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

Defence Ministers were aware of this report, which was completed as part of a wider study looking into a range of options for the potential future use of RAF Northolt. The conclusion of the study was to keep RAF Northolt as a Government airfield.

#### ■ Navy: Training

**Sir Nicholas Soames:** [\[13199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether celestial navigation forms part of the Royal Navy's phase one training.

**Mark Lancaster:**

Yes.



**EDUCATION****■ Children: Greater London****Vicky Foxcroft:****[12602]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children aged between four and seven in (a) Lewisham, Deptford constituency, (b) the London Borough of Lewisham and (c) London received free school meals in each of the last five academic years.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

Prior to the 2014/15 academic year, the department did not collect data on the number of free school meals given out to pupils below school level. The department does not, therefore, hold information on receipt of free school meals by pupils of different ages for earlier years.

Data from the January 2015 school census at regional and local authority level can be found in table 8e of 'Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics: January 2015 statistics'[1]. Constituency level data can be obtained by aggregating the underlying school level data from the same publication. This is available in the 'SFR16\_2015\_Schools\_Pupils\_UD' file within the underlying data, which contains information on each school within constituencies and the number of infant pupils who took a free school meal on census day.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2015>

**■ Children: Health****Dr Sarah Wollaston:****[12513]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans she has for consistent monitoring of the emotional, social and physical development of children in their early years, after the Early Years Foundation Profile becomes non-compulsory in September 2016; and if she will make a statement.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

It is important for parents and teachers to know how well a child is progressing. As such, communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development are set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework as prime learning areas for children from birth to age five.

As part of the wider reforms to the accountability system for primary schools and the national curriculum we have introduced the reception baseline assessment for the 2015/16 academic year.

The reception baseline forms one part of a teacher's wider assessments in reception and we will expect early years practitioners to continue to carry out the appropriate ongoing, formative assessment of children of reception age.

The EYFS statutory framework will also still require early years practitioners to carry out a progress check against the three prime areas of learning at age two, and we are

improving this check for parents by bringing it together with health visitor checks in the form of new Integrated Reviews.

#### ■ Primary Education: Assessments

**Ian Austin:** [12506]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the estimated cost to the public purse is of her Department's comparative studies on reception baseline assessments.

**Nick Gibb:**

Costs are not yet finalised and we cannot provide the information until the study is complete.

**Ian Austin:** [12507]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the estimated cost to the public purse of developing the reception baseline assessment policy implemented in September 2015 (a) was in 2014-15 and (b) is expected to be in 2015-16.

**Nick Gibb:**

The expenditure in 2014/15 was £82,507.81.

Costs for 2015/16 cannot be released until finalised.

#### ■ Schools: Crawley

**Henry Smith:** [12504]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to meet the demand for school places in Crawley.

**Edward Timpson:**

Local authorities are responsible for planning and securing sufficient school places in their area, and supporting them in doing so is one of this Government's top priorities. We allocate basic need funding to local authorities to help create new school places where they are needed. West Sussex has been allocated £57 million of basic need funding for the period 2015-18. West Sussex also received £113 million between 2011 and 2015, helping to create 8,565 new school places between 2010 and 2014. In addition to this, the Gatwick School, an all-through free school that opened in September 2014, is due to provide 1,020 additional places once at full capacity.

Information on basic need allocations can be found online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/basic-need-allocations-2015-to-2018>

## ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

#### ■ China: Nuclear Power

**Caroline Lucas:** [12368]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2015 to Question 11184, on China: nuclear power, if she will publish details of the

arrangements for managing the relationship between Chinese National Nuclear Corporation, the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the UK security services.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2015]:* Security in the civil nuclear sector is a top priority for the Government.

The Office for Nuclear Regulation is an independent regulator which regulates security in the civil nuclear industry including in relation to new nuclear build in the UK.

The security services and other Government bodies have a role in protecting key infrastructure, including the civil nuclear sector. There is a longstanding convention of successive Governments not commenting in detail on security and intelligence matters.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[12369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2015 to Question 11184, on China: nuclear power, what guarantees are in place to ensure that details of the operation of nuclear power stations that represent a potential threat in the hands of a foreign power do not reach the Chinese government; what access the Chinese government will have to the details of (a) operational information and (b) security regulations relating to those UK nuclear power stations with Chinese (i) investment and (ii) involvement in construction; whether input will be sought from Chinese (A) investors and (B) government officials for reviews of the regulatory framework for security in the civil nuclear industry; and if she will make a statement.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2015]:* The Nuclear Industries Security Regulations 2003 (as amended) require those holding Sensitive Nuclear Information to have in place robust security measures approved by the Office for Nuclear Regulation in order to protect this information. The Nuclear Industries Security Regulations are in the public domain.

The Office for Nuclear Regulation conducts inspections to ensure compliance with security requirements and has powers of enforcement in the event of a breach.

All employees and contractors in the civil nuclear industry are subject to robust personnel security and vetting arrangements in line with policies set out by Government in the annual Security Policy Framework.

The Department keeps the regulatory framework for civil nuclear security under review. It may from time to time consult on possible changes to the regulatory framework. It maintains a dialogue with investors on issues relating to nuclear new build, but has no plans at present to consult investors in new nuclear build specifically on any changes to the regulatory framework.

■ **Hinkley Point C Power Station**

**Alan Brown:**

[\[12497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, pursuant to the Answer of 15 October 2015 to Question 11217, what the cost element is of the projected transmission

charges within the agreed electricity strike rate of £92.50/MWh; and which party carries the risk if transmission charges are higher than predicted when the strike rate was agreed.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

The Generator's estimate of transmission costs is commercially sensitive.

The Strike Price could be adjusted, upwards or downwards, in relation to operational and certain other costs (including balancing and transmission charges) at certain fixed points including through opex reopeners at 15 and 25 years after the start date of the first reactor. Further detail on the treatment of transmission charges is included in the Departmental minute presented to Parliament on 21<sup>st</sup> October.

■ **Nuclear Reactors**

**Paul Flynn:** [\[13010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, on what date her Department commissioned a study of the technical and economic options for small modular nuclear reactors; which organisation her Department asked to carry this out; what departmental resources have been committed to support this study; and when the final report of that study is expected to be delivered.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

A range of studies has been commissioned by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in order to deliver a techno-economic assessment of small modular reactors. The organisations currently under contract to deliver projects for the techno economic assessment are: Atkins Limited (contracted on 22/7/15); Energy Technologies Institute LLP (contracted on 3/8/15); National Nuclear Laboratory Limited (contracted on 3/8/15); Checkendon Hill Ltd (contracted on 25/6/15); and Ernst and Young LLP (contracted on 20/10/15).

The total budget for this study is up to £4.5million excluding VAT. The equivalent of approximately 4 full time staff are supporting the study in my Department.

The final report will be delivered in Spring 2016.

**Paul Flynn:** [\[13012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what response she has made to the proposal put forward on 21 October 2015 for a partnership between Westinghouse and the Government to develop small modular nuclear reactors.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

Receipt of the proposal was acknowledged by officials and it will be considered as part of Government's wider work on SMRs, which includes evidence building through the techno-economic assessment and engagement with SMR vendors where appropriate.

## ■ Renewable Energy

Callum McCaig:

[\[12941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, if her Department will take steps to investigate how the administrative governance of installation of renewable energy systems could be simplified.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

The development of a renewable energy installation has, by its nature, a degree of complexity. This can cover topics as diverse as the securing of planning permission, the granting of electricity generation licences, access to grid and administration of renewable energy financial incentives. Responsibility for these resides with a number of different regulatory authorities each of which have already put in place detailed guidance for applicants.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Feed-in Tariffs

Peter Kyle:

[\[13075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, when her Department plans to publish its response to its consultation on feed-in tariffs.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

*[Holding answer 27 October 2015]:* DECC is aiming to publish its response to this consultation later this year.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Heating

Callum McCaig:

[\[12931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of mandatory regulation to stimulate volumes of installations of heat pumps.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

DECC keeps under review all policies which might be needed to meet future carbon budgets in line with the requirements of the Climate Change Act, in its consideration of the advice from the Committee on Climate Change.

Reducing carbon emissions will require improved energy efficiency measures and changes to heating systems in buildings. The Government is committed to considering both together through a stable long-term framework which explores the potential role of regulation.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ **Bovine Tuberculosis**

**Jim Fitzpatrick:** [\[12971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how frequently cattle in each region are tested for bovine TB.

**George Eustice:**

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

■ **Inland Waterways: Repairs and Maintenance**

**Andrew Stephenson:** [\[13056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding her Department has made available for the maintenance of waterways in (a) Pendle, (b) the North West and (c) England in 2015-16.

**Rory Stewart:**

The Government provides grant-in-aid funding to the two largest navigation authorities in England and Wales: the Canal & River Trust (CRT) and the Environment Agency.

Under the terms of the grant agreement, for 2015-16, the CRT will receive a total of £49.546m for the navigations it owns in England and Wales. The distribution of maintenance funding across CRT's waterways is a matter for CRT.

The Environment Agency does not own or manage any navigations in Pendle or the North West.

■ **Northumberland National Park**

**Mr Nicholas Brown:** [\[12526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what commercial freedoms she proposes to offer to Northumberland National Park.

**Rory Stewart:**

National Park Authorities are engaging with devolution proposals and we believe that with their current powers, National Park Authorities are already well equipped to be a vital part of devolution deals across the country. The North East Combined Authority has set out proposals for a devolution deal designed to drive economic growth and bring jobs and investment to the North East. As part of considering this, we will be discussing with the National Park Authority what we could do for them that might help them in terms of commercial freedoms.

**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE****■ Cleaning Services: Living Wage****Hilary Benn:**[\[12947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will place in the Library a copy of any letters or emails (a) sent to Interserve by his Department and (b) received by his Department from Interserve relating to a letter sent by cleaners working in his Department's premises to him regarding the living wage dated 21 July 2015.

