



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 30 October 2015 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:40 P.M., 30 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 **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Volkswagen

Mary Creagh:

[13688]

To ask the Attorney General, whether the Serious Fraud Office is undertaking an investigation into defeat devices used by Volkswagen in emissions tests.

Jeremy Wright:

As and when matters are brought to the attention of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) they are assessed in the context of the SFO's remit to investigate fraud, bribery and corruption. If appropriate, relevant matters will be considered for criminal investigation in line with SFO internal procedures. The SFO does not comment on its assessments or their status at any one time but does publish on its website details of those cases formally adopted for criminal investigation, when this is possible without prejudice to the investigation.

BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

■ Adult Education: Croydon

Mr Steve Reed:

[13679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what estimate he has made of (a) current and (b) forecast adult learner demand in Croydon.

Nick Boles:

Our policy is to support the growth of high quality apprenticeship places available in Croydon and across the country as a whole. Apprenticeships are the best form of adult vocational education because they bring together in one coherent experience formal learning and personal development in the workplace. The number and nature of the apprenticeship opportunities available depends on what employers offer, but we are supporting this by doubling public funding for apprenticeships since 2010, supporting employers in developing clear new apprenticeship standards, and introducing a levy on employers to fund further growth. Our aim is that there should be three million new apprenticeship starts by 2020.

Across adult education as a whole, it is important that there is the right supply of places to meet future demand. Determining what this supply should be is not something central government can take the lead on. In September the government announced a programme of area reviews, which will be locally led and will involve key stakeholders. They will be based on the best available evidence of skills requirements and establish a local post-16 education and training offer which is high quality and responsive to employer need. The reviews will support local involvement in the ongoing commissioning of provision, putting responsibility in the hands of people who are best

placed to tailor provision to local economic needs. Croydon will be included in the area review process, which is due to be completed by March 2017, and an announcement on the date for the review will be announced in due course.

There is also a role for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in ensuring that adult education reflects future economic development. LEPs are working in collaboration with local authorities, colleges and providers in the area to jointly agree key local skill needs and develop a local skills offer that responsive to local labour market conditions and contributes to improving our productivity. LEPs are responsible for decisions about capital allocations for adult skills projects, and the Skills Funding Agency requires colleges to engage with LEPs as a condition of its grant funding.

■ Apprentices: Taxation

Christina Rees: [\[13293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how his Department plans to apply the apprenticeships levy in Wales.

Christina Rees: [\[13294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what definition his Department plans to use of large and small employers in relation to qualification for the apprenticeships levy.

Christina Rees: [\[13335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, whether it is his policy that the apprenticeship levy will apply to labour-only subcontractors.

Christina Rees: [\[13336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how he intends that small employers will access funding for apprenticeships.

Christina Rees: [\[13337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, whether he intends that the apprenticeships levy will replace the one-third contributions for post-19 apprenticeships as part of the Richard Review reforms.

Christina Rees: [\[13338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, whether it is his policy that employers who pay the CITB levy will also have to pay the apprenticeships levy.

Christina Rees: [\[13339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, whether it is his policy that employers will have to pay the apprenticeships levy if they do not take on apprentices.

Christina Rees: [\[13340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how much of the proposed apprenticeships levy employers will be able to claim back through the e-voucher.

Christina Rees: [\[13341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what the apprenticeships levy rate will be.

Nick Boles:

My Rt hon Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will announce further details of the apprenticeship levy at the Spending Review, including the scope and rate of the levy and how it will operate with respect to the Devolved Administrations.

■ Aviation: Noise

Mark Tami: [\[13227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what steps his Department is taking to support research into new aircraft and engine technologies to reduce noise emissions from aviation.

Mark Tami: [\[13230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what steps his Department has taken to support the development and deployment of new aircraft and engine technologies in order to reduce emissions from aviation.

Anna Soubry:

The Government is supporting industry investment in the development and deployment of technologies for new aircraft, including technologies for new engines, aero structures and advanced systems, to reduce noise and other emissions from aviation.

This support is integral to the work between industry and Government through the Aerospace Growth Partnership and the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI), which published its Technology Strategy 2015 in July. To date, 100 ATI projects, worth around a total of £1bn, jointly funded by industry and government have been approved; and the majority of these are focused on technologies required to produce greener, more efficient and environmentally friendly aircraft.

■ Consumer Protection Measures in the Ticket Resale Market Review

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[12304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what steps the Government is taking to publicise its call for evidence for the Review of the Secondary Ticketing Market.

Nick Boles:

The "Review of Consumer Protection Measures in the Ticket Resale Market" commenced on 13 October 2015 with a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament.

The Call for Evidence was published on Gov.uk on 13 October and my officials have written to the main stakeholders to alert them to this and invite contributions.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[12305]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, who drafted the terms of reference for the Review of the Secondary Ticketing Market; and how those terms of reference were decided upon.

Nick Boles:

The Terms of Reference were decided upon by Ministers and the Chair following input from major stakeholders.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[12306]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, by what process the decision to appoint Professor Waterson as Chair of the Secondary Ticketing Market was made.

Nick Boles:

The independent Review requires a suitable qualified and experienced Chair, who is demonstrably independent of Government and has no link to any particular interest group on secondary ticketing.

Professor Waterson was invited to be the independent Chair by my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Business, Innovation and Skills and for Culture, Media and Sport.

■ Fireworks

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[13318]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what plans the Government has to limit the sale of fireworks (a) geographically and (b) seasonally.

Anna Soubry:

There are already seasonal limitations on the sale of fireworks. The Fireworks Regulations 2004 restrict their sale to the traditional fireworks periods of 5th November, Diwali, New Year's Eve and the Chinese New Year. It is possible to buy fireworks at other times of the year, but strict conditions are imposed on retailers wishing to sell them outside the traditional periods.

There are no geographical restrictions on the sale of fireworks, and currently no plans to introduce them, although further restrictions on their sale exist in Northern Ireland where a licence is required for home displays.

The Fireworks Regulations 2004 contain provisions to minimise the risk of fireworks harming people, property and animals, and Government-sponsored advice and guidance on the safe and considerate use of fireworks is freely available on the Safer Fireworks website.

■ Green Investment Bank

Caroline Lucas: [\[13575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how the Green Investment Bank has been classified in the Government accounts since its creation.

Anna Soubry:

UK Green Investment Bank plc has been treated as a central Government body since its establishment in 2012.

■ Small Businesses: Dartford

Gareth Johnson: [\[13065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how many small businesses were registered in Dartford in each of the last 10 years.

Anna Soubry:

The number of small businesses that were registered for VAT or PAYE in Dartford between 2006 and 2015 is shown below.

YEAR	NUMBER OF SMALL[1] BUSINESSES REGISTERED FOR VAT OR PAYE[2] IN DARTFORD
2006	2,420
2007	2,475
2008	3,180
2009	3,150
2010	3,005
2011	2,955
2012	3,135
2013	3,205
2014	3,380
2015	3,725

Source: ONS, UK Business: activity, size and location.

[1] Small businesses defined as employing less than 50 people. Data refers to Dartford parliamentary constituency.

[2] For 2006 and 2007, only the numbers of VAT registered businesses are available.

■ Small Businesses: Yorkshire and the Humber

Craig Whittaker:

[\[13037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what steps his Department is taking to support small businesses in (a) West Yorkshire and (b) Yorkshire & Humber.

Anna Soubry:

We are supporting small businesses in many ways and are committed to making sure the UK is the best place in Europe to start and grow a business. Businesses in West Yorkshire and the Yorkshire and Humber region are benefitting from Government support.

More than 900 *Start Up Loans*, worth over £5 million, have been issued across West Yorkshire. And more than 2,600 loans, worth over £14 million, have been issued in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Almost 900 West Yorkshire businesses have secured loans worth £87 million under the Enterprise Finance Guarantee scheme. And more than 2,000 businesses in the Yorkshire and Humber region have secured loans worth over £196 million.

There have been 48 Regional Growth Fund awards across the Yorkshire and Humber region totalling £268 million.

The Growth Deal programme is supporting growing businesses across the Yorkshire and Humber region, including £8m for growing SMEs across Leeds City Region. The Government is also funding the establishment of growth hubs which bring together local business support and advice into one place. The North Yorkshire & East Riding growth hub is now in place.

Ambitious, high growth businesses are also benefitting from the Business Growth Service: 369 in West Yorkshire and 900 in Yorkshire and Humber.

■ Trade Agreements: China

Kevin Brennan:

[\[13061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what his policy is on granting Market Economy Status to China under World Trade Organisation rules.

Anna Soubry:

The UK will examine the Commission's legal analysis and proposal on addressing the commitment in article 15 of China's protocol of accession to the World Trade Organisation when it is made available. The UK fully supports the China-EU 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation.

■ Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh:

[\[12972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of TTIP on different and separate regulatory systems for compliance with current ISDS provisions in different parts of the UK.

Anna Soubry:

The inclusion of investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) will not threaten the right of the UK or Devolved Administrations to regulate or determine public policy. The Commission has published a proposal for reforms to investment protections in this agreement, which includes a clause setting out governments' right to regulate.

The UK will work with the Commission on this proposal to ensure that UK investors are treated fairly overseas by foreign governments while allowing governments to regulate lawfully and in the public interest.

■ **Volkswagen****Mary Creagh:**[\[13687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, whether the Competition and Markets Authority is undertaking an investigation into defeat devices used by Volkswagen in emissions tests.

Anna Soubry:

The Competition and Markets Authority has been considering this issue carefully since it first emerged, including in liaison with government and other agencies nationally and internationally. It has not opened a formal investigation, but is continuing to assess in cooperation with government and other agencies what action it would be appropriate to take and who would be best placed to take it.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Foreign Relations: Scotland****Peter Grant:**[\[13634\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on how many occasions in each of the last five years officials of his Department have contacted representatives of a foreign government to ask for an account of private meetings or discussions held between representatives of that government and Scottish Government ministers.

Matthew Hancock:

Details of discussions with foreign governments are not usually disclosed.

■ **Kids Company****Tim Loughton:**[\[13576\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress he has made in retrieving the £3 million grant to Kids Company made by his Department immediately before that charity went into administration.

