



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 30 November 2015 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:47 P.M., 30 November 2015). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

#### ■ ACAS

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[17042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how many early conciliation cases processed by Acas in each quarter since October 2013 related to disputes regarding (a) non-payment of wages and (b) non-compliance with minimum wage legislation; and how many such cases (i) resulted in early conciliation and (ii) progressed to an employment tribunal.

**Nick Boles:**

The information will take time to collate. When collated, I will place this information in the Libraries of the House.

#### ■ Business: Billing

**Adam Afriyie:**

[\[17357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Prompt Payment Code on (a) UK businesses in the FinTech sector and (b) other businesses.

**Anna Soubry:**

The Prompt Payment Code is a voluntary code which organisations from the public, private and third sector can sign up to. The Government monitors a variety of sources to monitor the level of late payment debt. We are not able to assess the direct effect of the Prompt Payment Code on any individual sector.

New transparency measures will allow us to monitor the payment performance of signatories. Through powers in the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 the Government will introduce a new reporting requirement on the UK's largest companies – including many Code signatories - to report on their payment practices and performance. We plan to introduce this next year, and the Code will make full use of this new information. From next year small and medium-sized Code signatories will also report on their payment performance directly to the Code. Small and medium-sized companies will report, on an annual basis, on a comply or explain basis.

#### ■ Cleveland Potash: Redundancy

**Tom Blenkinsop:**

[\[16315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how much funding his Department will make available to support the retraining of workers recently made redundant by Cleveland Potash.

**Anna Soubry:**

This is clearly a worrying time for those affected by ICL's announcement that it is proposing to make 220 employees and 140 contractors redundant as part of a restructuring at its Boulby mine. Those affected will be able to access Jobcentre Plus' Rapid Response Service, which is delivered locally with partners, is tailored to an individual's needs, and can include some or all of the following elements:

- Help with job searches, including CV writing and interview skills.
- Help to identify transferable skills and skills gaps (linked to the local labour market).
- Training to update skills, learn new ones and gain industry recognised certification that will improve employability.
- Help to overcome barriers to attending training or securing a job or self-employment such as child care costs, tools, work clothes, travel costs etc.

We will, of course, consider with local partners whether the area needs extra support to respond to this news - including Jobcentre Plus, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Local Authority. However it is important to fully understand the impacts of this announcement before any decisions are taken.

Whilst this remains a difficult time, it was encouraging to read that the company intends to invest at least £20m in infrastructure at the mine to support its restructure.

**■ Government Assistance****Anna Turley:**[\[14928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what action can be taken within state aid rules to secure assets of national strategic significance to the British economy.

**Anna Soubry:**

A Member State may purchase or invest in an asset on purely commercial terms, as commercial investment is not subject to state aid rules. However, any subsequent injection of funds would be subject to the rules, unless it too was on commercial terms. It should be noted that the state aid rules apply equally to nationalised and privatised companies. With losses of over £600 million in just over three years and hundreds of millions in debts, commercial terms for SSI UK would have been impossible to meet.

More generally, it is possible to give a variety of types of aid under the rules including aid for research and development, and environmental protection. Restructuring and rescue of steel however is prohibited.

**■ Green Investment Bank: Privatisation****Kevin Brennan:**[\[14108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what ability the Government plans to retain to ensure that the Green Investment Bank operates according to its original purposes after that body's privatisation.

**Anna Soubry:**

Green investment is what the Green Investment Bank (GIB) does and is where its value lies. It is clear from preliminary feedback that potential investors are interested in GIB precisely because of its unique green specialism and its existing forward business plan and pipeline of green projects. Investors will have sound commercial reasons to maintain GIB's green focus and continue operating in accordance with its clearly stated green principles and highly transparent and robust green reporting practices.

As a key part of any sale discussions, potential investors will be asked to confirm their commitment to these values and to set out how they propose to protect them. We envisage this would involve new shareholders agreeing to:

- ensure GIB continues to invest in a way that achieves a positive green impact; and
- maintain GIB's existing standards for reporting on its green investment performance as well as continue providing for independent assurance of this.

It is important to understand Government could not impose binding conditions on future owners of GIB to act in a particular way while also securing our key objective of removing state control over GIB so it can be reclassified to the private sector.

**Mr Nick Hurd:**[\[16814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, whether the privatisation of the Green Investment Bank will be by asset sale or as a going concern.