**Mr Philip Hammond:***[Holding answer 27 October 2015]:*

OFFICIALS ARE CURRENTLY COMPILING AND REVIEWING CORRESPONDENCE IN RELATION TO THE CLEANERS' LETTER TO ME OF 21 JULY 2015 IN RESPONSE TO A FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUEST. COPIES OF ALL INFORMATION RELEASED UNDER THE FOI REQUEST WILL BE PLACED IN THE LIBRARY AS SOON AS INVESTIGATIONS ARE COMPLETE.

**Hilary Benn:**[\[12948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what meetings he has had with cleaners working in his Department's premises to discuss payment of the living wage.

**Mr Philip Hammond:***[Holding answer 27 October 2015]:* There have been no meetings between Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers and the cleaners.**■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Contracts for Services****Hilary Benn:**[\[12951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has taken steps to ensure that contractors used by his Department do not instigate investigatory proceedings against staff for writing directly to him about their employment conditions or pay.

**Mr Philip Hammond:***[Holding answer 27 October 2015]:*

FOLLOWING THE ALLEGATIONS FROM CITIZENS UK ON 13 OCTOBER 2015, OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION TAKEN AGAINST THE CLEANERS, FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE OFFICIALS ASKED INTERSERVE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION. INTERSERVE REPLIED ON 15 OCTOBER TO SAY THEY HAD COMMENCED AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE LETTER OF 21 JULY AS IT POTENTIALLY REPRESENTED A BREACH OF THE SIGNED CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT THEY HAVE WITH THEIR STAFF. THEY HAVE SINCE CONFIRMED THAT NO DISCIPLINARY ACTION HAS BEEN OR WILL BE TAKEN.

## ■ Human Rights

**Fiona Bruce:** [\[12641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what proportion of his Department's (a) budget and (b) personnel is allocated to promoting human rights, rule of law and democracy in other countries.

**Mr David Lidington:**

As the Government set out in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) 2014 Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report, it is difficult to calculate an exact figure for what we spend annually on human rights and democracy work. This is because it is an integral part of the department's work across the network.

However, by combining relevant programme spend, grant-in-aid spending, and estimated personnel costs, we were able to calculate a conservative figure of approximately £42.6 million for the financial year 2014-15.

In terms of personnel, we also set out in the report that approximately 240 full-time equivalents in the FCO work on human rights.

## ■ India: Offences against Children

**Jim Shannon:** [\[12576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with Indian authorities on the abuse of young girls in rural areas.

**Mr Hugo Swire:**

We have been following recent reports of violence against women and girls in India and share the honourable gentleman's concerns. The United Kingdom discusses a range of human rights matters with India, including women's rights, both bilaterally and through the EU. We are committed to tackling violence against women and girls round the world, including in India.

Through the Department for International Development, we are currently helping to implement India's Domestic Violence Act and supporting initiatives to reduce violence against women, both in homes and in public spaces. Our High Commission also works closely with Indian civil society and non-governmental organisations, including through providing advice to lawyers and grassroots organisations who are directly supporting survivors of sexual violence, through the Indian criminal justice system.

Although this is ultimately a matter for India's police and courts, we are working productively with the Indian government and international partners on this important issue.



## ■ Israel: Palestinians

**Guto Bebb:** [\[12633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what reports he has received on the involvement of Palestinian terror groups in the recent violence in Israel and the West Bank.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

While it appears that the majority of the attacks seen in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in recent weeks have been carried out by individuals, without direct organisation from political or terrorist groups, we have seen media reports of Palestinian terrorist groups claiming responsibility for some recent attacks, praising attacks, and appearing to incite further violence. We condemn all the terrorist attacks, as I made clear in the House on 20 October, and in my statement on 13 October.

## ■ Ministers: Codes of Practice

**Andy Slaughter:** [\[13252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his ministerial colleagues in the Cabinet Office on the removal from the Ministerial Code of a reference to Ministers having a duty to comply with the law including international law and treaty obligations and to uphold the administration of justice.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

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

## ■ Rebecca Prosser

**Ms Harriet Harman:** [\[12659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when and with whom he last raised the issue of the detention of British journalist Rebecca Prosser by the Indonesian authorities.

**Ms Harriet Harman:** [\[12663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he or ministers in his Department will next meet their Indonesian counterparts; and if he will ensure that the detention of Rebecca Prosser in Indonesia will be raised at such meetings.

**Ms Harriet Harman:** [\[12664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made representations to his Indonesian counterpart regarding the detention of Rebecca Prosser.

**Mr Hugo Swire:**

In consultation with Ms Prosser's legal team and advisors, the case has been raised at senior level on ten separate occasions. I personally raised it with the Indonesian Foreign Minister in September at the UN General Assembly and it was last raised on 9 October by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Director General Economic & Consular with the Indonesian Director General of Protocol and Consular Affairs. We plan to raise the

case again on 29 October during a meeting in London with the representatives of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**Ms Harriet Harman:** [\[12660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when his Department last had contact with Rebecca Prosser or her family; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Harriet Harman:** [\[12661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on which occasions British consular officials in Indonesia have visited Rebecca Prosser since her detention on 28 May 2015; how long each such visit lasted; and when the next such visit will take place.

**Ms Harriet Harman:** [\[12662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which officials in his Department have visited Rebecca Prosser during her detention in Indonesia; and when and for how long each such visit was.

**Mr Hugo Swire:**

Members of the consular team in Jakarta have visited Rebecca Prosser twice. The first visit took place on 2 June, shortly after her arrest, and lasted 30 minutes. The second, which lasted over two hours, took place on 10 September when she was moved from house arrest into a detention facility. Normal practice is to visit detainees in Indonesia every three months.

Consular staff are in regular contact with Ms Prosser's employer's representatives, her legal team and her family. Since court proceedings began, we have provided a weekly written update to Ms Prosser, her family and their MPs. Our most recent contact with Ms Prosser's family was on 21 October.

**Mrs Caroline Spelman:** [\[12811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last raised the detention in Indonesia of Rebecca Prosser; and with whom he raised that issue.

**Mr Hugo Swire:**

In consultation with Ms Prosser's legal team and advisors, the case has been raised at senior level on ten separate occasions. I personally raised it with the Indonesian Foreign Minister in September at the UN General Assembly and it was last raised on 9 October by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Director General Economic & Consular with the Indonesian Director General of Protocol and Consular Affairs. We plan to raise the case again on 29 October during a meeting in London with the representatives of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## ■ Sombath Somphone

**Angus Brendan MacNeil:** [\[12609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent reports he has received on the whereabouts of Sombath Somphone who disappeared in Laos in

December 2012; and what representations his Department has made to the Laos government on Mr Somphone.

**Mr Hugo Swire:**

We remain very concerned as to the whereabouts of Mr Sombath Somphone. We regularly raise his disappearance with the Lao government. Laos underwent its second UN Universal Periodic Review under the auspices of the UN Human Rights Council, earlier this year. The United Kingdom's recommendation calling on the Lao government to conduct a thorough, transparent and impartial investigation into Mr Somphone's disappearance was formally accepted by the Lao government. On 11 September, 1000 days since Mr Somphone's disappearance, I wrote to the Lao Ambassador to the United Kingdom, to urge the Lao government to rapidly proceed with conducting an investigation. Next month, at the EU-Laos Human Rights Dialogue in Vientiane, the United Kingdom, along with our EU partners, will highlight the lack of progress in the investigation into Mr Somphone's disappearance.

■ **Syria: Humanitarian Aid**

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[12779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage other nations to make a greater contribution to humanitarian aid for people affected by the situation in Syria.

**Mr Philip Hammond:**

*[Holding answer 26 October 2015]:*

THE UK HAS PLEDGED OVER £1.1 BILLION AID IN RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS IN SYRIA AND THE REGION, MAKING US THE SECOND BIGGEST BILATERAL DONOR. THE UK CONTINUES TO PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN ENCOURAGING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO MAKE GENEROUS PLEDGES IN RESPONSE TO THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS. WE LOBBIED HARD TO MOBILISE FUNDING FROM OTHER DONORS AHEAD OF THE THIRD KUWAIT PLEDGING CONFERENCE ON 31 MARCH 2015 WHICH RAISED \$3.8 BILLION. THE UK IS COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH THE UN AND OTHER MAJOR DONORS TO ENSURE THAT THE MOMENTUM ON FUND-RAISING IS MAINTAINED OVER THE LONGER TERM, INCLUDING TO RESPOND TO THE 2016 APPEALS, ONCE THESE HAVE BEEN ISSUED.

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■ **Ukraine: Armed Conflict**

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[12946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Minsk Agreement in reducing fighting in Ukraine.

**Mr Philip Hammond:**

*[Holding answer 27 October 2015]:* A renewed attempt in early September by the Minsk signatories to ensure a comprehensive ceasefire has resulted in a considerable reduction in fighting along the line of contact in Eastern Ukraine, compared with the levels in previous months. Since September, casualties have mainly resulted from land

mines and unexploded ordnance rather than direct shelling, which has practically ceased.

#### ■ Ukraine: Aviation

**Jim Shannon:** [\[12575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Russian counterpart on the funding of the Dutch investigation into the downing of flight MH17.

**Mr David Lidington:**

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond) has not discussed funding of the Dutch investigation into the downing of flight MH17 with his Russian counterpart. Funding for the technical investigation is the responsibility of the Dutch Safety Board, and for the criminal investigation this is the competence of the Joint Investigation Team.

#### ■ Zimbabwe: Politics and Government

**Hilary Benn:** [\[12945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his most recent assessment is of the political situation in Zimbabwe.