Mr Rob Wilson:

We are currently in discussions with the Official Receiver regarding retrieving the grant Government recently provided to Kids Company.

TREASURY

■ Aggregates Levy

Sammy Wilson:

[[13069](#)]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department has spent to date on legal fees in respect of the case against the Aggregates Levy brought by the British Aggregates Association.

Damian Hinds:

The lawfulness of the Aggregates Levy been challenged in the UK and European courts for over thirteen years by the British Aggregates Association. No court has ever found the levy to be unlawful.

The legal challenges have also caused many years of uncertainty for industry, and have prevented the government from making any significant changes to the levy.

The government's legal costs are not finalised and are continuing to rise. This should be viewed against over £4 billion (and rising) in levy revenue that the government's defence is protecting.

■ Economic and Monetary Union: Greece

Craig Whittaker:

[[13038](#)]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the UK economy of Greece leaving the Eurozone.

Mr David Gauke:

The Greek government has been clear that they want to remain within the euro area. The Treasury continuously monitors global economic developments, including those in Greece, and their impact on the UK as part of the normal process of policy development.

■ Excise Duties: Soft Drinks

Ian Paisley:

[[13322](#)]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has consulted UK-based soft drinks producers about the economic effect a potential excise duty on sugary drinks would have on those businesses.

Damian Hinds:

At present the Government has no plans to introduce new taxes on sugary drinks.

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

■ Revenue and Customs: Staff

Mr Mark Hendrick: [13346]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many full-time equivalent staff in the Tax Credit Office were allocated to deal with representations from hon. Members relating to constituents' concerns about tax credits on 1 October (a) 2011, (b) 2012, (c) 2013, (d) 2014 and (e) 2015.

Damian Hinds:

HMRC do not hold the requested data.

HMRC requires many of its staff, as part of their roles, to contribute to dealing with tax credits enquiries from Members.

■ Social Security Benefits and Welfare Tax Credits

Tom Brake: [13527]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on the average working household of welfare and tax credit changes proposed since May 2015.

Dawn Butler: [13610]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the average annual amount by which working families affected by changes to tax credits will be compensated by the increase in the level of the minimum wage.

Frank Field: [13719]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to lines 41 and 42 of Table 2.1 of the Summer Budget 2015 Red Book (HC 264), page 73, what the savings to the public purse would be if those measures were to be applied only to households that are not currently in receipt of tax credits or universal credit.

Damian Hinds:

This Government is committed to moving from a high welfare, high tax, low wage economy to a lower welfare, lower tax, higher wage society. As the Chancellor made clear on [Monday / 26 October], the Government will set out at Autumn Statement how we plan to achieve the same goal of reforming tax credits, saving the money we need to save to secure our economy, while at the same time helping in the transition.

The Summer Budget offered a new deal for working people. A new National Living Wage for workers aged 25 and above, initially set at £7.20 per hour from April 2016, will directly benefit 2.7 million low wage workers, and up to 6 million could see a pay rise as a result of a ripple effect up the earnings distribution. The new National Living

Wage will boost pay for those currently earning the National Minimum Wage by £4,800 a year by 2020 when the National Living Wage is expected to rise to over £9 per hour.

To help working families keep more of what they earn, the personal allowance will increase to £11,000 in 2016-17 and £11,200 in 2017-18. The government has committed to increase the personal allowance to £12,500 by 2020 which will mean that a typical basic rate taxpayer will see their income tax cut by £1,205 a year compared to 2010.

The government set out its assessment of the impacts of the Summer Budget policies in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill on 20th July 2015.

■ UK Membership of EU

Mr Bernard Jenkin:

[\[12973\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the average net benefit per household of the UK's membership of the EU.

Mr David Gauke:

As the Chancellor of the Exchequer has noted, the best outcome for the UK economy is that we achieve major economic reform of the EU. The Prime Minister is focused on success: he believes he 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.

The Confederation of British Industry and British Chambers of Commerce have both come out to say they support the reform agenda the Prime Minister is seeking to deliver.

■ Welfare Tax Credits

Frank Field:

[\[13615\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the average duration of a claim for tax credits was in the most recent (a) 12 and (b) 24 months for which data is available.

Damian Hinds:

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

Frank Field:

[\[13616\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many existing tax credit claimants have been in continuous receipt of tax credits for (a) one, (b) two, (c) three and (d) four years or more.

Damian Hinds:

This information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Frank Field:

[\[13617\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the total on-flow and off-flow for tax credits was in the most recent (a) 12 and (b) 24 months for which data is available.

Damian Hinds:

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

Ms Karen Buck: [13728]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of households in receipt of tax credits in each of the last five tax years for which figures are available had not made a claim in the preceding tax year.

Ms Karen Buck: [13729]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of households in receipt of tax credits in each of the last five tax years for which data are available did not make a claim in the following tax year.

Damian Hinds:

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

Ms Karen Buck: [13730]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the average duration is of a tax credit claim.

Damian Hinds:

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

■ Welfare Tax Credits: Wrexham

Ian C. Lucas: [13707]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people claimed tax credits in each lower super output area in (a) Wrexham County Borough Council and (b) Wrexham constituency.

Damian Hinds:

A geographical breakdown of tax credits claimants can be found in the 2013-14 finalised award published statistics, at this link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/462398/LSOA_2013_-_W_-_Wales.xls

■ Working Tax Credit

Frank Field: [13650]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of in-work households in receipt of tax credits with an underlying entitlement to Working Tax Credit in each of the last five tax years did not have a claim with an underlying entitlement to Working Tax Credit in the following tax year.

Frank Field: [13651]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of in-work households in receipt of tax credits with an underlying entitlement to Working Tax Credit in

each of the last five tax years had not had a claim with an underlying entitlement to Working Tax Credit in the preceding tax year.

Damian Hinds:

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

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Homelessness

Peter Kyle: [R] [[13695](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many people were assisted by the Homelessness Prevention Grant in 2014-15.

Peter Kyle: [[13696](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many local authorities have contacted his Department on the future of the Homelessness Prevention Grant in the last six months.

Peter Kyle: [[13697](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if his Department will publish an updated evaluation of the operation of the Homelessness Prevention Grant.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 30 October 2015]: Homelessness prevention grant is part of our £500 million investment in local authority and voluntary sector homelessness services. It has helped local authorities to prevent 935,800 households from becoming homeless since 2010 and assisted 220,800 in 2014-15 alone.

The Government does not evaluate the effectiveness of local authority grants including the Homelessness Prevention Grant. As democratically elected organisations, local authorities are independent from Central Government and are responsible for managing their budgets in line with local priorities. Since 2010, local councils have had more flexibility over how they spend the money they receive from central government. Together with the money raised through council tax and other local sources, they have considerable freedom to work with their residents to decide how best to spend available resources on local priorities. My Department regularly engages with a wide range of partners on homelessness prevention. We have received five written representations directly from local authorities on the future of the grant since April 2015.

■ Mayors: North East

Mr Kevan Jones: [[13062](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made under what working assumptions of the cost and the salary and other

elements of the remuneration package for the potential future position of regional mayor of the North East of England.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[13063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made under what working assumptions of the potential annual running costs for the office of a North East regional mayor.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[13064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made under what working assumptions of the potential cost of the holding of an election for a North East regional mayor.

James Wharton:

We have made no such estimates as all these costs are matters for the councils concerned which will have considered such matters when giving their provisional agreement to the North East Devolution Deal, which in addition to establishing a North East regional mayor, will create an Investment Fund to support the North East, worth up to £1.5 billion, with an initial allocation of revenue funding for capital financing of £30 million a year for 30 years.

■ Right to Buy Scheme: Housing Associations

Tulip Siddiq: [\[13152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether it is his policy that the Right to Buy extension for housing associations will apply to tenants whose properties were built exclusively with private finance.

Kate Hollern: [\[13675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether it is his policy that the extension of right to buy to housing associations will apply to tenants whose properties were built exclusively with private finance.

Brandon Lewis:

Under the agreement with the National Housing Federation, there will be a presumption that housing association tenants will have the right to purchase their home at Right to Buy level discounts.

The agreement states that housing associations may exercise discretion over sales of properties provided through charitable or public-benefit resources or bequeathed for charitable or public-benefit purposes, and in the possession of the housing association before it became registered under the Housing Act 1974 (or later equivalent legislation).

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Broadband: Small Businesses**

Antoinette Sandbach: [13565]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make it his policy to reopen the Government's Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

The Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme, which has supported thousands of small businesses, is now closed as the funding has been fully allocated. Any decision regarding new funding is subject to the forthcoming Spending Review.

■ Public Lending Right

Nigel Adams: [13396]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what guidance he has given to local authorities on the inclusion of volunteer-led libraries in the sampling arrangements for Public Lending Right.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

The British Library administers the Public Lending Right (PLR) scheme and calculates PLR payments using loans data from a sample of UK public library authorities. Where a local authority includes a community - supported library in its statutory library service, loans from that library would fall within the PLR scheme. Further information is available at www.gov.uk/public-lending-right-how-it-applies.

■ Rugby: Injuries

Jim Shannon: [13545]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of people sustaining serious injuries as a result of playing rugby in each of the last five years.

Jim Shannon: [13546]

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of people sustaining serious injuries as a result of participating in boxing in each of the last five years.

Tracey Crouch:

DCMS does not hold information or data on the comparative health risks resulting from taking part in major sports.

DEFENCE■ **Afghanistan: Interpreters**

Maria Eagle: [\[13130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many full-time staff are based in the Kabul Intimidation Investigation Unit; and what the roles of those staff are.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Intimidation Investigation Unit (IIU), based in Kabul, has six full time, in-theatre staff:

A Ministry of Defence (MOD) civil servant leads the team as the Scheme Manager, overseeing the investigation of intimidation cases, presenting cases at decision panels, and managing any policy issues which arise.

Another MOD civil servant, employed as the Policy and Secretariat Officer, manages the overall caseload appropriately and ensures that case records are maintained.