**Anna Soubry:**

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills' written Ministerial Statements of 25 June and 15 October make clear that the Government is moving UK Green Investment Bank plc (GIB) into private ownership and repealing the GIB legislation so that, following a sale, GIB can continue to operate as a going concern and be reclassified to the private sector with the freedom to borrow and raise a much greater volume of private capital without affecting public sector debt.

**■ Iron and Steel: China****Jim Shannon:**[\[17229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what assessment he has made of the potential threat to national security of the involvement of Chinese government companies in the UK steel industry.

**Anna Soubry:**

We scrutinise closely any deal that may have implications for national security.

**■ Iron and Steel: Imports****Bill Esterson:**[\[17451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what assessment he has made of the reliance of the UK economy on imports of steel from countries outside the EU.



**Anna Soubry:**

The Government supports an open market for steel and UK consumers are free to source their requirements from anywhere in the world as long as imported material is traded fairly and meets quality and standards criteria where applicable.

Data on UK imports of steel as a share of domestic demand are published by the EEF on behalf of UK Steel in their Key Statistics 2015 report, which can be found at the EEF website under the 'Publications' page. Please note that these figures exclude imports made by steel producers.

**■ Manufacturing Industries****Bill Esterson:**[\[17449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what his strategy is for maximising the economic contribution of (a) the steel industry and (b) other industries vital to the UK's economic success.

**Anna Soubry:**

The best way the Government can support our industries is to continue to deliver a strong and growing economy.

In the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced an exemption for Energy Intensive Industries (EIs), including the steel industry, from the policy costs of the Renewables Obligation and Feed-in Tariffs, a hugely significant step to provide industry with long-term certainty and helping them remain competitive. This is on top of the millions that has already been paid in compensation to EIs for energy costs.

The Government engages with various industrial sectors through our Sector Councils, where we discuss the opportunities and challenges facing certain sectors.

The Government recognises the current difficulties that are unique to the steel sector. While we cannot fix the price of steel, halt global overproduction or fix currency rates, the Government has taken a number of measures to help our steel industry.

We have taken action on unfair trade, recently voting in support of anti-dumping measures on wire rod and steel tubing imports, as well as lobbying successfully for an investigation into cheap imports of Reinforcing Steel Bar.

The steel industry's request for flexibility over Industrial Emissions Directive exemptions has been secured. This will save the industry millions of pounds of unnecessary expenditure at a time of crisis by offering steel companies more time to comply with this European legislation.

Finally, we are taking action to drive up the number of public contracts won by UK steel manufacturers and their partners through fair and open competition. The Government published on 30 October new guidelines for departments to apply on major projects when sourcing and buying steel. The new instructions will help steel suppliers compete on a level playing field with international suppliers for major Government projects.

## ■ Nuclear Power: Regulation

**Paul Flynn:** [\[15833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, if he will assess the effect on the ability of the Office for Nuclear Regulations to carry out its functions of the provisions of the Regulators' Code requiring regulatory agencies to consider how they might support or enable economic growth for compliant businesses they regulate.

**Anna Soubry:**

The Regulators' Code came into force in April 2014 and provides a framework for how regulators should engage with those they regulate. The code, which is underpinned by the principles of better regulation, says that regulators should carry out their activities in a way that supports those they regulate to comply and grow and to consider whether they are able to reduce the administrative burden on business or streamline certain processes whilst still achieving the same social, environmental or economic outcomes.

The Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) is expected to demonstrate compliance with the Code without compromising its core purpose of nuclear safety and security. The ONR has recently published the results of a review they undertook to assess compliance against the Code in September 2015: <http://news.onr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/report.pdf>.

The review found that the requirements of the Code are being met and have identified eight additional actions to further embed the Code over the next year. These measures such as a commitment undertake a review of its economic impact on duty holders, which will support them in carrying out their activities in a way that supports those they regulate to comply and grow further enable economic growth. In doing so, it does not compromise effective regulation to maintain robust safety and security standards.

## ■ Research: Finance

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** [\[17311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of government funding for translational research programmes; and if he will make a statement.

**Joseph Johnson:**

The Government's Productivity Plan in July set out our ambition that UK Universities will continue to increase their collaborations with industry to drive the translation and commercialisation of research and broader knowledge exchange. Universities' external income from engagement with business and the community reached £3.93 billion in 2013-14, up by 27% from 2009-10. The World Economic Forum ranks the UK among the top four nations in the world for university-industry collaboration in R&D. The recent Research Excellence Framework 2014 has demonstrated the breadth and extent of economic impact arising from university research, with 84% of submissions assessed as outstanding or very considerable by expert and academic peer review.