**Mr Philip Hammond:**

*[Holding answer 27 October 2015]:*

SINCE THE 2013 ELECTIONS, OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE REMAINS BROADLY THE SAME, WITH 2015 SIGNALLING SOME POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS. WITHIN THE ZIMBABWE AFRICAN NATIONAL UNION ADMINISTRATION THERE ARE SIGNS OF REFORMIST POLICIES BEGINNING TO EMERGE, ESPECIALLY ON THE ECONOMY. THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION HAS REMAINED RELATIVELY STABLE AND REPORTED VIOLATIONS CONTINUE TO FALL. HOWEVER, THE SITUATION CONTINUES TO BE FRAGILE AND WE REMAIN CONCERNED ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, ESPECIALLY DURING ELECTION PERIODS. AHEAD OF THE 2018 ELECTIONS, IT IS CRITICAL THAT ELECTORAL REFORMS ARE IMPLEMENTED, AND THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SUPPORTS THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE IN EXERCISING THEIR DEMOCRATIC RIGHT TO BUILD A FREE, PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE.

## HEALTH

#### ■ Action on Smoking and Health

**Philip Davies:** [\[12657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2015 to Question 10530, what the job titles are of those officials undertaking the assessment of the grant funding for Action on Smoking and Health; and what transparency measures have been built into the assessment process.

**Jane Ellison:**

The assessment of the grant application for funding from Action on Smoking and Health is undertaken by members of the Tobacco Control policy team.

The assessment process is the same for all grants awarded under Section 64 powers. The assessment process uses standard business case criteria and consists of a Strategic Case, Economic Case, Financial Case, Commercial Case and Project Governance.

The assessment is reviewed by the Department's Voluntary Sector Grants Hub to ensure that the grant proposal is affordable within Departmental budgets; relevant Efficiency Review Group Controls have been considered; the grant has been assessed as delivering value for money and the grant is considered to be appropriate for the Grant funding route rather than procurement.

A grant application is currently under assessment and a decision on funding has not yet been made.

**■ Autism: Lancashire****Cat Smith:**[\[12595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps (a) his Department and (b) NHS England are taking to ensure that autism diagnosis waiting times for (i) children and (ii) adults meet National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance in (A) Lancaster and (B) Fleetwood.

**Alistair Burt:**

The Department has discussed with NHS England the difficulties that people on the autistic spectrum can have in getting an appropriate diagnosis in a timely manner. With support from the Department, NHS England and the Association of Directors of Social Services will undertake a series of visits to clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) where there is good practice in meeting the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Quality Standard 51 Autism, and to those that do not, with the aim of supporting more consistent provision. These NICE guidelines already recommend that there should be a maximum of three months between a referral and a first appointment for a diagnostic assessment for autism. We expect the National Health Service to be working towards meeting the recommendations.

In Lancashire North CCG which covers Lancaster the average wait for adults for an assessment is 12 weeks which is in line with the NICE guidelines. While there are 34 children waiting for a specialist multi-agency autism assessment, additional funding has been allocated and a recovery plan is in place to clear this backlog. The CCG is also in discussions with their providers to agree how the multi-agency assessment process for children and young people can be improved. In Fylde and Wyre CCG the average waits for adults and children is in line with the NICE guidelines.

**■ Blood: Contamination**

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[12648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 23 July 2015 to Question 7788, whom his Department has consulted on the matter of compensation packages for people affected by NHS contaminated blood.

**Jane Ellison:**

The Department is considering wider reform of the ex-gratia financial assistance and other support for those affected with HIV and/or hepatitis C by infected NHS-supplied blood or blood products. We are doing this within the context of the spending review and in a way that is sustainable for the future.

In order to help develop the shape and structure of any new scheme, we plan to consult publicly on scheme reform soon. The Department has already engaged with representative groups of infected/affected individuals. These individuals were nominated from the Contaminated Blood Campaign, Tainted Blood and The Haemophilia Society. The event was held in a neutral venue and had an independent facilitator. A report from this one off event will be made public soon. Discussions are ongoing with other interested parties.

While we are working to establish a full and fair resolution, liability has not been established in the majority of cases, so it would not be appropriate to talk about payments in terms of compensation, particularly on the scale that some may envisage.

**■ Cancer: Diagnosis**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[12592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent steps he has taken to ensure that people diagnosed with cancer are (a) diagnosed early and (b) treated immediately.

**Jane Ellison:**

The Independent Cancer Taskforce's report recognised the importance of early, and faster, diagnosis to improve both patient outcomes and experience. The Taskforce particularly recommended the implementation of a new cancer waiting times standard that, by 2020, everyone referred with a suspicion of cancer would receive either a definitive diagnosis or the all-clear within four weeks. We have committed to implementing this, and NHS England is working with partners across the health system to consider how best to take this forward.

NHS England has launched a major early diagnosis programme, Accelerate, Co-ordinate, Evaluate (ACE), working jointly with Cancer Research UK and Macmillan Cancer Support to test new innovative approaches to identifying cancer more quickly. Outputs from the

first wave of test sites, which commenced in April 2015, will be delivered on a phased basis, with the majority falling between September 2015 and December 2016. A number of the Proactive Lung cluster projects are running for 2-3 years but is hoped that there will be sufficient data after one year to enable evaluation. It is expected that ACE Wave 1 evaluation will be complete by mid-2017.

We welcome the very positive reaction we saw earlier this year to the publication of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence updated referral guidelines for suspected cancer. The new guideline focuses on key symptoms rather than which cancer a patient might have, to help make it easier to use and more applicable to the day-to-day experience of general practitioners and their patients.

## ■ Carers

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[13247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings of the report, *A Charge on Caring?*, published by the Carers Trust in September 2015, on the level of compliance by councils with their duty under the Care Act 2014 to prevent carers developing a need for support.

**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.

The Care Act guidance is clear about policy on charging carers. The Care Act statutory guidance, 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 (currently only 5%) 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.

The Care Act and guidance are clear about the provision of preventative services. Under the Care Act, local authorities have a responsibility to support carers in a number of

ways. This includes duties on local authorities to provide information and advice and universal preventative services for carers.

We continue to support implementation of the Care Act 2014.

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.

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

#### ■ Clinical Commissioning Groups: Statistics

**Cat Smith:** [\[12594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects the publication of the new Clinical Commissioning Group Outcomes Indicator Set (2016/2017) indicators.

**George Freeman:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and the Health and Social Care Information Centre make recommendations to NHS England for new indicators for the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Outcomes Indicator set. This process includes a public consultation on potential new indicators. Any new indicators that are selected would be published in the 2016/17 CCG Outcomes Indicator Set during 2016, in time for commissioners to begin using them in 2016/17.

#### ■ Department of Health: Public Expenditure

**Justin Madders:** [\[13249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make it his policy to maintain ringfencing for total NHS funding in the Autumn Statement.

**Alistair Burt:**

The Government has protected the funding the National Health Service receives and increased the Department's budget in real terms year on year. There is no plan to change this, fulfilling the Government's manifesto commitment. By 2020-21, the



Government will increase funding for the NHS by £10 billion a year in real terms compared to 2014-15 to support the implementation of the NHS's own plan - the NHS Five Year Forward View - to transform services across the country.

## ■ Diseases: Diagnosis

**Dan Jarvis:**

[12566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what change there has been in the rate of undiagnosed diseases in the last five years; and if his Department will continue to fund at the present rate research into undiagnosed diseases.

**George Freeman:**

Data on the numbers of undiagnosed diseases is not held centrally. The Department is committed to improving the diagnosis of rare diseases through the UK Strategy for Rare Diseases. This includes commitments to reduce times for diagnosis and to establish appropriate diagnostic pathways which are accessible to and understood by, healthcare professionals and patients.

The Department has commissioned research into the diagnostic odyssey for rare diseases to improve the measurement of rates of diagnosis. The Policy and Innovation Research Unit published the report Diagnostic Odyssey for Rare Diseases, Exploration of Potential Indicators in April 2015 ( [www.piru.ac.uk](http://www.piru.ac.uk) ).

The Government is making substantial investment in infrastructure for research into rare diseases through the National Institute for Health Research. A total of over £800 million has been invested in Biomedical Research Centres and Units and a further £100 million in funding to support Clinical Research Facilities for experimental medicine. The Prime Minister's 100,000 Genomes project is also focussing on rare diseases and has already led to a diagnosis for some patients who were unable to find a diagnosis through existing NHS tests.

## ■ Eating Disorders

**Luciana Berger:**

[13215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what training GPs receive on eating disorders.

**Ben Gummer:**

It is the responsibility of the General Medical Council (GMC) to set the standards and outcomes for education and training and approve training curricula to ensure newly qualified doctors are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to provide high quality patient care. This includes training on treating patients with eating disorders as required.

Health Education England will work with bodies that set curricula such as the GMC and the royal colleges to seek to ensure training meets the needs of patients.

## ■ Eating Disorders: Health Services

**Luciana Berger:** [\[13212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much of the funding distributed by NHS England to improve eating disorder services has been spent; and what that funding has been spent on.

**Alistair Burt:**

For 2015/16, NHS England has distributed £30 million to clinical commissioning groups in order to improve services for children and young people with eating disorders. The funding will be used to reduce waiting times and to improve the way in which services are delivered for people with eating disorders. A specific aim is to move towards providing specialist care on an out-patient basis so that fewer young people will need admission to hospital. The expectation is this will improve outcomes and allow more young people to receive treatment closer to home.

Clinical commissioning groups have led the development of Local Transformation Plans for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing that include plans for how the eating disorder allocation will be spent. The deadline for submission was Friday 16 October and the plans are being assured by NHS England's regional assurance teams. Expenditure will be monitored against the plans over the remainder of the financial year.

## ■ Haematological Cancer

**Julian Sturdy:** [\[12658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will take further steps to support Anthony Nolan's Destination Cure campaign.