Two appropriately trained and experienced police officers, seconded from Home Office constabularies, are employed to conduct the investigations into intimidation claims. Their tasks include conducting interviews and assessing evidence.

Two British military interpreters, fluent in Pashtun and Dari, who provide support to interviews and translate documents that have been provided as evidence.

Though not members of the IIU staff, the IIU receives additional in-theatre support from a Danish legal adviser, and from staff within the Labour Support Unit.

The work of the IIU in-theatre is overseen by the Operation TORAL Civil Secretary, who dedicates the majority of their time to chairing the in-theatre decision panels and provides guidance should cases or issues need to be escalated.

Additional support is provided from the UK by a full-time policy officer based at Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), and by senior managers within PJHQ who oversee the whole of Operation TORAL.

■ **Army: Uniforms**

John Spellar: [\[13174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what preparations his Department has made for (a) upcoming changes in EU legislation regarding the chemical PFOA and (b) the technical effect of that legislation on the performance of camouflage print on the Army's multi-terrain pattern uniforms and ensemble.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The upcoming change to EU legislation on the use of Perfluorooctanoic acid is a matter for the contractor, who has to meet the specifications set by the Ministry of Defence.

We do not expect the change in EU legislation to adversely affect the production or performance of combat clothing used by the UK's Armed Forces.

■ Defence Equipment

Toby Perkins:

[[13007](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which pieces of equipment included in his Department's Defence in Numbers publication of August 2015 are used only for training or ceremonial use.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Defence in Numbers booklet is a snap shot of the UK's Defence capability and how we are spending the fifth largest Defence budget in the world. As well as giving details on civilian and personnel numbers and current operations, it also includes a list of the Ministry of Defence's equipment holdings, the vast majority of which are in service and deployable. We will continue to review the Defence in Numbers booklet to ensure that it best reflects the breadth of defence equipment.

The Defence in Numbers booklet has a section for "training aircraft", and all of the aircraft types listed there are used for training only. This includes the Hawk, Viking, Vigilant, Tucano and Jet Provost aircraft.

The other pieces of equipment used only for ceremonial use are BAE-125 aircraft, Wessex helicopters, Challenger 1 battle tanks, FH70 Towed Howitzers and Chieftain Armoured Vehicles.

Maria Eagle:

[[13128](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reasons retired and out-of-date equipment, including FH70 howitzers and Jet Provost aircraft, were included in his Department's Defence in Numbers publication of August 2015; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Defence in Numbers booklet is a snap shot of the UK's Defence capability and how we are spending the fifth largest Defence budget in the world. As well as giving details on civilian and personnel numbers and current operations, it also includes a list of the Ministry of Defence's equipment holdings, the vast majority of which are in service and deployable or used for training (for example Jet Provost) or ceremonial (for example FH70 howitzers) purposes.

■ Defence: Expenditure

Andrew Rosindell:

[[13408](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to encourage other NATO member states to honour their commitment to spend two per cent of GDP on defence.

Michael Fallon:

Ministry of Defence Ministers, officials and I regularly raise the two per cent commitment during discussions with Allies. I reminded my counterparts at the NATO Defence Ministers Meeting in October that we have committed to spending two per cent of our GDP on defence and security every year of this decade and we have

historically been one of the few Allies to invest 20 per cent of our budget in major equipment.

■ Islamic State

Maria Eagle: [\[13125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress has been made by the UK and its Coalition Partners on disrupting the ability of ISIS to raise significant funds through oil revenues; and if he will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Coalition's initial approach to disrupting ISIL's ability to raise funds from oil revenues was to seek to destroy modular oil refineries. However, ISIL has adapted to this and is now using low technology refining methods and changing the way it trades hydrocarbon products.

The UK and its Coalition partners are now concentrating on oil smuggling and the ability of ISIL to keep its production facilities functioning.

■ Islamic State: Military Intervention

Clive Lewis: [\[13622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether UK armed forces personnel deploying on Operation SHADER include Special Forces.

Penny Mordaunt:

It is the longstanding policy of the Government not to comment on Special Forces.

■ Navy

Sir Nicholas Soames: [\[13187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will place in the Library copies of the Naval Service Operational Pinch Point Groups for (a) each quarter of each financial year from 2005-06 to 2014-15 and (b) the first two quarters of 2015-16.

Mark Lancaster:

Prior to 2015, Naval Service Operational Pinch Point Groups were not recorded quarterly. However, Pinch Points as at 1 April of each year are published in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Annual Report and Accounts which are available in The Library of the House. Please note, an MOD Annual Report for 2009-10 was consolidated into the MOD Departmental Resource Accounts 2009-10.

The number of Naval Service Operational Pinch Points in July 2015 and October 2015 are as shown in the following table.

1 APR-1 JUL 2015**1 OCT 2015**

Nuclear Watchkeepers Petty Officer-Warrant Officer1

Nuclear Watchkeepers Petty Officer-Warrant Officer1

Strategic Weapon Systems Engineers Leading Hand-Warrant Officer1

Strategic Weapon Systems Engineers Leading Hand-Warrant Officer1

Tactical Weapon Systems Engineers Petty Officer-Chief Petty Officer

Tactical Weapon Systems Engineers Petty Officer-Chief Petty Officer

Marine Engineer General Service Petty Officer

Marine Engineer General Service Petty Officer

Weapon Engineer General Service Petty Officer

Weapon Engineer General Service Petty Officer

Seaman specialist Able Seaman

Seaman specialist Able Seaman

Mine Warfare Leading Hand-Petty Officer

Mine Warfare Leading Hand-Petty Officer

Medical Technician (Operating Department Practitioner) Leading Hand-Chief Petty Officer

Medical Technician (Operating Department Practitioner) Leading Hand-Chief Petty Officer

Medical Assistant (Submarines) Senior Rates

Medical Assistant (Submarines) Senior Rates

Hydrographic Services Leading Hand

Hydrographic services Leading Hand

Underwater Warfare specialist Able Seaman-Petty Officer

Underwater Warfare specialist– Rank: Able Seaman-Petty Officer

Submarine Coxswain Chief Petty Officer

Submarine Coxswain Chief Petty Officer

Submarine Sonar specialist (SSM) Able Seaman

Submarine Sonar specialist (SSM) Able Seaman

Above Water Warfare specialist Leading Hand

Above Water Warfare specialist Leading Hand

Above Water Tactical specialist Leading Hand

Above Water Tactical specialist Leading Hand

Marine Engineer General Service Chief Petty Officer

Marine Engineer General Service Chief Petty Officer

Chef Able Seaman-Leading Hand

Chef Able Seaman-Leading Hand

Marine Engineer General Service Leading Hand

Marine Engineer General Service Leading Hand

Weapon Engineer General Service Leading Hand

Weapon Engineer General Service Leading Hand

Weapon Engineer Officer (Submarines) Lieutenant

Weapon Engineer Officer (Submarines) Lieutenant

Submarine Tactical specialist (TSM) Petty Officer-Chief Petty Officer

Sir Nicholas Soames: [13189]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of Royal Navy (a) officers and (b) ratings in each branch, specialisation and arm were unavailable to be deployed in each year from 2005-06 to 2014-15.

Sir Nicholas Soames: [13198]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of Royal Navy (a) officers and (b) ratings of each branch specialisation and arm were classified as non-deployable in each year from 2005-06 to 2014-15.

Mark Lancaster:

The information is not held in the format requested. However, the number and proportion of Naval Service officers and ratings in each branch who were categorised as non-deployable as at April of each year from 2010 is provided below. Information is not available prior to 2010.

All totals are rounded in accordance with the Defence Statistics rounding policy.

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table, the link below is to the web version of the answer:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-10-23/13198>

Sir Nicholas Soames: [13190]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list the Royal Navy's (a) branches, (b) specialisations and (c) sub-specialisations.

Mark Lancaster:

The Naval Service's current branches, specialisations and sub-specialisations, extracted from the Joint Personnel Administration System, are attached.

Attachments:

1. Royal Navy lists of branches and specialisations [13190 - Royal Navy's current branches, specialisations and sub-specialisations.docx]

■ **Navy: Discharges**

Sir Nicholas Soames: [13186]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel of each (a) rank and (b) branch, specialisation and arm left the Royal Navy in the first (a) three months, (b) three to six months, (c) six to nine months and (d) nine to 12 months of their service in each year from 2005-06 to 2014-15.

Mark Lancaster:

The information requested in respect of rank and branch is provided in the tables attached.

Notes:

Source: Defence Statistics (Navy).

A financial year includes all outflows from 1 April to 31 March.

Length of Service is recorded when someone completes that month.

Specialisations have been excluded from these tables due to the need to protect sensitive small figures.

All totals are rounded in accordance with the Defence Statistics rounding policy. All numbers are rounded to the nearest 5 with numbers that would be rounded to 0 represented by '~'.

Attachments:

1. Royal Navy Stats on Employment [13186 - RN Personnel by Rank, Branch and Specialisation that have left the RN.xls]

■ Navy: Labour Turnover

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[13200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the expected personnel (a) inflow and (b) outflow in each (i) rank and (ii) branch specialisation and arm in the Royal Navy over the next 10 years.

Mark Lancaster:

The information requested for the Naval Service is provided in the tables attached.

Notes:

No estimates are provided for ranks greater than Commodore as they are not modelled.

Inflow tables represent Gains to Trained Strength figures.

Outflow tables represent flows from the Naval Service to civil life.

All totals are rounded in accordance with the Defence Statistics rounding policy; therefore totals may not equal the sum of their parts. All numbers are rounded to the nearest 10 with numbers ending in 5 rounded to the multiple of 20 to avoid bias. Numbers that would be rounded to 0 are represented by '~'.

Attachments:

1. 13200 - Royal Navy stats on inflow and outflow [13200 - RN inflow and outflow for rank, branch specialisation and arm.xlsx]

■ Type 26 Frigates

Maria Eagle:

[\[13124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to maximise the role that UK suppliers can play in the development of the Type 26 programme.

Mr Philip Dunne:

In February 2015 the Government signed a £859 million Demonstration Phase contract for the Type 26 (T26) Global Combat Ship. Around 1,700 jobs in the UK will be

sustained as a result with 600 of those jobs safeguarded in Scotland where T26 will be built.