**■ Sahaviriya Steel Industries UK: Redcar**

**Anna Turley:** [\[15649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, if he will list (a) his Department's correspondence and (b) meetings with the former hon. Member for Redcar between May 2010 and May 2015 on SSI Redcar.

**Anna Soubry:**

It is an established convention that Ministers of one Administration cannot see the documents of a previous Administration. I am therefore unable to provide the information requested by the hon Member.

**■ Students: Finance**

**Rushanara Ali:** [\[17520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how many students are supported by universities through the Student Opportunity Allocation fund.

**Rushanara Ali:** [\[17521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what proportion of students supported by universities through the Student Opportunity Allocation fund have disabilities.

**Joseph Johnson:**

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) allocates the Student Opportunity Fund to Higher Education providers as part of the teaching grant.. Although the different elements of the fund are calculated on the basis of the number of students within an institution with particular characteristics, institutions have been able to use the funding in whichever way they feel is most appropriate for their students. Therefore, there is no centrally collected data on the numbers of students supported by the fund.

**■ Students: Loans**

**Michael Dugher:** [\[16060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, if he will estimate the number of people who would be worse off financially if the threshold for student loan repayments were not index-linked in (a) Barnsley East constituency, (b) Barnsley, (c) South Yorkshire and (d) Yorkshire and the Humber.

**Joseph Johnson:**

The Student Loans Company (SLC) administers student support for each of the UK Government Administrations. Information on English loan borrowers is published annually by SLC in the Statistical First Release '*Student Loans in England: FY 2014-15*'.

<http://www.slc.co.uk/official-statistics/student-loans-debt-and-repayment/england.aspx>

The numbers of borrowers at the end of the 2014-15 financial year with post-2012 student loan arrangements who had been domiciled in (a) Barnsley East constituency, (b) Barnsley, (c) South Yorkshire and (d) Yorkshire and the Humber when they applied for financial support is set out in the following table:

**BORROWERS AT THE END OF THE 2014-15 FINANCIAL YEAR <sup>(1)</sup> WITH POST-2012 LOAN ARRANGEMENTS BY DOMICILE**

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<b>Geographical Area</b>	<b>Students (2,3,4)</b>
Barnsley East and Mexborough	1,330
Barnsley	3,610
South Yorkshire	20,350
Yorkshire and the Humber	94,370

Source: Student Loans Company

Notes:

(1) As of 31/03/2015

(2) Includes only students with loans with a non-zero balance

(3) Excludes Further Education students (4) Figures rounded to the nearest multiple of 10

Freezing the repayment threshold will not affect the up-front cost of attending university. It would mean that students on average meet a greater share of these costs over their working life through loan repayments, helping ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the system. Those earning below the repayment threshold will not be affected by the proposed changes.

■ **Universities: Mental Health Services**

**Luciana Berger:** [\[17399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what safeguards his Department is putting in place to ensure the quality of university specialist mental health mentoring provision when the new single quote system is introduced.

**Luciana Berger:** [\[17400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what analysis his Department has undertaken to assess the effect of the proposed changes on the standard of

support from university specialist mental health mentoring provision and the effect this could have on at-risk students.

**Luciana Berger:** [\[17401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what public consultation has taken place with whom in preparation for the introduction of the two-quote system for university specialist mental health mentoring provision.

**Luciana Berger:** [\[17402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what plans he has to assure the quality of providers of the new two tier university specialist mental health mentoring provision.

**Joseph Johnson:**

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have clear responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to support students, including those with mental health conditions. It is for the HEI to determine what welfare and counselling services they need to provide to their students.

In addition, Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs) are available to meet the additional costs of study-related support needs, where the needs of the student cannot be met by the institution by way of a reasonable adjustment.

A new quality assurance framework is being developed for support that is funded by DSAs, so as to provide assurance on both quality and financial matters. The quality assurance framework will be in place in 2016. All support workers will be required to meet quality standards in order to be funded through DSAs. Discussions with stakeholders regarding new mechanisms for the selection of non-medical help support providers are already underway.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Cabinet Office: Ministers' Private Offices

**Louise Haigh:** [\[17505\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2015 to Question 10866, when he will next publish the job titles and pay grades of appointments to extended ministerial offices.

**Matthew Hancock:**

The government publishes information on the job titles and pay grades of senior civil servants along with the numbers of staff they manage on a twice yearly basis.