**Jane Ellison:**

Since 2011, the Department of Health has provided our delivery partners, NHS Blood and Transplant and Anthony Nolan, a total of £16 million in additional, new funding to improve stem cell transplantation services in the United Kingdom. A further £3 million investment was announced in March 2015.

The Government remains committed to improving stem cell transplantation services and doing all we can to help those in need of a transplant to find a suitable donor. The report 'Destination Cure – arriving at a better future' from Anthony Nolan provides a timely contribution to this work.

## ■ Health Services

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[12642]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what his Department has spent on (a) mental and (b) physical health (i) in total and (ii) as a proportion of the total departmental budget in each financial year since 2010.

**Alistair Burt:**

The table below shows figures for secondary healthcare spend on mental illness which have been taken from the published NHS (England) Summarised Account (2009-10 to 2010-11) and the Department of Health Annual Report and Accounts (2011-12 and 2012-13). Mental illness healthcare is also commissioned in primary care environments. However, it is not possible to separately identify the amount of primary care expenditure on mental illness from the statutory accounting data collected by the Department.

Total revenue expenditure has been used as a proxy for 'budget' in order to calculate the proportion of spend on mental health.

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

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-10-20/12642>

## ■ Health: Children

**Dr Sarah Wollaston:**

[12516]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how he plans for the Public Health Outcomes Framework to continue to give a comprehensive picture of children's school readiness, when the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile becomes non-compulsory in September 2016; and if he will make a statement.

**Jane Ellison:**

The consultation on updating the Public Health Outcomes Framework was published on 3 September and closed on 2 October. We are considering the responses and intend to publish our proposals early next year.

## ■ Hearing Aids

**Jim Fitzpatrick:**

[12559]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the recommendations contained in the report from the Ear Foundation entitled Bending the Spend, published in October 2015; and if he will make a statement.

**Alistair Burt:**

The Department in conjunction with NHS England jointly published the Action Plan on Hearing Loss in March 2015. The Action Plan sets out the case for action to tackle the rising prevalence and personal, social and economic costs of uncorrected hearing loss and the variation in access and quality of service.

The areas highlighted within the Bending the Spend report concur with and further strengthen those in the Action Plan. This includes the need to assess strategies for the earlier identification and management of hearing loss and the development of commissioning guidance to underpin the Action Plan, which NHS England will co-produce with stakeholders such as the Ear Foundation.

A Cross System Oversight Group had its first meeting on 14 October 2015. This will not only review and monitor progress of the implementation of the Action Plan, but will also provide a forum for government departments, arm's length bodies and stakeholders within the hearing loss community to engage with each other to ensure connections are made and maintained across the system.

Membership of this group includes the Hearing Loss and Deafness Alliance of which the Ear Foundation is a member.

**■ Heart Diseases: Children**

**Mr Nicholas Brown:** [\[12523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what progress he has made in establishing a smaller number of specialist children's heart units, as recommended by the Safe and sustainable review of children's congenital heart services, published by the NHS in February 2011.

**Jane Ellison:**

On 12 June 2013 my Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced in Parliament that the Safe and Sustainable review's proposals for children's congenital heart services could not go ahead in their current form. In July 2013, after discussions with key stakeholders, NHS England established a new congenital heart disease review, encompassing services for adults as well as children.

The new review has now been completed and the board of NHS England has agreed its proposals. NHS England is now working on implementation of the proposals and commissioning services against the new requirements. This is being done in collaboration with provider trusts.

**■ Incontinence**

**Glyn Davies:** [\[12564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people with (a) urinary incontinence and (b) faecal incontinence in England.

**Glyn Davies:** [\[12565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to improve the quality of care provided for people with incontinence in the UK.

**Glyn Davies:** [\[12610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what progress his Department has made on raising awareness and promoting understanding of incontinence amongst (a) health and social care staff and (b) the general public; and if he will make a statement.

**Glyn Davies:** [\[12611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people living with (a) urinary incontinence and (b) faecal incontinence in (i) Northern Ireland, (ii) Scotland and (iii) Wales.

**Jane Ellison:**

NHS England has advised that according to a survey conducted in 2008, there are over 14 million adults who have bladder control problems and 6.5 million with bowel control problems in the United Kingdom.

The Department does not collect information on the number of people living with urinary and faecal incontinence specific to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This is a matter for devolved administrations.

The Healthcare Quality and Improvement Partnership (2010) established that in order to achieve the best clinical outcomes, continence services have to be integrated across primary and secondary care and care home settings.

They also concluded that 'there is an urgent need for improved and equitable practice for all people with bladder and bowel problems' through the development of commissioning frameworks, evidence-based training for health professionals and patient empowerment to increase their expectations of cure.

Improving continence care provision through integrated services brings many benefits including:

- a better quality of life and more independence through finding solutions appropriate to individual needs;
- less reliance on pads and products by using alternative treatments;
- a reduction in admissions to hospitals and care homes;
- fewer complications, such as urinary tract infections, faecal impaction and skin breakdown; and
- a reduction in costs.

NHS England's Excellence in Continence Care guidance provides a framework that enables commissioners to work in collaboration with providers and others to make a step change to address shortfalls so that safe, dignified, efficient and effective continence care is consistently provided.

This guidance is aimed at commissioners, providers, health and social care staff and as information for the public and has been produced in partnership with patient and public advocates, clinicians and partners from the third sector. The roles of everyone involved in the care of people with continence needs are made clear in the guidance and publication via a launch is planned for 'Self Care Week' beginning 16 November. The launch will both raise awareness and promote understanding.

In addition the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has produced a range of guidance for clinicians to support them in the diagnosis, treatment care and support and people with continence problems e.g. *Urinary incontinence in women* (September 2013), *Faecal incontinence in adults* (June 2007), *Urinary incontinence in neurological disease: assessment and management* (August 2012) and *Lower urinary tract symptoms in men: management* (May 2010).

## ■ Mental Health Services

**Luciana Berger:** [\[13214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many training places in the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies service there were in each of the last five years.

**Luciana Berger:** [\[13216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Training service places were commissioned in 2014-15.

**Alistair Burt:**

There were 756 training places commissioned for improving access to psychological therapies (IAPT) programmes in 2014/15. In addition 509 trainees attended Child and Young People's (CYP) IAPT courses in 2014/15.

The following table contains an aggregate of the number of training places that have been commissioned in each of the last four financial years for the IAPT programmes. Comparable information relating to the IAPT programmes is not held centrally for the 2011/12 financial year.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	
IAPT training places commissioned		634	859	756	946

*Source:* multi professional education and training budget monitoring returns

The following table details the number of trainees attending CYP IAPT courses per year of the programme in the last five years.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Trainee Therapist	97	142	252	372	537

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Supervisor	30	45	88	86	113
Service Lead	35	48	73	51	114
TOTAL	162	235	413	509	764

Source: NHS England

## ■ NHS England

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[12514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will place in the Library an explanation of the organisational structure, including current post-holders, of the senior management of NHS England.

**George Freeman:**

An organogram and explanation of the roles of the chief executive and the seven national directors of NHS England is attached.

### Attachments:

1. NHS England Structure Chart- National Directors [NHS England National Directors - Structure Chart.pdf]

## ■ NHS Trusts: Performance Standards

**Justin Madders:**

[\[13250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what new performance target for Trusts and Foundation Trusts has been introduced since May 2010; and which new performance targets he plans to introduce for those bodies over the next five years.

**Jane Ellison:**

A number of operational standards related to access and waiting times have been introduced or amended since May 2010. All the changes were based on recommendations from clinical experts.

As part of our response to the Independent Cancer Taskforce's report, we have announced our commitment that – by 2020 – 95% of National Health Service patients will be given a definitive cancer diagnosis or the all clear within 28 days of being referred by a general practitioner. This will be underpinned by investment - expected to be £300 million more in diagnostics a year by 2020.

We are also introducing the first waiting times standards specifically for mental health so that, from April 2016:

- 75% of people will be referred to the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme within six weeks, with 95% of people being referred within 18 weeks; and
- 50% of people experiencing a first episode of psychosis will be treated within two weeks.

## ■ NHS: Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

**Mr Nicholas Brown:** [\[12655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that public services provided by the NHS are not affected by legal challenge by commercial markets entrants as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations.

**Ben Gummer:**

The United Kingdom has trade deals with over 160 countries across the world and we have protected the National Health Service and public services in all of these trade agreements. We will continue to do so in the European Union-United States free trade deal (TTIP). This is non-negotiable.

This means that the government of the day, not trade agreements, will always set the rules governing how the NHS is run.

There will be nothing in the EU-US free trade deal Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions that would stop a future Government from changing the legal framework for the provision of NHS services or terminating the private provision of such a service in accordance with the law or contracts entered into as is the case today. It would be entirely possible for the UK, or any EU country, to change the delivery model for publicly funded health services in the future.

## ■ Palliative Care

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[12729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department plans to improve out-of-hour services for palliative care.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[12730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department plans to take to improve the quality of palliative care.

**Ben Gummer:**

This Government is committed to improving the quality of palliative care. Earlier this year, the Review of Choice in End of Life Care made a number of recommendations on how to enable greater choice and improve quality in palliative and end of life care nationally, including on the provision of out-of-hour palliative care services.



We agree with the vision set out by the Review and are working with NHS England and others to see how this can best be achieved. We intend to respond to the Review recommendations in due course.

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[12920]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of funding available to NHS palliative care in (a) England, (b) the North East and (c) Sunderland in (i) 2014 and (ii) 2015.

**Ben Gummer:**

The information is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is shown in the following table.

Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Expenditure on End of Life Care, 2013/14 (£ million)

ALL CCGS IN ENGLAND	472.75
North East CCGs	24.35
NHS Sunderland CCG	2.52

*Source:* Programme Budgeting Collection, NHS England

*Notes:*

1. CCG expenditure on end of life care was collected for the first time on an experimental basis as part of the 2013/14 Programme Budgeting Collection. The data is published in the Programme Budgeting benchmarking tool on the NHS England website. Data for 2014/15 is currently being collected and is not yet available.
2. "End of life care" expenditure in this data collection refers to expenditure on specialist palliative care and hospice care.
3. "North East CCGs" includes the following CCGs: NHS Darlington CCG, NHS Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield CCG, NHS Gateshead CCG, NHS Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees CCG, NHS Newcastle North and East CCG, NHS Newcastle West CCG, NHS North Durham CCG, NHS North Tyneside CCG, NHS Northumberland CCG, NHS South Tees CCG, NHS South Tyneside CCG, and NHS Sunderland CCG.
4. Data quality: The Programme Budgeting Collection currently contains experimental data. The quality of the data included in the Programme budgeting collection varies by CCG and certain CCGs' data quality issues may have an impact on the ability to benchmark expenditure with other CCGs. Full details of data quality for each CCG are available on the NHS England website at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/resources/resources-for-ccgs/prog-budgeting/>

**■ Parkinson's Disease: Drugs**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[12593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with the Royal Colleges on the use of cancer drugs to slow down Parkinson's disease.

**Jane Ellison:**

My Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State meets regularly with the Royal Colleges, however he has not specifically discussed this matter. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence is currently updating its guidance on Parkinson's disease to take into account the latest evidence.

**■ Pregnant Women: Alcoholic Drinks**

**Bill Esterson:** [\[13138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will commission a study of the prevalence of births of children damaged as a result of alcohol consumed by their mothers during pregnancy.

**Jane Ellison:**

We recognise the fact that too many women may be unaware of the health risks and possible harmful fetal effects associated with drinking during pregnancy. The Chief Medical Officer's review of the alcohol guidelines will include consideration to the current Government's advice on drinking during pregnancy.

Whilst we have no current plans to commission a study of the prevalence of births of children damaged as a result of alcohol consumed by their mothers during pregnancy the World Health Organization is starting a global prevalence study on fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, recognising that this information is lacking in many countries. There are a number of challenges on the feasibility of estimating prevalence, which should be addressed in this study. We welcome this study and will consider participating.

**Bill Esterson:** [\[13139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of adults with brain damage caused by alcohol consumed by their mothers during pregnancy; and what assessment he has made of the level of awareness of health and other care professionals of the disability, and the consequences of that disability, which result from that activity.

**Jane Ellison:**

This information is not held centrally.

Health Education England (HEE) works with the General Medical Council, the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the Royal Colleges to seek to ensure training of health and care professionals meets the needs of the public.

HEE has established a Patient Advisory Forum which provides advice to the HEE Board and other advisory groups to ensure that the needs of the patient are at the heart of the education, training and workforce planning process.

## ■ Prescriptions

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[12517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has made an assessment of the desirability of including ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease on the long-term prescription list.

**George Freeman:**

We have not made an assessment of the desirability of including ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease on the list of medical exemptions which provide exemption from prescription charges.

Other exemption arrangements are in place, in England, based on age and income, to support those who cannot afford to pay for their prescriptions. Additionally, for those who need multiple prescriptions and do not qualify for exemption, Prescription Prepayment Certificates (PPC) can be purchased, which allow someone to claim as many prescriptions as needed. A 12 month PPC costs £104 and benefits anyone who needs 13 or more prescriptions a year.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Abortion

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[12603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent (a) meetings and (b) correspondence she has had on the setting up of buffer zones around abortion clinics; and if she will make a statement.

**Mike Penning:**

I refer the Hon Member to the answers I gave to 5385 and 7247 on 13 July and 22 July 2015. We have also received correspondence from Members of Parliament on behalf of their constituents on this issue. The Home Office has not issued guidance to the police on this matter.

### ■ Asylum: Syria

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[12505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the Government will prioritise Christian, Shia Muslim and Yazidi refugees, who have been targeted by ISIL, when considering asylum cases.

**James Brokenshire:**

All asylum and human rights claims are carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with the UK's obligations under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the European Convention on Human Rights.

■ **Britain First**

**Greg Mulholland:** [\[11628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the threat level of the group Britain First.

**Karen Bradley:**

The Police's National Domestic Extremism and Disorder Intelligence Unit (NDEDIU) has a role in monitoring and gathering intelligence on groups where they pose a criminal threat from domestic extremism or public disorder. If any illegal activities are taking place, the police will take the necessary action. The Government's Countering Extremism Strategy focuses on all forms of extremism, not least the hate inspired and racially motivated nature of far right and Neo-Nazi extremists.

As yet, no specific assessment of the threat from Britain First has been carried out.

■ **Overseas Students: Further Education**

**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[12647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many further education colleges used the Confirmations of Acceptance for Studies allocation system in the (a) 2008-09 and (b) 2015-16 academic year.

**James Brokenshire:**

In the academic year 2008-2009, no Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies were used by further education colleges, as visa letters were issued by Tier 4 sponsors at that time.

In the academic year 2015-2016, 404 further education colleges have assigned Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies since 1 September 2015.

■ **Passports: Greater London**

**Bill Wiggin:** [\[12807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to increase the number of appointments available for premium passport applications in London.

**James Brokenshire:**

Her Majesty's Passport Office continues to review services to ensure they meet customer expectations and needs. During 2015, the London Passport Office has consistently offered customers a premium service appointment the next day and has always remained within the target of 3 working days.

## ■ Police: Equality

**Tim Farron:**

[\[12085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to encourage diversity in the police service.

**Mike Penning:**

It is vital that the police reflect the communities they serve and the Government is determined to improve BME representation in all 43 forces in England and Wales.

Decisions on when and how to recruit individuals are for the chief officer of a police force. It is important that they use equalities legislation, including positive action provisions, to make better progress in terms of recruitment of under-represented groups.

My Rt Hon. Friend, the Home Secretary announced on 22 October the publication of data showing the gender and ethnicity of police officers by force area. This will make it easier for the public to access the data they need to see how representative their force is compared to the local population. It is clear that the current representation of women and officers from minority ethnic backgrounds in the officer ranks is not good enough and the Home Secretary has challenged forces to do more.

The Government's reforms have already made improvements. For example, we set up the College of Policing, which has embarked on a major programme of work, BME Progression 2018, looking at recruitment, retention and progression of black and minority ethnic officers, including the development of an evidence base of successful approaches used by forces.

As part of this programme the College recently published Positive Action Practical Advice, which advises forces on the use of lawful positive action to support the recruitment, retention and progression of officers from under-represented groups, and it has published case studies from forces showing what can be done.

We have also developed innovative schemes such as Direct Entry and Police Now. These are increasing the number of BME recruits to the police, showing that you can achieve better representation while attracting the best and the brightest into policing.

Of the nine direct entry superintendents who began their superintendent training on November 2014 four (44%) are women and two (22%) are from an ethnic minority background. This is significantly more representative than the current make up of the superintendent rank which is comprised of 17% women and 4% ethnic minority.

Police Now, implemented in the Metropolitan Police, appointed 69 people to start their training, up from an anticipated 50 owing to the high calibre of applicants. Of these, 43% are women and 9% are from a BME background, compared to the national BME proportion of 5.5%.

With the joint leadership of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Commissioner, the Metropolitan Police also introduced its London residency criteria for recruits in August 2014. Recent Metropolitan police figures show that in the three

months from June to August 2015, 26% of new Metropolitan police recruits came from a black or minority background, more than double the 12% recruited in the same quarter of 2014, and the 12% of Metropolitan police officers currently from a black and minority ethnic background.

## ■ Police: Ethnic Groups and Females

**Margaret Ferrier:** [\[12720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to increase the number of (a) women and (b) people from ethnic minorities in the police forces.

### **Mike Penning:**

It is vital that the police reflect the communities they serve and the Government is determined to improve BME representation in all 43 forces in England and Wales.

Decisions on when and how to recruit individuals are for the chief officer of a police force. It is important that they use equalities legislation, including positive action provisions, to make better progress in terms of recruitment of under-represented groups.

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We have worked with the College to develop its Reverse Mentoring programme, which seeks to give police leaders an insight into the direct lived experience of officers from under-represented groups. I am grateful to the five Chief Constables who have signed their force up to the programme. We also worked with the College to produce its Positive Action Practical Advice, which advises forces on the use of lawful positive action to support the recruitment, retention and progression of officers from under-represented groups.

Under this Government innovative schemes such as Direct Entry and Police Now are increasing the number of BME recruits to the police, showing that you can achieve better representation whilst attracting the best and the brightest into policing.

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## ■ Police: Mergers

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[\[12588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on merging police forces in England.

**Mike Penning:**

It is the role of directly elected local Police and Crime Commissioners to propose changes to local policing, not the Home Office. Any request from police forces to voluntarily merge would be considered where it is supported by a robust business case and has local consent.

It is not necessary for police forces to merge in order to become more efficient. Existing legislation places a strong duty on Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners to collaborate in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness. Many are demonstrating that savings can be generated through collaboration without sacrificing local accountability and identity.

## ■ Refugees: Syria

**Cat Smith:**

[\[12320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support the Government is providing to disabled refugees from Syria who are currently in Europe.

**Richard Harrington:**

The UK is prioritising its support and aid efforts where the need is greatest. Only a small percentage of Syrians displaced from Syria are seeking asylum in Europe; the vast majority remain in Syria and neighbouring countries. Those that remain in the immediate region around Syria are more likely to be particularly vulnerable and this is rightly where our focus remains. We are the second largest bilateral donor of humanitarian aid to the Syrian crisis with £1.12 billion already pledged.