The majority of sub-contractors to the T26 Global Combat Ship programme are selected by BAES through competition.

The use of competition remains the cornerstone of defence procurement and this approach has been successful in driving efficiency into the UK defence industry. UK suppliers have had an equal opportunity to bid for work on the T26 programme with selections based on cost and the ability of suppliers to meet the schedule and performance requirements.

To date BAES has placed eight design development agreements (DDAs) and six design and manufacture contracts with UK based companies. These are shown in the table below:

Design Development Agreements – UK based companies only

COMPANY	EQUIPMENT SUPPLYING	LOCATION
Cathelco	Hull preservation	Chesterfield
L3	Platform management system	Bristol
Marine Systems Technology Ltd	Doors, scuttles and hatches, X-Y crane	Middlewich
Rolls Royce	Steering Gear System	Derby
Rolls Royce	Stabilisers	Dunfermline
Salt Separations Ltd	Reverse osmosis plant	Rochdale
TOD	Sonar dome	Weymouth
Tyco Fire & Integrated Solutions	Fixed fire fighting system	Reading

Design & Manufacture Contracts – UK based companies only

COMPANY	EQUIPMENT SUPPLYING	LOCATION
Babcock	Air weapons handling system	Leicester
BAE Systems	Meteorological and oceanic (METOC) sensors UK	Dorchester
David Brown Gear Systems	Propulsion gearbox	Huddersfield
GE Energy	Electronic integration test facility, Propulsion motor and drive system	Warwickshire

COMPANY	EQUIPMENT SUPPLYING	LOCATION
Rohde and Schwarz UK Ltd	Communications	Fleet
Rolls Royce	Gas Turbines	Derby

We anticipate that more UK based sub-contracts will be appointed as the programme progresses.

EDUCATION

■ Children in Care

Tim Loughton: [\[13680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children leaving care to return home have subsequently returned to care in each local authority in each of the last five years.

Edward Timpson:

The Department does not routinely publish data on the annual number of children who have returned home and later re-entered care.

Addressing this issue remains a Government priority. In September 2013, the Department published the 'Improving permanence for looked-after children' data pack, which can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/perm-data-13>. This included information on the numbers of children who had returned home in the year 2006-7 and had re-entered care or accommodation by 2012. The purpose of the pack was to encourage local authorities to review their systems for returning children home, to improve their rate of success, and to inform decision-making.

The changes made to the statutory framework in April 2015 ensure a sharper focus on safe and successful reunification, where this is the best route to permanence. We have also provided funding for two research projects. These projects will research how we can improve support for children returning home and test a specific reunification framework.

The findings from that research will be published later this year. To inform these projects, the Department has shared analysis with the research teams on return home and re-entry to care or accommodation. We are considering the benefits of publishing this information more widely and will continue to work with the sector.

Tim Loughton: [\[13681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of children have been placed in residential children's homes outside their home local authority area in each of the last five years.

Edward Timpson:

Information on the number of children accommodated in children's homes inside and outside the Council boundary is published in table A2 of the statistical first release

"Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers), year ending 31 March 2015" at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2014-to-2015>

■ Design: Curriculum

Louise Haigh: [13029]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate she has made of the number of (a) academies, (b) free schools and (c) maintained schools which do not include design and technology on the school curriculum.

Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education does not hold information on the number of schools which do not include design and technology on the school curriculum.

■ Free School Meals

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [13032]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 October 2015 to Question 11372, how many local authorities have used her Department's eligibility checking system for free school meals.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The department's records indicate that all English local authorities have used the eligibility checking system for free school meals.

■ GCSE: Dartford

Gareth Johnson: [13068]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many GCSEs were awarded for foreign language courses in Dartford constituency in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education publishes information at local authority level on the percentage of pupils achieving the languages component of the English Baccalaureate in the "Statistics: GCSEs (key stage 4)" series[1]. Information at parliamentary constituency level is not routinely published.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4>

■ Social Services: Pilot Schemes

Tim Loughton: [13682]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what social work practice pilots are still running.

Edward Timpson:

The social work practice pilots concluded in 2012. In November 2013 the Government commenced the first part of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 to allow all local authorities to explore new models of provision, if they wish to.

■ Special Guardianship Orders**Tim Loughton:**[\[13683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she expects to report on her review into the use of special guardianship orders; and which experts will assess submissions to that review.

Edward Timpson:

The Department for Education expects to report on the review into the use of special guardianship orders by the end of the year.

The findings of the review have been discussed extensively with an expert advisory group whose membership includes representatives from voluntary agencies for adoption, fostering and kinship care, local authorities, academics, ADCS and CAFCASS.

■ Teachers: Training**Louise Haigh:**[\[13030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate she has made of the number of secondary school teachers accessing continuing professional development in design and technology in (a) 2010, (b) 2011, (c) 2012, (d) 2013, (e) 2014 and (f) 2015 to date.

Nick Gibb:

The government does not collect data on the number of teachers accessing professional development. Decisions relating to teachers' professional development rest with schools, individual teachers and head teachers, who are in the best position to judge their own requirements.

■ Truancy: Lancashire**Andrew Stephenson:**[\[13053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how the Government plans to use the fines collected in Lancashire for parents taking their children out of school early in 2014-15.

Nick Gibb:

Revenue from penalty notices (fines) is payable to the local authority in respect of pupils registered at school in their area, or in the case of an unregistered pupil, for whom they have arranged alternative provision.

Regulations provide that the local authority can retain revenue from their penalty notice scheme to cover the cost of issuing or enforcing notices, or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay. All revenue not used for these purposes must be paid to the Secretary of State.

■ **Truancy: Pendle**

Andrew Stephenson: [13054]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the level of truancy was in Pendle in the last three years.

Nick Gibb:

Information on pupil absence, including authorised and unauthorised absence, is published at school, local authority, regional and national level in the "Statistics: pupil absence"[1] series. Parliamentary constituency level information is not available.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-pupil-absence>

Andrew Stephenson: [13055]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many parents were fined for taking children out of school early or for their children's truancy in Pendle in each of the past three years.

Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education does not hold information on the number of penalty notices (fines) issued to parents for school attendance offences in Pendle.

The department collects and publishes local authority level annual data on the number of penalty notices issued to parents, for offences relating to Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. The department does not collect data regarding fines issued by the courts on this matter. The most recent data published by the department is for the academic year 2012/13.

The number of penalty notices issued in Lancashire in 2011/12 and 2012/13 can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-academic-year-2012-to-2013>

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

■ **Electricity Interconnectors**

Dr Poulter: [13262]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what plans her Department has to support electricity grid interconnections between the UK and other countries.

Andrea Leadsom:

Electricity interconnection can lower consumer bills, improve security of supply and contribute towards decarbonisation.

A number of interconnection projects are already progressing under Ofgem's regulatory regime¹, designed to bring forward interconnection investment in the interest of GB consumers. This includes projects to France, Belgium, Norway, Denmark and Ireland, which have been assessed by Ofgem as offering over £11.8bn in consumer benefits. The Government has also supported a number of mature interconnector projects to benefit from access to European grant funding as Projects of Common Interest.

Together these projects represent billions of pounds of infrastructure investment and aim to more than double our interconnection capacity by the early 2020s. This will make Britain more energy secure and will help lower consumer bills.

[1] Source, Ofgem: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/decision-roll-out-cap-and-floor-regime-near-term-electricity-interconnectors>

■ Electricity Interconnectors: Denmark

Dr Poulter: **[13263]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what plans her Department has to support proposals for an electricity grid interconnector between the UK and Denmark.

Andrea Leadsom:

Government is committed to increasing electricity interconnection that delivers benefits to GB consumers, and the Department is aware of the VikingLink project which proposes to connect GB to Denmark¹. Ofgem have assessed the project as offering £2.6bn in consumer benefits and has granted it initial approval on this basis. Government has also supported it to gain access to European development funding as a Project of Common Interest.

[1] Source, Ofgem: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/decision-initial-project-assessment-fab-link-ifa2-and-viking-link-interconnectors>

■ Solar Power

Mr Jim Cunningham: **[13428]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what recent assessment her Department has made of the ability of the UK solar industry to meet service demand; and if she will make a statement.

Andrea Leadsom:

[Holding answer 29 October 2015]: As set out in the November 2013 Renewable Energy Roadmap Update, analysis indicated a potential deployment range of 7-20 GW (equivalent to 6-18 TWh) of solar PV at all scales, with 20GW being our estimate of the technical maximum level of solar PV deployment by 2020 on the basis of grid and other constraints. Solar PV in the UK was 8.007GW as of August 2015 ¹.

In the absence of cost effective storage, solar PV can make a contribution to meeting electricity demand but this will be limited by the nature of its diurnal cycle.

REF:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/solar-pv-deployment-august-2015>

■ Solar Power: Feed-in Tariffs

Peter Kyle: **[12974]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what assessment she has made of the impact of the reduction in the feed-in tariff rates proposed in the Government's

consultation published on 27 August 2015 on the rooftop solar industry and solar installation companies in the South East region.

Andrea Leadsom:

The impact assessment published alongside the feed in tariff review consultation set out DECC's assessment of the impact of proposed changes across different technologies and tariff bands. This did not include a breakdown by region.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[13692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assistance her Department is providing to the agronomic sector in the UK to reduce (a) carbon emissions and (b) water use; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

Agriculture produces relatively small amounts of carbon dioxide emissions with this gas accounting for around 10% of emissions from the industry sector. The major greenhouse gasses (GHG) produced by agriculture are methane and nitrous oxide. Defra has engaged with the agriculture industry in England to help develop an industry led approach, the Green House Gas Action Plan, which includes farming sector roadmaps for reducing GHG emissions. We will be reviewing progress on the action plan with the industry next year.

The Government is investing £160 million in the UK Agri-Tech Strategy to help take our world class agricultural research to the farm. £60 million of Government and industry funding has already been committed to projects which aim to make farming more productive, resilient and sustainable.

Rural Development Programme (RDPE) funded capital grants are available for reservoirs to improve security of water supplies for agriculture (including horticulture) and reduce pressure on summer water flows in the environment Capital grants to improve efficiency of water application to reduce water use are also available.

Applications are also being processed for Countryside Productivity scheme capital funding for precision farming equipment to improve the accuracy of field operations and application of fertilisers and sprays, which can achieve savings of (typically) 5% plus in fuel, fertilisers and sprays with consequent reduction in CO₂ emissions.

■ Agriculture: Productivity

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[13691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the productivity of UK farmland; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

Defra produces a number of statistics on UK agricultural productivity and these are published on the GOV.UK website.

The land productivity index (calculated as total agricultural output divided by the amount of land in agricultural production) shows:

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Productivity by land	98.1	100.0	103.8	99.2	100.7	107.7

Index base year = 2010

Care needs to be taken in interpreting this measure, as agricultural output is determined by a number of inputs, both within farmers' control (eg. labour) and outside their control (eg. weather).

■ **Non-native Species**

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[13690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent review her Department has conducted of the threat posed to UK agriculture by invasive species; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

Defra commissioned Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International to produce a report, entitled "The Economic Cost of Invasive Non-native Species on Great Britain", which was published in 2010. The report sets out the economic impacts of invasive non-native species to a range of sectors, including agriculture.

The Great Britain Non-native Species Secretariat undertakes risk assessments on potentially invasive non-native species and has completed 75 to date. These risk assessments consider the impacts on a wide range of sectors including agriculture.

An updated Great Britain Invasive Non-native Species Strategy was published in August which sets out a comprehensive framework for delivering action to address the impacts from these species.

■ **Volkswagen**

Mary Creagh:

[\[13689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Environment Agency is undertaking an investigation into defeat devices used by Volkswagen in emissions tests.

Rory Stewart:

The Government has announced a UK programme to retest vehicles including Volkswagen vehicles, led by the regulator for vehicle emissions. This is the Vehicle Certification Agency, not the Environment Agency.

■ **Waste Disposal: EU Law****Mary Creagh:**[\[13685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will assess the costs and benefits of the EU Waste Framework Directive to the UK economy.

Rory Stewart:

An assessment of the costs and benefits of the revised Waste Framework Directive in England and Wales was carried out when laying the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 which transposed the Directive. The assessment was published and is still available on the Legislation.gov webpages. As waste is a devolved issue, the Scottish and Northern Irish administrations carried out and published their own impact assessments, which are similarly available online.

The European Commission are expected to publish proposals to amend the revised Waste Framework Directive on 2 December. Once those proposals are published, we will submit another explanatory memorandum to the House, assessing the potential costs and benefits of those changes.

■ **Water: EU Law****Mary Creagh:**[\[13686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will assess the costs and benefits of the EU Water Framework Directive to the UK economy.

Rory Stewart:

Implementation of the Water Framework Directive within the UK is a devolved matter. In England, the Environment Agency's 2014 consultation on updating the 2009 River Basin Management Plans considered a scenario in which around 75% of waters would reach good status or good ecological potential by 2027 (or later where natural recovery times are an issue). It estimated the benefits of achieving this to be £21 billion (present value), with costs of £12 billion.

The Environment Agency will shortly be submitting its updated proposed River Basin Management Plans with revised estimates of the costs and benefits to the Secretary of State, for consideration with a view to their approval and publication by the end of the year.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ Arms Trade****Dan Jarvis:**[\[12965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to ensure that UK weapons are not used in strikes that constitute serious violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK operates one of the most rigorous and transparent arms export control regimes in the world. All defence and dual-use exports are required to meet the UK's strict export control legislation and adhere to the UK international commitments, including international treaties and obligations. We do not issue an export licence if there is a clear risk that the proposed export might be used for internal repression or in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law, and we take account of any risk that the goods might be diverted to undesirable end-users or end-use.

■ Middle East: Armed Conflict**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[13693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has received from his Turkish counterpart on the ongoing situation in Iraq and Syria; and if he will make a statement.

Mr David Lidington:

We regularly discuss the situation in Syria and Iraq with the Turkish Government. I last met with my Turkish counterpart in August where we discussed the need to support a political solution in Syria and the Iraqi government's efforts to combat ISIL. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge has spoken with the Turkish Foreign Minister a number of times in the last month, where both Ministers made clear that the UK and Turkey would continue to cooperate closely on the situation in Syria and Iraq.

■ South Africa: Crime**Kwasi Kwarteng:**[\[13058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assistance the Government plans to give to authorities in South Africa to help tackle high levels of crime in (a) rural and (b) other areas of that country.

James Duddridge:

Her Majesty's Government provides assistance to South Africa to help tackle organised crime networks and minimise the threat they pose to the UK. This co-operation includes the sharing of information and expertise and the provision of capacity building. It does not differentiate between rural and other areas of the country. These activities form part of the UK's contribution to counter organised crime and it is our policy not to disclose specific details about assistance given.

■ UK Membership of EU

Craig Whittaker: [\[13039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his EU counterparts about further expansion of the membership of the EU.

Mr David Lidington:

The UK supports enlargement of the EU as a driver for peace, prosperity and reform, once countries have met in full the conditions and standards for membership. The Prime Minister, my right hon. Friend, the Member for Witney (Mr Cameron), has made clear that there needs to be reform of the transitional controls on free movement of workers before any further countries join the EU. I discuss enlargement policy and developments in aspirant countries in the course of contacts with EU counterparts and in the context of annual autumn Council discussions on enlargement. Based on latest assessments and enlargement experiences to date, we don't expect further enlargement before the early 2020s.

HEALTH**■ Blood Diseases: Drugs**

John Glen: [\[12557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2015 to Question 10868, on blood diseases: drugs, what assessment his Department has made of the date on which he will issue a tender for extended half-life products.

John Glen: [\[12558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2015 to Question 10868, on blood diseases: drugs, when NHS England plans to take a decision on the development of a clinical commissioning policy for extended half-life products; what discussions NHS England has had to date on such a clinical commissioning policy; and if he will make a statement.

George Freeman:

The timing of the tender is effectively predicated on the availability of licensed products. The Department is in dialogue with those suppliers understood to be concerned in this market to understand their potential capabilities.

NHS England has made no decision to develop a clinical commissioning policy for 'extended half-life products'. The potential need for policy will remain under review by the Clinical Reference Group with input from the Department's Commercial Medicines Unit, as manufacturer's products achieve licence and procurements are completed.

■ Cancer: Drugs

Andrew Percy:

[\[13621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the time taken to decide on patient access scheme applications for drugs through the Cancer Drugs Fund.

George Freeman:

Within the framework set out in the 2014 Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme, a Patient Access Scheme (PAS) can be proposed by a pharmaceutical company and agreed by the Department to improve the cost-effectiveness of a medicine as part of a National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) technology appraisal.

A PAS proposal can only be submitted for a medicine that is available through the Cancer Drugs Fund if that product is also scheduled for appraisal or review by NICE and no assessment has been of the time taken to consider any such PAS proposals.

■ Carers

Alex Cunningham:

[\[13008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the findings of the Carers Trust report published on 16 September 2015, *Analysis of the UK and Impact of Charges by Councils Providing Support to Unpaid Carers*; and if he will make an assessment of the effect of local authority charges on carers for the support they receive to help them in their caring role.

Alistair Burt:

The Department has been clear 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.

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

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

The Care Act replicates the previous position where charging carers was permissible. It would not have been appropriate to impose a blanket ban on charging for carers services, because in some cases small charges are necessary to the viability of services. However, the Care Act provides additional protection to carers by making it clear that local authorities cannot charge carers for services provided to the person being cared for. This means that carers may only be charged for services provided directly to them.

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

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. 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.

■ General Practitioners: Greater London

Sadiq Khan:

[\[13698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the average age was of general practitioners in London in each year since 2010.

Ben Gummer:

The information requested is shown in the following tables:

Average age of all general practitioners (GPs) (including retainers and registrars) in London 2010-14

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
46	45.9	45.7	45.3	45.2

Average age of GPs (excluding retainers and registrars) in London 2010-14

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
47.6	47.5	47.4	47.3	47.1

Source: The Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Note: all figures shown are as at 30 September for each year.

■ Health Professions: Recruitment

Michelle Donelan: [\[13027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he plans to take to encourage more people to join healthcare professions in rural areas experiencing difficulties with staff recruitment.

Ben Gummer:

Health Education England was established to deliver a better healthcare workforce for England and is accountable for ensuring a secure workforce supply for the future. It ensures that the workforce has the right skills, behaviours and training, and is available in the right numbers, to support the delivery of excellent healthcare and drive improvements.

National Health Service organisations are best placed to decide how many staff they employ. Services should be tailored to meet the needs of their patients and local communities, to deliver safe care.

■ Health: Finance

Andrew Gwynne: [\[13677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the local government public health grant will be in (a) 2016-17, (b) 2017-18, (c) 2018-19 and (d) 2019-20; and if he will make a statement.

Jane Ellison:

No decisions have yet been made on the public health grant for future years. This is being considered as part of the Spending Review.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[13718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what equality impact assessment has been carried out on the decision to reduce by £200 million the local government public health grant; and if he will make a statement.

Jane Ellison:

The Department has conducted a public consultation exercise on the options for delivering this saving and specifically invited views in relation to the potential impact on people with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. We will publish our conclusions shortly.

■ In Vitro Fertilisation: Immigrants

Kate Osamor: [\[13119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what his policy is on the provision by the NHS of free IVF to women whose partners have had immigration applications rejected.

Jane Ellison:

The provision of in-vitro fertilisation services is a matter for clinical commissioning groups, in compliance with the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors)

Regulations 2015, and with regard to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines on fertility services.

■ Maternity Services: Multiple Births

Sir Gerald Howarth: [\[13017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether Monitor plans to create a new maternity tariff for multiple pregnancies which more closely meets the costs associated with delivering the best practice care pathways outlined by NICE and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; and if he will make a statement.

Ben Gummer:

Monitor and NHS England are working with providers on a bottom-up costing exercise for maternity services. Returns are due in mid-November and analysis over the following couple of months will help to ensure that the tariffs are improved to more closely reflect the costs of service delivery. This will help inform prices for 2017/18.