With assistance from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees we will identify the most vulnerable Syrian refugees who cannot be effectively supported in the region for resettlement through our Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation scheme with the aim of resettling 20,000 refugees during this Parliament.

The UK is not providing direct resettlement or other support to asylum seekers in other Member States. The UK is already providing practical support to those Member States who are experiencing particularly serious pressures and will provide a further ten personnel to the European Asylum Support Office.

## ■ Religious Hatred: Islam

**Greg Mulholland:** [\[12623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will commission independent research into the causes of Islamophobia.

**Karen Bradley:**

*[Holding answer 23 October 2015]:* A key part of our new Countering Extremism Strategy, published this week, outlines how we will engage with and protect Muslim communities from Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred.

We have access to a wide range of research on Islamophobia from academics, non-government organisations and from the Extremism Analysis Unit.

We have announced a new Cross-Government Hate Crime Action Plan. As part of this we are engaging with partner organisations to establish the plan's priority focus areas including future research requirement.

The Government also recognises the risk of Islamophobia in the UK as well as the increasing number of attacks aimed at the Muslim Community. To address this the PM has announced that from next year all police forces will be required to record Anti-Muslim hate crime as a distinct category when it is reported.

## ■ Visas: Overseas Students

**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[12645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies renewal applications for the 2015-16 academic year took longer than 18 weeks for a final decision to be made by the UK Visa and Immigration Service.

**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[12646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time taken by UK Visa and Immigration Service was to process Confirmations of Acceptance for Studies renewal applications for the 2015-16 academic year.

**James Brokenshire:**

The proportion of Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) renewal applications received between 1 September 2014 and 20 October 2015, where CAS may have been assigned for study during the academic year 2015-2016, which exceeded the service standard of 18 weeks was 60 out of a total of 2259 requests.

The average time to process Confirmations of Acceptance for Studies renewal applications received between 1 September 2014 and 20 October 2015, where CAS may have been assigned for study during the academic year 2015-2016, was 32 days.

## ■ Written Questions: Government Responses

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [\[13040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will Answer Question 11793 of 14 October 2015, on Home Office: staff.



**James Brokenshire:**

The Hon. Member's question was answered on 22 October 2015.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### ■ Defence: Expenditure

**Carol Monaghan:**

[\[901843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether any of her Department's spending will be counted towards the target of spending 2 per cent of gross national income on defence.

**Justine Greening:**

In 2014/15, the Ministry of Defence provided fantastic support to DFID to support humanitarian activities, contributing £32million, and was therefore reimbursed from the ODA budget. This spending will count towards the target to spend 2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defence.

### ■ Developing Countries: Gender

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[12840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking at UN summits to ensure strong commitments are made to eradicating gender inequality.

**Justine Greening:**

Promoting the rights of girls and women is a top priority for my Department, including at UN Summits. The UK was a leading voice in international negotiations on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for a strong stand-alone goal on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, as well as gender-sensitive targets throughout the SDG framework.

My Department and I will continue to make every effort to push for gender equality at other global events, such as the African Union Girl Summit in November 2015 and the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2016.

### ■ International Conference on Financing for Development

**Kirsten Oswald:**

[\[12943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, who represented the Government at the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa; and what steps the Government took to consult with NGOs, churches and other stakeholders on the UK's contribution in advance of that conference.

**Justine Greening:**

As Secretary of State for International Development I led the UK delegation at the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa. In the run up to the conference, the UK Government undertook a programme of consultations on the

FFD agenda with a range of stakeholders, including BOND, the UK membership body for organisations working in international development, whose members include Christian Aid and CAFOD.

#### ■ Kenya: Education

**Chris Heaton-Harris:** [\[901844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the projects her Department funds which help disabled children access education in Kenya.

**Grant Shapps:**

DFID is making important contributions to data availability, educational access and learning outcomes for children with disabilities in Kenya. The DFID-funded national special needs survey has collected comprehensive data on the educational needs of children with disabilities for the first time in Kenya; all new DFID infrastructure provide disabled access; and visually and hearing impaired children will soon be supported with learning materials.

#### ■ Nepal: Economic Situation

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[12847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of the economic recovery in Nepal since the earthquake in April 2015.

**Mr Desmond Swayne:**

The Nepal government estimates that GDP reduced by 1.5% as a result of the earthquake. Economic recovery has been slow and uncertain.

Delays setting up the National Reconstruction Authority and unrest in the border area with India, which has closed most border crossings for over 6 weeks, make economic recovery challenging. We are pressing the government to prioritise the post-disaster response.

The UK is providing up to £35 million for technical assistance to the Government of Nepal to directly mobilise more than £600 million of private investment into growth-boosting sectors, such as export-focused hydropower projects, indirectly generating better-paying jobs for unskilled and low-skilled Nepalese. The UK is also investing in building and maintaining roads to improve access in Nepal.

**Lucy Allan:** [\[901847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the progress of the economic recovery in Nepal since the recent earthquake in that country.

**Mr Desmond Swayne:**

Economic recovery has been slow. Delays setting up the National Reconstruction Authority and unrest in the border area with India, which has closed most border

crossings for over 6 weeks, make economic recovery challenging. We are pressing the government to prioritise the post-disaster response.

#### ■ **Palestinians: Overseas Aid**

**Mr Peter Bone:**

[13203]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department takes to monitor how aid disbursed by the UK to the Palestinian Territories is used.

**Mr Desmond Swayne:**

DFID's Operational Plan for the Occupied Palestinian Territories contains a results framework which is monitored annually to ensure results being delivered are in line with those planned. We assess that UK aid is on track to deliver key results as set out in our Operational Plan.

Each new project is approved on the basis of a value for money assessment. This involves assessing the strength of the evidence provided in each business case for the intervention, and comparing the efficiency and cost effectiveness of different delivery options. All projects are reviewed annually, and at project completion, to monitor the results that have been delivered. All reviews are publicly available on the Development Tracker website: <http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/>.

#### ■ **Refugees**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[12849]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much of her Department's budget is directed at the root causes of migration.

**Justine Greening:**

The root causes of migration are diverse. They include conflict, lack of security and also lack of opportunity or jobs. That's why we provide help and security for refugees affected by the Syria crisis. When we double our work on jobs and growth, it is not only good for the people and countries we are supporting, it is in our national interest too.

#### ■ **Somalia: Politics and Government**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[12848]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of political and economic progress in Somalia.

**Grant Shapps:**

During my recent visit in July, I saw the complex challenges that Somalia faces after more than two decades of conflict. Despite this, real progress is being made in reaching a political settlement, tackling the threat posed by Al Shabaab, and rebuilding the economy and the state. Credible elections next year will be a further important step forward. As one of Somalia's leading international partners, we are doing everything we can to support the completion of the federal map, the electoral process, and the economic development of the country.

## ■ South Sudan

**Stephen Gethins:** [\[12782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of the humanitarian situation in South Sudan.

**Grant Shapps:**

We remain deeply concerned by the dire humanitarian situation in South Sudan. In October 2015, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) assessed that 3.9 million South Sudanese people were severely food insecure in September, an 80% increase compared to last year at the same time and unprecedented in the country. The IPC found 30,000 people in Unity state experiencing catastrophic food insecurity. The risk of famine in the absence of urgent and immediate unrestricted humanitarian access is very real.

The UK is second largest bilateral donor to the humanitarian response in South Sudan £172m has been committed since the start of the crisis in December 2013, along with an additional £88.9m to the regional response for South Sudanese refugees.

The South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan has sought \$1.63 billion to meet the most urgent needs until the end of 2015 and it is so far 55% funded. The low level of funding is concerning. The UK Government continues to urge the international community to respond as we have and follow our lead.

## ■ Sustainable Development

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[12846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to coordinate development and environmental sustainability agendas.

**Grant Shapps:**

The new Global Goals provide a strong new framework for sustainable growth and poverty reduction, explicitly linking the development and environmental sustainability agendas. DFID is integrating environmental sustainability through development policy, research and investment, including investment of Climate Finance via the UK's International Climate Fund (ICF) which has helped 15 million poor and vulnerable people adapt to the effects of climate change and helped 2.6 million people to access to clean energy.

## ■ Syria: Refugees

**John Pugh:** [\[901845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect on her Department's work of re-allocating elements of her Department's budget to help local authorities deal with Syrian refugees.

**Justine Greening:**

There will be no substantive impact on existing DFID programming. It is right that we work with communities in the UK taking refugees as we do elsewhere in the world, but of course, we will stay within ODA rules.

**Alison McGovern:**[\[901850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what progress the Government is making on meeting the UK's international obligations to refugees fleeing Syria.

**Mr Desmond Swayne:**

The UK has been at the forefront of the response to the Syrian crisis. To date, we have committed over £1.1 billion. This makes us the second largest bilateral after the US and means we have done more than any other European country.

**■ United Nations****Stephen Gethins:**[\[12768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what reports she has received on the reasons for delays in the establishment of the UN Verification and Investigation Mechanism.

**Mr Desmond Swayne:**

The UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) is a new mechanism, developed by the UN. It involves setting up an internationally-staffed maritime verification centre which is expected to replace the existing informal Coalition mechanism.

The UN Regional Humanitarian Coordinator has been working with the Government of Yemen and other relevant parties to ensure that UNVIM is established in the most effective way and can fit with the requirements of UNSCR 2216.

**■ Yemen: Humanitarian Aid****Stephen Gethins:**[\[12769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to support access of humanitarian supplies and access by aid workers to Taiz City, Yemen.

**Mr Desmond Swayne:**

Taiz city continues to experience intense fighting, which is making it extremely difficult for aid agencies to deliver humanitarian assistance. Their efforts to access the city and provide relief have been consistently blocked by parties to the conflict over the past month.

The UK continues to call on all parties to facilitate rapid, safe and unhindered access to all people in need in Yemen. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and support UN and NGO partners' efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance to Taiz city.