■ NHS Trusts

Steve McCabe: [\[12556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that NHS hospital trusts are not placed in special measures.

Ben Gummer:

The Care Quality Commission's (CQC) rigorous inspection regime means that the full picture of services at a particular provider is known and published, and if required, the provider knows what it must do to improve.

Importantly, if the Chief Inspector finds serious failures in quality of care and where there are concerns that existing leadership cannot make the necessary improvements without support, he can recommend that the trust be placed into Special Measures.

Poor care should not be tolerated and Special Measures ensures trusts receive a tailored package of support to enable them to improve.

The CQC uses a risk-assessment approach to inform the order in which providers are inspected. This means where there are concerns about a particular provider they are inspected as a priority, allowing action to be taken earlier.

Early intervention is important and these inspections allow the CQC to get a much more detailed picture in hospitals. If the Chief Inspector concludes that the care needs to improve, he can recommend Monitor and the NHS Trust Development Authority take action.

The NHS Trust Development Authority and Monitor oversee, manage performance and, in Monitor's case for foundation trusts, regulate hospital trusts. Both organisations have a number of options at their disposal to support trusts if they have concerns about their performance before they reach the stage where Special Measures may be required.

In establishing NHS Improvement, we are bringing these two organisations together meaning all NHS providers will be able to access the same support and be subject to the same types of intervention. NHS Improvement will foster, nurture and share best practice. It will help to drive and support both urgent operational improvement at the frontline and the long term sustainability of the healthcare system.

■ NHS: Working Hours

Michelle Donelan: [\[13028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the implementation of seven-day-a-week NHS services on the payment-by-results contracts in clinical commissioning groups.

Ben Gummer:

The Department and NHS England are working together to establish the costs of introducing seven day services over the spending review period.

■ Transvaginal Mesh Implants

Sir Oliver Heald: [\[13725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the Answer of 3 December 2014 to Question 216204, what progress the working group on vaginal tapes and mesh has made concerning transvaginal mesh implants; and if he will make a statement.

George Freeman:

The working group on vaginal tapes and mesh is now finalising its interim recommendations which NHS England expects to publish in November 2015, subject to its internal governance processes.

HOME OFFICE

■ Community Policing: Private Military and Security Companies

Mr Douglas Carswell: [\[12503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to encourage police forces to enable private security firms to provide community security services.

Mike Penning:

The Community Safety Accreditation Scheme, established by the Police Reform Act 2002, seeks to engage those working in community safety, including private companies, to be involved in reducing crime and disorder alongside the police.

Chief constables may accredit employees of an organisation that provides community safety and security services with certain powers. Decisions about accreditation are for Chief Constables locally.

■ Firearms: Licensing

Jim Shannon: [\[13543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with shooting organisations on the cost of firearm licences.

Mike Penning:

There have not been any recent Ministerial discussions with shooting organisations on the cost of firearm licences.

Following a public consultation on a proposal to increase firearms licensing fees, a new fee structure was introduced in Great Britain on 6 April 2015.

The Firearms Fees Working Group will be reconvened in the New Year to oversee the first annual review and representative members will be invited to attend.

■ Immigrants: Deportation

Greg Mulholland: [\[13172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of times a removal direction was issued for people applying to remain in the UK while they were awaiting a court hearing in each of the last five years.

James Brokenshire:

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

However, more generally, under section 78 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, a person may not be removed from, or required to leave, the United Kingdom whilst an in-country appeal is pending, although this does not prevent the giving of a direction for the person's removal, the making of a deportation order, or the taking of any other interim or preparatory action.

■ Migrant Workers: Deportation

Angus Brendan MacNeil: [\[12638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will estimate the cost to the public purse of deporting people who moved to the UK planning to work in the Scottish fishing industry.

James Brokenshire:

Border Force has not deported anyone working in the Scottish Fishing Industry at public expense within the last 5 years.

Immigration Enforcement cannot estimate the cost of deporting people who moved to the UK to work in the Scottish fishing industry as to do so would involve a manual search of records which could only be conducted at disproportionate cost.

■ Undocumented Migrants: France

Tim Farron:

[12091]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her joint declaration with the French Minister of the Interior of 20 September 2014, how much funding her Department has contributed to the Joint Intervention Fund announced in that declaration.

James Brokenshire:

The joint declaration of 20 September 2014 included a £12 million contribution from the UK Government towards a joint fund to strengthen security at Calais and other juxtaposed ports. Since 20 September 2014, the UK Government has committed an estimated £11.54 million from that fund on security and other improvements at the juxtaposed ports, including £1.5 million into the joint fund for a secure zone for HGVs at Calais.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Afghanistan: Earthquakes

Imran Hussain:

[13623]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assistance her Department is providing to areas affected by the recent earthquake in Afghanistan.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

We are in close contact with our governmental and non-governmental partners in Afghanistan and Pakistan who are assessing and responding to the situation on the ground. Whilst we have not received any official requests for assistance at this stage, we do have multi-year humanitarian programmes in both countries which could be drawn upon if needed. In Afghanistan, DFID is providing up to £80 million of humanitarian support over 2015-2019, including through the UN-led Common Humanitarian Fund and the International Committee of the Red Cross. In Pakistan, our multi-year humanitarian programme could provide up to £100 million over 2014-2018 for immediate relief and early recovery, depending on the extent of emergencies which occur. In both countries we are also supporting work by local organisations to build resilience to natural disasters and increase preparedness for recurring events.

■ Department for International Development: Pay

Andrew Gwynne:

[13166]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much was paid in (a) year end and (b) in-year bonuses to officials of her Department in each of the last three years.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

The following table provides the total paid in year-end performance related awards to DFID staff in each of the last three years.

PERFORMANCE YEAR	TOTAL PAID IN YEAR-END PERFORMANCE RELATED AWARDS
2012/13	£1,213,250
2013/14	£1,294,200
2014/15	£850,800

DFID does not award in-year performance related awards.

Non-consolidated performance related pay is only paid to reward excellence, for example to recognise and incentivise those responsible for delivering high quality public services and savings to the taxpayer. These one-off payments are not pensionable. Since 2010-11 the Government has restricted awards for senior civil servants to the top 25% of performers (from 65% in previous years), saving around £15 million overall

■ Turkey: Refugees

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[13694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assistance and support her Department is providing to refugees based in Turkey; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

Turkey hosts almost 2.1 million refugees from Syria, the highest number of refugees of any country in the region surrounding Syria. We commend the generosity that Turkey has shown towards those fleeing the conflict in Syria. The UK has allocated £34 million to support Syrian refugees in Turkey, including food, shelter and primary healthcare. The UK is also working in partnership with Turkish institutions on targeted projects to build their capacity to tackle irregular migration. The EU is currently working in partnership with the Turkish government to explore options for increased support to Turkey. The UK is engaged in this process.

JUSTICE

■ Administration of Justice: Saudi Arabia

Andy Slaughter:

[\[13492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2015 to Question 12217, on judicial co-operation with Saudi Arabia, what the possible areas for co-operation are.

Dominic Raab:

No work has yet been undertaken by the Ministry of Justice as a result of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Andy Slaughter: [\[13493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2015 to Question 12217, on judicial co-operation with Saudi Arabia, when those discussions took place.

Dominic Raab:

Discussions are ongoing. No work has yet been undertaken by the Ministry of Justice as a result of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Andy Slaughter: [\[13724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to Answer of 21 October 2015 to Question 12217, when more discussions on judicial co-operation are planned to take place.

Dominic Raab:

Discussions are ongoing and are being taken forward by the British Embassy in Riyadh. No work has yet been undertaken by the Ministry of Justice as a result of the Memorandum of Understanding.

■ European Convention on Human Rights

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[13624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which of the articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights his Department plans to omit in a future British Bill of Rights.

Dominic Raab:

This Government will fully consult on our proposals this session before introducing legislation for a Bill of Rights. Further details will be announced this Autumn.

■ Insolvency: Legal Costs

Andy Slaughter: [\[13425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of how much revenue will be collected annually by HM Revenue and Customs through insolvency litigation funded by third-party funding.

Dominic Raab:

The Ministry of Justice has not made such an estimate. We are currently considering the way forward for the application of the no win no fee reforms in Part 2 of the LASPO Act 2012 for insolvency litigation.

■ Just Solutions International: Saudi Arabia

Andy Slaughter: [\[13722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the closure of Just Solutions International and termination of all contracts and bids with Saudi Arabia breaks any agreement in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

No. The Memorandum of Understanding and the bids submitted by JSi are entirely separate and there is no link between the two.

■ **Prisons: Saudi Arabia**

Andy Slaughter: [13723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions his Department had with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the recent termination of the Saudi Arabia prison contract.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

I refer the hon member to the Secretary of State's statement of 13 October 2015 at the following link:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151013/debtext/151013-0001.htm#15101362000003>. As has been the practice with successive administrations, details of discussions between Government departments are not normally disclosed.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Northern Ireland Office: Pay**

Andrew Gwynne: [13358]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how much was paid in (a) year-end and (b) in-year bonuses to officials of her Department in each of the last three years.

Mr Ben Wallace:

In the last three financial years my Department paid officials the following amounts for year-end and in-year bonuses:

FINANCIAL YEAR	IN-YEAR BONUSES (£)	YEAR-END BONUSES (£)
2012/13	22,100	35,800
2013/14	32,150	31,800
2014/15	22,710	25,600

Non-consolidated performance related pay is only paid to reward excellence, for example to recognise and incentivise those responsible for delivering high quality public services and savings to the taxpayer. These one-off payments are not pensionable. Since 2010-11, the Government has restricted awards for senior civil servants to the top 25% of performers (from 65% in previous years), saving around £15 million overall.

■ Welfare Tax Credits: Northern Ireland

Danny Kinahan: [\[13590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps she is taking to ensure that discussions on the Stormont House Agreement include tax credits.