## JUSTICE

## ■ Courts: Calder Valley

**Craig Whittaker:** [12831]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what risk assessments his Department has conducted on changes to court provision in Calder Valley.

**Mr Shailesh Vara:**

An impact assessment was published alongside the consultation document, which can be found at: <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/proposal-on-the-provision-of-court-and-tribunal-es>.

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

## ■ Courts: Calderdale

**Craig Whittaker:** [12832]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what account was taken of local transport links in Walsden, Portsmouth and Todmorden in the consultation on the Provision of Court and Tribunal Estate for both victims and those on trial.

**Mr Shailesh Vara:**

The consultation proposals included information on approximate travel times for each regional consultation paper.

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

## ■ Courts: Chichester

**Mr Andrew Tyrie:** [12239]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of making Chichester Combined Court Centre compliant with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

**Mr Shailesh Vara:**

All reasonable adjustments have been made at Chichester Combined Court Centre and a temporary measure is in place to meet staff access requirements. The estimated cost of a permanent solution would be £20,000.

## ■ Domestic Violence: Prosecutions

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [12605]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will assess the efficacy of the communication between the criminal courts and the family courts where a prosecution for domestic abuse is happening alongside child contact proceedings.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Ministry of Justice does not collect information centrally on Litigants in Person, or on who is cross examining witnesses in family court cases.

■ **European Convention on Human Rights**

**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[12562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will bring forward plans to suspend UK membership of the European Convention on Human Rights in respect of UK military operations.

**Dominic Raab:**

The Government will legislate for a Bill of Rights to protect our fundamental rights, prevent abuse of the system and restore some common sense to our human rights laws

The Prime Minister has told the House that, "The plans that were set out in our manifesto do not involve us leaving the European Convention on Human Rights, but let us be absolutely clear about our position if we cannot achieve what we need... I rule out absolutely nothing..." The Government will fully consult on our proposals before introducing legislation for a Bill of Rights. We will set out our proposals in due course.

■ **Family Proceedings: Witnesses**

**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[12604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will estimate the number of litigants in person in the family courts who are cross examined by their abuser.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Ministry of Justice does not collect information centrally on Litigants in Person, or on who is cross examining witnesses in family court cases.

■ **Magistrates' Courts: Northamptonshire**

**Tom Pursglove:**[\[8881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the running costs by expenditure item were for (a) Corby, (b) Kettering (c) Wellingborough and (d) Northampton magistrates' Courts.

**Mr Shailesh Vara:**

The running costs for each of these courts are provided below:

**CORBY MAGISTRATES' COURT (2 COURT ROOMS)  
OPERATING COSTS 2014/15**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Value</b>
Rates (Estate)	£11,809
Service Charges (Estate) <b>[1]</b>	-£39,376
Security	£18,235

**CORBY MAGISTRATES' COURT (2 COURT ROOMS)  
OPERATING COSTS 2014/15**


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Building Maintenance	£15,981
Management (Estate)	£8,037
Cleaning	£4,154
Utility - Electricity	£4,085
Printing	£2,250
Grounds Maintenance	£1,379
Telephone	£1,186
Waste Disposal	£243
Utility - Gas	£215
Waste & Refuse Removal	-£30
<b>Total</b>	<b>£28,168</b>

**KETTERING MAGISTRATES' COURT (2 COURT  
ROOMS) OPERATING COSTS 2014/15**


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<b>Name</b>	<b>Value</b>
Rates (Estate)	£18,798
Service Charges (Estate)	£4,148
Security	£33,383
Building Maintenance	£7,979
Management (Estate)	£7,465
Cleaning	£5,315
Grounds Maintenance	£1,690
Telephony	£1,119
Printing	£444
Waste Disposal	£286
Health & Safety - Personal Equipment	£53



**KETTERING MAGISTRATES' COURT (2 COURT ROOMS) OPERATING COSTS 2014/15**

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Stationery & Office Supplies	£49
<b>Total</b>	<b>£80,729</b>

**WELLINGBOROUGH MAGISTRATES' COURT (3 COURT ROOMS) OPERATING COSTS 2014/15**

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Value</b>
Rates (Estate)	£13,962
Service Charges (Estate)	-£9,593
Security	£16,296
Building Maintenance	£14,020
Management (Estate)	£9,423
Cleaning	£6,618
Grounds Maintenance	£1,573
Telephony	£812
Waste Disposal	£718
Equipment Maintenance	£240
Information Communication Technology (ICT) - Other	£216
Printing	£193
Telecomms - Charges/Rental - mobile	£2
<b>Total</b>	<b>£54,480</b>

**NORTHAMPTON MAGISTRATES' COURT (6 COURT ROOMS) OPERATING COSTS 2014/15**

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Value</b>
Service Charges (Estate)	£80,500
Rates (Estate)	£31,812

**NORTHAMPTON MAGISTRATES' COURT (6 COURT ROOMS) OPERATING COSTS 2014/15**


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Security	£73,671
Building Maintenance	£22,582
Management (Estate)	£12,898
Cleaning	£11,483
Estate Surveying	£7,577
Equipment Maintenance	£3,628
Telephony	£3,374
Printing	£1,241
Information Communication Technology (ICT) - Other	£792
Pest and Vermin	£714
Conveyancing	£570
Utility - Electricity	£352
Design/Print/Reprographic Services	£339
Catering-Office Drinking Water	£333
Waste Disposal	£245
Telecomms - Charges/Rental-non mobile	£166
Telecomms - Charges/Rental - mobile	£2
<b>Total</b>	<b>£252,279</b>

*Negative figures shown in the above tables are a result of rebates.*

The following costs collectively cover Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Northampton magistrates' courts. No staff are permanently allocated to these sites and as staff and judiciary are shared across these sites the staffing and judicial costs are accounted for centrally. The shared costs of these were:

**SHARED COSTS FOR KETTERING,  
WELLINGBOROUGH, CORBY, NORTHAMPTON  
MAGISTRATES' COURTS – 2014/15**

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Value</b>
Staffing costs	£1,244,106
Judicial costs	£123,865
DX post	£3,136
Manual Payments (Ex gratia)	£60
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,371,167</b>

[1] Figure includes a released excess accrual of - £54,959 that had accumulated from 2010.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Saudi Arabia**

**Andy Slaughter:** [\[12354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the oral evidence given by Michael Spurr to the Justice Committee on 13 October 2015, HC 416, how many officials of his Department have travelled to Saudi Arabia in relation to their work with Just Solutions International; and what the cost to the public purse was of that travel.

**Andrew Selous:**

I refer the hon member to the Secretary of State's statement of 13 October 2015. One official travelled to Saudi Arabia twice, both times in 2014, at a total cost of £3,425.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Temporary Employment**

**Andy Slaughter:** [\[12353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the oral evidence given by Ann Beasley, DG Finance and Corporate Services, Ministry of Justice, to the Justice Committee on 13 October 2015, HC 416, Question 30, how many agency staff his Department employed in each of the last five years.

**Mike Penning:**

Workforce information including agency staff, interim managers, contractors and consultants for the Ministry of Justice, its agencies and executive non-departmental public bodies is published in the department's annual accounts. Information for 2011 to 2015 is available at Annex A vi of the 2014/2015 annual report available at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/434016/moj-annual-report-and-accounts-2014-15.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/434016/moj-annual-report-and-accounts-2014-15.pdf)

Information for the 2010 is available at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/217275/moj-annual-report-accounts-2011-12.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/217275/moj-annual-report-accounts-2011-12.pdf)

#### ■ National Offender Management Service: Pay

Ian Lavery:

[9817]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the cost was of (a) overtime payments, (b) required hours allowance, (c) Payment Plus, (d) constant watch, (e) bedwatch, (f) tornado, (g) dirty protest, (h) unsocial hours working payments and (i) additional committed hours within NOMS in each of the last five years.

**Andrew Selous:**

The table below shows total cost in respect of overtime payments; payment plus; bedwatch; and tornado for financial years 2010-11 to 2014-15. The overtime payments includes all NOMS staff.

#### FINANCIAL YEARS

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
<b>Payments made to NOMS staff</b>	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Overtime	10.5	9.4	9.2	8.2	11.1
Bedwatches	15.2	14.7	14.9	15.3	14.2
Tornado	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.5
Payment Plus	33.9	31.3	30.2	30.3	38.1

*To note within the table:*

*1. The figures have been drawn from our central accounting system, and although care is taken when processing and analysing returns, the detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system*

Information in respect of : required hours allowance; constant watch; dirty protest; unsocial hours working payments; and, additional committed hours is not held separately in the National Offender Management Service's central accounting system.

The recent recruitment campaign has led to the recruitment of 2,230 new prison officers in the 12 months ending 30 June 2015. This should in turn result in less reliance on Payment Plus.

## ■ Prisoners: Coroners

**Andy Slaughter:** [\[12613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much his Department has incurred in costs for legal advice and representations at inquests following the deaths of serving prisoners in (a) 2012-13 and (b) 2013-14.

**Andrew Selous:**

The principal costs which the Ministry of Justice incurs for legal advice and representations at inquests following the deaths of serving prisoners are those charged by the Government Legal Department. These costs for the financial year 2009/10 to 2013/14 are set out in the table below. They relate to preparatory work in advance of inquests as well as representation at specified inquests in each year in question.

YEAR	COST
2009/10	£2.7million
2010/11	£2.1 million
2011/12	£2.1 million
2012/13	£2.4 million
2013/14	£2.7 million

## ■ Prisons: Education

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[10906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to promote peer to peer mentoring projects (a) in general and (b) to improve literacy and numeracy in prisons.

**Andrew Selous:**

On 8<sup>th</sup> September, the Secretary of State announced a review of the quality of education in prisons, chaired by Dame Sally Coates. She will work with a panel of experts to produce proposals regarding the improvement of education in prisons and they will be visiting prisons to assess provision first hand.

The review will examine the scope and quality of current provision in adult prisons and in young offender institutions for 18-20 year olds; review domestic and international evidence of what works well in prison education to support the rehabilitation of different segments of prison learners; and identify options for future models of education services in prisons

Peer support is already used in many prisons and is an important part of the rehabilitation process for all the individuals involved. A wide variety of peer support occurs in prisons, including:

- induction support

- abstinence support
- learning and skills support
- provision of advice
- mentoring
- support to vulnerable prisoners
- advocacy.

■ Prisons: Saudi Arabia

**Andy Slaughter:** [\[12221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the offer made to the Saudi Arabian government for its prisons training contract.

**Andrew Selous:**

I refer the hon member to the Secretary of State's statement of 13 October 2015. The terms of the bid remain confidential and we have no plans to publish it.

■ Prisons: Tobacco

**Paul Flynn:** [\[8817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on prison and prisoner stability of banning tobacco in prisons.

**Andrew Selous:**

I refer the Hon. Member to my WMS of 22 October 2015.

## SCOTLAND

■ Iron and Steel: Scotland

**Margaret Ferrier:** [\[12719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with Ministers from the Scottish Government on the steel industry in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

**David Mundell:**

I have regular discussions with Scottish Government ministers on a range of issues. I wrote to the Deputy First Minister on 20 October to extend the Scotland Office's full support for the Scottish Government's Task Force to address the recent issues with the steel industry in Scotland.

**TRANSPORT**■ **Great Western Railway Line: Electrification**

**Jonathan Reynolds:** [\[12958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans for the electrification of the Great Western Mainline to be completed.

**Claire Perry:**

The Secretary of State announced in June that Sir Peter Hendy, the new Chair of Network Rail, would develop proposals for how the rail upgrade programme, including the Great Western Mainline, will be carried out. He will report to the Secretary of State later in the autumn and it would be premature to speculate on his conclusions.

■ **RAF Northolt**

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[13141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the safety of civilian flights at RAF Northolt; and if he will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[13142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had on safety at RAF Northolt; and if he will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[13143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Civil Aviation Authority is exercising its duty to ensure the safety of civilian aircraft at RAF Northolt; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

All commercial air transport operators are required to satisfy themselves that the aerodromes they use are adequate. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulates compliance with this requirement through its oversight of such operators.

The CAA is reviewing certain aspects of the safety of operations at RAF Northolt. This review will conclude shortly and, if necessary, appropriate action could be taken in respect of civil operations.

The CAA and the Ministry of Defence are also working on a memorandum of understanding which will allow the CAA to discharge its functions in respect of military aerodromes open to civil use. In particular, this will ensure that operators continue to have access to all necessary information to make an assessment of adequacy of a military aerodrome for the proposed flight.

My officials have discussed RAF Northolt with the CAA on a number of occasions. I am satisfied that the CAA is taking appropriate steps to discharge its functions in respect of the safety of commercial air transport operations at the aerodrome.

**■ Railways: Complaints**

**Jonathan Reynolds:** [\[12957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many complaints by passengers were received by Network Rail in (a) 2010, (b) 2011, (c) 2012, (d) 2013, (e) 2014 and (f) 2015.

**Claire Perry:**

Network Rail was reclassified as an arm's-length public sector body on 1 September 2014 and the collation of statistics of annual complaints received remains an operational matter for the company.

Network Rail advises that its customer relationship management system focusses on providing solutions to a range of customer service requests, the majority of which are received from line-side residents rather than passengers. Network Rail's system does not focus specifically on logging the annual number of passenger complaints.

**■ Railways: Electrification**

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[12644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the electrification schemes for the North TransPennine and Midland Mainline will resume.

**Andrew Jones:**

The work to electrify the North TransPennine and Midland Mainline railways has resumed, as announced on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 by the Secretary of State, as part of Sir Peter Hendy's work to reset Network Rail's Upgrade Programme.

**■ Railways: Franchises**

**Jonathan Reynolds:** [\[12959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much has been spent by his Department on franchising negotiations since 2010.

**Claire Perry:**

Since 2013, and the setting up of Rail Executive Passenger Services, the Department has separated out the cost of individual Franchise Competitions and Direct Awards. Prior to 2013 such costs are merged within the general costs of running the franchised passenger services and we are unable to disaggregate them from the general costs.

The cost of re-franchising projects since the re-launch of the Franchising Programme in Spring 2013 is £41.4 million. This represents the actual consultancy and non-pay staff costs for the duration of the completed competitions and Direct Awards. This figure includes costs for ongoing competitions and Direct Awards up to and including the end of September.

Franchise competitions are not the result of negotiation, but of open competition. The benefits these competitions bring to the passenger far outweigh the cost to the Department. I also note that the franchising system returned £1.15billion to the taxpayer in financial years 2014/15, and is expected to return a similar amount in 2015/16.



## ■ Railways: North of England

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[\[12530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what role the North East Combined Authority has in relation to the Northern Rail franchise.

**Andrew Jones:**

When known as Tyne & Wear Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) (trading as NEXUS), the North East Combined Authority were one of five PTEs who are co-signatories of the current Northern Interim Franchise Agreement that commenced in 2014.

The North East Combined Authority is one of the 29 authorities that make up Rail North Ltd. As part of the new franchise competition they were involved in helping develop the Invitation To Tender for the next Northern Franchise, which is expected to begin in April 2016.

Going forward the Secretary of State will sign the franchise agreement, but the management of the next Northern Franchise is being devolved to the Department for Transport and Rail North partnership.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

### ■ Equal Pay

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[12845\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what response her Department has received to the consultation on regulations on the gender pay gap.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

This government is committed to closing the gender pay gap in a generation by addressing the underlying causes of the gender pay gap, including the gender bonus gap. Our consultation on Closing the Gender Pay Gap closed on 6 September, and received nearly 700 responses. Over 200 employers and business organisations responded, including the CBI, whose members employ around a third of the private sector workforce. We have announced that this will apply to large employers and to large public bodies. We will be working with employers on how this will be implemented as they will be required to publish information showing the differences in pay between men and women.

### ■ Utilities: Billing

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[12606\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment her Department has made on accessibility of utilities bills for (a) people with disabilities and (b) elderly people.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Equality Act 2010 protects service users from discrimination on a number of grounds, including disability and age. In the case of disability, it also requires providers of services to make reasonable adjustments for customers who require them. The government has recently published a memorandum to the Act, on post-legislative scrutiny. A link to the memorandum can be found here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/441838/Memo\\_to\\_Women\\_Equalities.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441838/Memo_to_Women_Equalities.pdf)

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Department for Work and Pensions: Digital Technology****Chi Onwurah:****[13246]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what (a) funding his Department is undertaking and (b) projects his Department has planned as part of the Government's Digital Inclusion Strategy.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

There are a number of projects in the Department that include elements of Digital Inclusion. The funding for these projects is agreed at the appropriate time during the project's lifecycle.

Every DWP digital transformation project is designed around user needs. In researching these needs throughout the projects' development we determine the volumes and requirements of those people who are not digitally included, and ensure that there are solutions in place to cater for them.

IT access will be available to those without it in Jobcentres and through partner organisations such as libraries as well as through other local providers. Universal Credit provides support for those without digital skills to gain them.

DWP is also partnered with many third party organisations with an aim to raise digital capabilities within the Department and across the UK. One such partnership is with Barclays, with whom we have run a joint exercise, pairing their Digital Eagles with our Business Coaches, as well as evaluating the usefulness of their Digital Driving Licence in identifying digital capability gaps and requirements amongst DWP's employees.

DWP is a contributory Department in the Digital Friends initiative. This initiative is intended to up-skill staff within the Department and in wider society through sharing existing digital skills with colleagues, friends, family and neighbours.

### ■ Mental Illness: Independent Living Fund

**Luciana Berger:** [\[13213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in receipt of the independent living fund in each of the last five years had a diagnosed mental health condition.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Independent Living Fund closed on 30 June 2015. The information requested is not held by the Department for Work and Pensions and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. Such information as is available can be found on page 10 of the equality impact assessment published on 6 March 2014:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/287236/closure-of-ilf-equality-analysis.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/287236/closure-of-ilf-equality-analysis.pdf).

### ■ Social Security Benefits: Cancer

**Kate Osamor:** [\[13392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the provisions in Clauses 13 and 14 of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill on the welfare of cancer patients.

**Priti Patel:**

The Government set out its assessment of the impacts of the policies in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill on 20th July. These are available on the Parliament website:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/welfarereformandwork/documents.html>

### ■ Welfare State: Reform

**Neil Coyle:** [\[12639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the contribution of the Minister of State for Disabled People to the debate on Welfare Reform (Sick and Disabled People) of 27 February 2014, what progress his Department is making on an assessment of the effect of welfare changes on disabled people and carers; and when his Department plans to publish that assessment.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Cumulative impact assessment analysis published by HMT is the most comprehensive available, as spending is not the only way to help disabled people and carers. It is crucial that any assessment includes looking at further support including health spending, employment support, and investment in infrastructure, as well as the introduction of the National Living Wage, the extended childcare offer for working parents of three and four year olds and the increase to the personal allowance. HM Treasury's analysis includes these wider impacts in its cumulative analysis.

However, it is not possible to produce a cumulative impact assessment of policies on disabled people and carers using this model only.

The Government has published analysis showing how the share of public spending that benefits households and the share of tax paid by households changes as a result of government policy.

The richest fifth will be paying a greater proportion of taxes in 2017-18 than in 2010-11 as a result of government policy – and more than all other households put together.

The proportion of spending received by households in each quintile has not changed since 2010-11: around half of all spending on welfare and public services is still going to the poorest 40 per cent of households.