Mr Ben Wallace:

A range of issues are under discussion in the cross-party talks. These include welfare reform, the Executive's budget and delivering longer term economic reform. The Government is committed to its long-term economic plan, key elements of which are tackling the deficit, making the costs of welfare sustainable and getting more people into work.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Prime Minister: Correspondence

Chi Onwurah: [\[13633\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, when he plans to respond to the letter he received from the charity Memorial 2007 in May 2015 on funding for the Enslaved Africans Memorial in Hyde Park.

Mr David Cameron:

My office has no record of a letter to me from the charity Memorial 2007 in May 2015.

SCOTLAND

■ Carbon Emissions: Scotland

Alan Brown: [\[13632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, on what dates he has met the Chancellor of the Exchequer to discuss the potential effects in Scotland of a carbon price support exemption scheme since April 2015.

David Mundell:

As indicated in my answer of 20 October, I have had a number of meetings and discussions on the important issue of opencast restoration and in particular the proposal for a carbon price support exemption. These have included discussions with colleagues from HM Treasury, the Department of Energy and Climate Change, the Scottish Government and Local Authorities.

■ Iron and Steel: Scotland

Margaret Ferrier: [\[12723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with the Minister of State for Trade and Investment on the promotion of Scottish steel; and if he will make a statement.

David Mundell:

The UK Government is committed to supporting the Scottish steel industry and collaborating with the Scottish Government in doing so. Scotland Office Ministers and officials have regular discussions with their counterparts at UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) and UKTI works throughout the world to promote our industries through the United Kingdom's extensive consular network.

TRANSPORT■ **Crossrail Line****Lilian Greenwood:**[\[13569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many tonnes of steel (a) used and (b) projected to be used in the construction of Crossrail were sourced from (i) UK-based steel manufacturers and (ii) all steel manufacturers; and what the monetary value was of those orders.

Claire Perry:

Crossrail Ltd. does not directly procure steel as this is undertaken by their tier 1 contractors and their supply chains. However, Crossrail keeps an oversight of its critical contracts and estimates that 85% of its supply chain providing steel to the project is UK based; this includes the 57km of rails for the central tunnelled section that is being sourced from the UK.

■ **Driving Tests****Bridget Phillipson:**[\[13459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will give consideration to introducing the testing of (a) night-time and (b) motorway driving as mandatory components of the driving test.

Andrew Jones:

Current legislation requires the eyesight element of the practical driving test to be conducted in good daylight and prohibits learner drivers from motorways. The learning to drive and testing processes are, however, kept under review. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is currently trialling a series of potential changes aimed at encouraging learner drivers to obtain a wider range of driving experience prior to the practical driving test. This will include driving on roads which require a higher speed and other varying traffic situations. DVSA is also developing clips that depict hazards related to driving at night for inclusion in the hazard perception element of the theory test.

■ **Driving under Influence: Scotland****Bridget Phillipson:**[\[13635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will examine evidence from Scotland on the effects of a lower drink-drive limit; and if he will make it his policy to equalise the limit in England.

Andrew Jones:

Tackling drink driving is a priority for this Government and we have continued to focus on tough enforcement. In April 2015 legislation was introduced through the De-Regulation Act which removed the automatic right for drivers who fail a breathalyser test to demand a blood or urine test. This has denied people the chance to sober up while waiting for the test to be taken. Also, 'High Risk Offenders' are now required to prove that they are no longer alcohol-dependent before being allowed to drive.

I would be interested to see a robust and comprehensive evaluation of the change to the Scottish drink drive limit.

■ **Iron and Steel****Lilian Greenwood:**[\[13618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what orders were placed by (a) Network Rail and (b) Highways England for (i) steel manufactured by UK-based companies and (ii) all steel in 2014-15; and what tonnage was ordered at what cost in each such order.

Lilian Greenwood:[\[13620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of changes in UK steel output in the last five years on the (a) value of orders placed by Network Rail and Highways England to companies in the UK supply chain and (b) projected number of steel-carrying rail freight movements over the next three years.

Claire Perry:

Network Rail advises that for its major use of steel it has a five year framework contract from April 2014 for the supply of new steel rails from Long Steels UK Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tata Steel. Network Rail is in close contact with Tata Steel to ensure continuity of supply.

Network Rail buys approximately 140,000 tonnes of steel rail per annum from Tata Steel, which equates to around 95% of total aggregated demand for Network Rail. This is supplied directly from Scunthorpe. Smaller contracts are also in place with Arcelor Mittal (Spain) and Voestalpine (Austria). These relate to the manufacture of very special steel products.

These volumes are broken down as follows. The figures for 2015-16 are provisional:

YEAR	TATA SUPPLY (TONNES)	TATA SPEND (£)
2011-12	137,762.2408	97,715,813.91
2012-13	142,022.9286	100,210,560.98
2013-14	158,891.8490	107,201,303.99
2014-15	138,387.2325	90,832,520.93
2015-16	138,000	87,713,500.74

Highways England does not procure steel materials directly. Despite the changes in UK steel output over the last five years, Highways England and its predecessor have continued to invest heavily in UK steel. During this period Highways England has used a category management framework as the main method of procuring steel gantries for the Strategic Road Network. To date circa 95% of this steel has been drawn from Tata Steel in the UK, which equates to approximately 11,000 tonnes of steel. The approximate framework spend is £30 million, of which about 35% will be steel procurement i.e. raw materials, and will equate to around £10.5 million.

As rail freight is a wholly commercial business and therefore has to respond to market changes as part of its operational model, the Government does not itself undertake assessments of the impact on rail freight of variations in the flows of specific commodities. Network Rail's Freight Market Study, published in 2013, assumed a small recovery in the steel market based on information available at that time.

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr David Anderson: [\[13042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to respond to the letter from the Leader of Gateshead Council of 25 June 2015 on upgrading the A1 between the Birtley and Coal House interchanges.

Andrew Jones:

A reply was sent on 22 July 2015.

■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance

Sir David Amess: [\[13000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment the Government has made of the financial effect on consumers of the requirement for drivers to be insured at all times under the Road Safety Act 2006.

Andrew Jones:

Since the introduction of the Continuous Insurance Enforcement (CIE) scheme, the level of uninsured driving has been reduced from 1.4 million vehicles at the end of 2010 to 1.0 million at the end of 2014, a 29% reduction. CIE has promoted positive changes in vehicle keeper behaviour and contributes significantly to making our roads safer and in helping keep down insurance premiums for the honest motorist.

■ Railways: Electrification

Kate Hollern: [\[13715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent progress has been made on his Department's rail electrification programme.

Andrew Jones:

Since 2010, the Department has overseen the successful delivery of 50 miles of electrified track as compared to the ten miles which were delivered in the 13 years from 1997 to 2010. Electrification between Liverpool and Manchester, and Liverpool and Wigan, was completed earlier this year.

The work to electrify and upgrade the North TransPennine has resumed, as announced on 30 September 2015 by the Secretary of State. When the North of England electrification programme is finished, the whole route from Liverpool to Newcastle (via Manchester, Leeds and York) will be fully electrified.

Railways: Tickets**Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[12942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans for the South East Flexible Ticketing scheme to be delivered.

Claire Perry:

Smart ticketing was taken forward by the Coalition Government after 2010. Five train operators, serving 73% of all rail season ticket holders in the South East, have now signed up to the South East Flexible Ticketing (SEFT) programme.

Smart season tickets are already available to customers on Govia Thameslink Railway and c2c. South West Trains and Abellio Greater Anglia plan to introduce smart seasons on their services in January 2016; Southeastern will follow at the end of 2016.

A new SEFT central back office, providing critical IT infrastructure and data processing capability, underwent testing in August 2015. This will enable train operators to consider a range of new products and services including automatic delay repay, flexible season tickets and loyalty schemes, and also to extend smart ticketing across a range of transport modes including rail, trams and buses.

In September 2015, Birmingham New Street station reopened with smart-enabled ticket barriers supported by the central back office.

On current plans, the South East Flexible Ticketing programme will complete in 2018.

Roads: Safety**Kate Hollern:**[\[13678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to reintroduce National Road Safety targets.

Andrew Jones:

The Conservative Manifesto 2015 had a commitment to reduce the number of cyclists and other road users killed or injured on our roads every year. We are working closely with road safety groups to consider what more can be done and we believe that every death is a tragedy and is one too many.

The Government has not set road safety targets for local authorities or the police, and is not considering reinstating them. We do not believe that further persuasion is needed on the importance of road safety through “Whitehall knows best” diktats. However, local authorities and the police are free to set their own targets if they find this useful.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Freedom of Information

Stephen Timms: [13627]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Freedom of Information requests were (a) submitted to, (b) acceded to and (c) refused by his Department in each of the last five years.

Justin Tomlinson:

Information on Freedom of Information performance for the last five years for all Government Departments, including DWP, is routinely published on GOV.UK.

These reports are published quarterly and annually and include the number of requests received, acceded to and refused.

They are published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=freedom+of+information+statistics+&tab=government-results>

■ Disability Living Allowance: Children

Frank Field: [13684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many disability living allowance applications for children with ADHD were (a) accepted and b) rejected in the most recent 12 months for which data is available.

Justin Tomlinson:

The requested data is not available.

Child Disability Living Allowance (DLA) caseload statistics by main disabling condition are published on gov.uk at <http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/100pc/tabtool.html>

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is not listed separately but under the broader descriptor Hyperkinetic Syndrome. As of February 2015, there are 44,740 children with Hyperkinetic Syndrome being paid DLA out of 391,000 children in total.

■ Employment and Support Allowance

Mr Mark Hendrick: [13564]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent meetings Ministers in his Department have had with cancer campaign groups on proposals in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill on changes to employment and support allowance for people in the work-related activity group.

Priti Patel:

Ministers regularly have meetings with a variety of stakeholders, including cancer charities; as part of their role.

■ Pension Credit

Drew Hendry:

[13630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to increase the uptake of pension credit by people who are eligible.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are committed to ensuring that older people receive the support they are entitled to and the Department targets activity on engaging with people who may be eligible at pivotal stages such as when they claim State Pension or report a change in their circumstances.

We use a wide range of channels to communicate information about Pension Credit to potential customers, including information on gov.uk, in leaflets and by telephone.

We believe that one of the best ways to reach those eligible customers who may be reluctant to claim is through trusted messengers working in the community and DWP provides a web-based Pension Credit toolkit at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pension-credit-toolkit> containing a range of resources for anyone working with pensioners. It contains guides to Pension Credit, examples of the reasons why eligible customers might not claim, ideas for encouraging take-up, and makes available a range of publicity material.

To increase take-up we are currently engaging with community partners through the Age Action Alliance and have recently begun a series of workshops designed to publicise the toolkit resources and to allow partners to share best practice of what works to encourage take-up.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Neil Coyle:

[13726]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 23 October 2015 to Question 12674, what his Department is doing to ensure that people provide sufficient written medical information for their initial Personal Independence Payment decision to prevent the need for reconsiderations and appeals.

Justin Tomlinson:

Claimants are invited to provide any evidence that they have to hand when they submit their "PIP2 How your disability affects you" questionnaire. We also ask them who assessment providers can approach to seek further evidence.

We have worked with organisations representing disabled people to improve our communications; we now provide additional information to claimants outlining more specifically the types of evidence which are most helpful in enabling us to carry out an assessment.

In every case the health professional conducting the assessment will consider any evidence that the claimant has provided, and will also consider whether further evidence will help them in providing advice on the claim to the Department's decision maker. Ensuring that the claimant is able to tell us who is best placed to provide supporting evidence forms a core part of our approach. Such evidence can come from a variety of sources, including GPs, hospital consultants, community psychiatric nurses and social workers, as well as family members and carers.

We would urge all advisors and advocates to encourage claimants to provide relevant evidence at the earliest opportunity to avoid the need for reconsiderations and appeals, and minimise consequent costs for the tax-payer.

■ Social Security Benefits

Phil Boswell: [\[13052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what procedures his Department has in place to correct errors when benefits are paid into the wrong bank account.

Priti Patel:

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have a clear policy on correcting errors where payments have been made to an incorrect bank account. This ensures that, where an error has been made, the intended recipient still receives the payments that they are entitled to. The Department also has clear procedures to recover funds paid to wrong accounts.

The procedures include establishing if the customer provided incorrect account details to the Department. If so, the account details are updated to protect further payments, but the claimant is asked to contact their bank for advice, as DWP had acted in accordance with their instructions.

Where official error led to an incorrect account being used then the missing payment is re-issued to the claimant using the correct account details. DWP then seeks recovery of the funds from the unintended recipient, either directly, where contact details are held on DWP's systems or indirectly through a letter forwarded by the receiving bank, building society, or other institution, as appropriate.

■ Social Security Benefits: Multiple Sclerosis

Stephen Timms: [\[13626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, in what ways his Department's requirements for reassessment of continuing claims for (a) employment and support allowance and (b) personal independence payment by people with multiple sclerosis reflect the degenerative nature of that condition.

Stephen Timms: [\[13629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how frequently a person with a (a) multiple sclerosis and (b) another degenerative disease should be required to attend an

assessment in connection with their claim for (i) employment and support allowance and (ii) personal independence payment.

Priti Patel:

The Work Capability Assessment (WCA) assesses individuals against a set of functional descriptors not specific conditions, as two people with the same condition can be affected in different ways. This does however take account of how fluctuating and degenerative conditions, such multiple sclerosis, affect a claimant's ability to work.

A healthcare professional gives advice on when they think a claimants functional capability may have changed sufficiently to trigger a change in the outcome of the WCA. Re-referral dates chosen can be 3, 6, 12, 18, 24 or 36 months depending on when it is considered most appropriate for the claimant to have their next contact with the Department.

Decisions on claims to Personal Independence Payment are made by case managers and are based on advice received from the assessment providers following an assessment, together with any other evidence received. People with a progressive condition, and who are not expected to live beyond six months, are not required to attend a face-to-face assessment and their claims will always be decided on the basis of the evidence received.

Claims to Personal Independence Payment are looked at individually, considering the impact on daily living and mobility of the impairment or health condition, rather than solely basing the decision on the impairment or health condition itself. Award durations and reviews are based on an assessment of whether the individual's functional abilities are likely to deteriorate, improve or stay the same. Reviews ensure that claimants continue to receive the appropriate level of award throughout their claim, including claimants with degenerative conditions who may get a higher award at review to reflect a deterioration in their condition.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Overpayments**

Louise Haigh:

[\[13614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the total value is of benefit overpayments which have been written off by his Department due to a failure to keep and maintain adequate records since 2010.

Justin Tomlinson:

This information can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ **Universal Credit: Landlords**

Drew Hendry:

[\[13631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that landlords receive the expected rent payments for tenants in properties in areas where universal credit is rolled out.

Justin Tomlinson:

Universal Credit is usually paid directly to claimants as a single monthly sum.

In certain circumstances, such as where a claimant is identified as vulnerable, the Department may make alternative payment arrangements for rent to be paid directly to landlords.

The Department is also conducting a pilot with a selection of landlords from the social housing sector where the landlord can identify claimants with a need for alternative payments arrangements and make recommendations to DWP for rapid implementation of direct payments.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HEALTH

■ Health Informal Council: 24-25 September 2015

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health (Jane Ellison):
[\[HCWS280\]](#)

An Informal Health Council meeting was held in Luxembourg on 24-25 September 2015 as part of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council formation. The UK was represented by a senior official.

Among the issues discussed were prevention, removing stigma, early diagnosis and investment in research. The UK's work on dementia was recognised and there was agreement on the need for further work following the World Health Organisation (WHO) conference that was held earlier in the year in March.

Trans Fatty Acids (TFAs)

A variety of views were expressed about whether regulation or a voluntary approach should be taken towards trans fatty acids (TFAs). Most Member States would await an upcoming Commission report on TFAs before taking a firm view. The UK outlined its national voluntary action to reduce TFAs and the importance of an evidence based approach. The Commissioner said that they were in the process of finalising the report and that it would be presented in December.

Migration

The UK outlined work it is undertaking with Syrian refugees in countries bordering Syria, called for a comprehensive approach to the crisis, and referred to the work of the Health Security Committee. The Commission called for solidarity and outlined the extra funding that had been allocated as well as a letter that had been sent to all Ministers on this issue.

European Semester

A vast majority of Member States argued strongly against the involvement of the European Semester in healthcare. The UK welcomed the recent narrower focus of the semester and called for it to concentrate on sustainability and cost effectiveness. The UK also called for Health Ministers to be more involved in the Social Protection Committee process on matters relating to healthcare.

Cross Border Directive

Most Member States were positive about progress that has been made on the Cross-Border Directive, with a number suggesting that patients should be better informed about their rights. The UK welcomed the Commission's report on the operation of the Directive but added that, whilst the principles of the Directive are sound, more needs to be done at EU

level to clarify and simplify the interaction of this new legislation with existing patient mobility rules (the EU Social Security Coordination Regulations).

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Foreign Affairs Council for Development: October 2015

The Secretary of State for International Development (Justine Greening):
[[HCWS279](#)]

On 26 October, I attended the Foreign Affairs Council for Development in Luxembourg. The meeting was chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini. She also hosted a joint lunch with Environment Minister to discuss the implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030. A [provisional report of the meeting and Conclusions adopted](#) will be deposited in the Library of the House for the convenience of members.

Humanitarian Affairs

The Council discussed how the EU could play a leading role at the forthcoming World Humanitarian Summit. A notable common thread was on the need for a new approach to funding; more genuine partnerships with affected governments, the private sector, civil society and diaspora; and the need for innovation. I led calls for better enforcement of International Humanitarian Law to protect civilians; a reformed approach to finance, blending public and private approaches and moving beyond initial emergency response to focus on education and livelihoods; and a bold approach to gender equality in humanitarian action, including a global coordinated approach to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. In addition to the exchange of views, Commission Vice President Georgieva presented the work of the UN High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing.

Migration, refugees and development

The Council discussion focussed largely on preparation for the forthcoming Valletta Summit, and in particular the Emergency Trust Fund which was intended to be a key deliverable for the Summit. I emphasized the UK's view that the Summit needs to demonstrate Europe's credibility, leadership, and commitment to respond quickly to the serious problems posed by migrants crossing the Mediterranean. The UK has taken a leading role in pressing for a substantive discussion on tackling the root causes of migration, a mutual challenge faced by Europe and Africa – a lack of growth, jobs, opportunity in African countries – and the concrete actions needed to turn the situation around. I emphasised the need to review the Commission's existing financial instruments to ensure they are flexible and fit for purpose for a rapid response to ongoing crises. I also pressed other Member States to step up their own financial commitments to address the Syria crisis, alongside UK leadership.

Gender Action Plan

The Council adopted Conclusions on the new Gender Action Plan (2015-2020) (GAP), which the UK has been a key actor in shaping. I welcomed the new GAP as a landmark opportunity

for the EU to take significant steps forward in delivering tangible results for women and girls across the world and pressed for its full implementation.

EU-Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) relationship ("Post-Cotonou")

The Council also discussed the future of the EU's relationship with the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states), with the expiry of the existing Cotonou Partnership Agreement set for 2020. This is an important opportunity for the EU to modernise its relationship with the ACP, so that it is relevant, forward-looking and consistent with Agenda 2030. I called for the Commission to have a broad review, base policy decisions on the evidence of Cotonou's impact and actively seek a wide range of views during the consultation period.

Implementation of the Agenda 2030

During lunch, in a joint session with Environment Ministers, we discussed the implementation of the recently-agreed 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (the Post-2015 Development Framework). I emphasized the importance of looking at the implementation of the Agenda 2030 alongside the other major processes - including the mid-term reviews of the financial instruments and the Cotonou Agreement – occurring over the next five years.

Any other business

The Council adopted several sets of Council Conclusions, including on [Afghanistan](#) ; the [Horn of Africa Action Plan](#) ; and the 2015 Report on [Policy Coherence for Development](#). In addition, the decision to open consultation with Burundi on restrictive measures under the EU-ACP (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) Partnership Agreement was also [approved](#). Details of these Council conclusions will also be placed in the Library of the House.