**■ Civil Servants: Deployment**

**Louise Haigh:** [\[17629\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil servants in each Department are in the redeployment pool.

**Matthew Hancock:**

Workforce planning and redeployment pools are the responsibility of each individual Department to determine and manage. The numbers in redeployment pools is under constant change and therefore this information is not held centrally.

**■ Foreign Companies: North Korea**

**Fiona Bruce:** [\[17315\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many North Korean owned or financed businesses operate in the UK.

**Mr Rob Wilson:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Letter to Member - North Korean Businesses [17315 FINAL.pdf]

**■ Freedom of Information**

**Andy Slaughter:** [\[17605\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 24 November 2015 to Question 13072, for what reasons the Prime Minister decided to transfer responsibility for the Freedom of Information Act from the Ministry of Justice to the Cabinet Office.

**Matthew Hancock:**

I refer the hon. Member to the Written Ministerial Statement of 17 July [HLWS134].

**■ Government Departments: Disclosure of Information**

**Kirsty Blackman:** [\[17600\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure regular publication of departmental transparency data.

**Matthew Hancock:**

We are committed to publishing data in a timely fashion, and further transparency data will be published in due course.

**■ Government Departments: Pay**

**Chris Stephens:** [\[17185\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what percentage pay award was made to employees of each Government department in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

**Matthew Hancock:**

In line with Public Sector Pay Policy, Civil Service departments and agencies made average consolidated pay awards of 1 per cent in 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16. Departments and agencies are responsible for determining how to allocate the award to their staff, but the Government expects pay increases to be applied in a targeted manner within workforces to support high performance and the delivery of public services.

**Government Departments: Recruitment****Mark Spencer:**[\[17155\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what information he holds on the average time taken by each Government department to respond to a request by a current or former employee for a job reference.

**Matthew Hancock:**

This information is not held centrally. The provision of employee references is the responsibility of each departmental employer.

**Government Departments: Trade Union Officials****Chris Stephens:**[\[17240\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of the expenditure of each Government department in the last 12 months has related to the payment of trades union officials for facility time; and if he will make a statement.

**Matthew Hancock:**

The Cabinet Office publishes data relating to Civil Service facility time on a quarterly basis. The latest data is available

at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trade-union-facility-time> .

**Infrastructure: Electronic Warfare****Mr Nicholas Brown:**[\[17118\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the vulnerability of the UK's critical infrastructure from cyber attack; and what investment his Department is making to improve the security of the UK's critical infrastructure from such attacks.

**Matthew Hancock:**

For security reasons we do not comment on details of our vulnerability to cyber attacks. The Government takes cyber security very seriously; since 2011 we have invested £860 million in a National Cyber Security Programme. As announced in the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, we plan to almost double investment in cyber security to £1.9bn over the next five years, which includes further investment in protecting the UK's critical national infrastructure.

**■ Skin Cancer****John Mann:** [\[17642\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people were diagnosed with melanoma in the most recent period for which figures are available.

**Mr Rob Wilson:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Letter to Member - Melanoma Diagnosis [17642 FINAL.pdf]

**■ Young People****Peter Kyle:** [\[17691\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of people aged (a) 16, (b) 17 and (c) 18 there will be in England in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017, (iii) 2018, (iv) 2019 and (v) 2020.

**Mr Rob Wilson:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Letter to Member - 16,17,18 yrs in England [17691 FINAL.pdf]

**TREASURY****■ First Time Buyers****Mr Stewart Jackson:** [\[17577\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have received funding from government schemes to assist first-time home buyers in (a) Peterborough and (b) England in each year since 2010; and if he will make a statement.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government does not hold annual figures for the number of first time buyers who have received funding since 2010. However since the launch of The Help to Buy: Equity loan in April 2013, funding has been made available to support 46,133 first time buyers in England, of whom 601 were in Peterborough. Funding has also been made available to support 19,971 first time buyers in England, of which 154 were in Peterborough, through the Firstbuy and Homebuy Direct schemes.

To support more first time buyers, the Government announced at the Spending Review plans to extend the Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme until 2021, launch London Help to Buy and build 200,000 starter homes, to be sold at a 20% discount to young first time buyers. The Government is also launching Help to Buy: ISA, giving savers a bonus to help them purchase their first property.



**■ Local Government: Edinburgh**

**Owen Thompson:** [\[17743\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Spending Review 2015, what steps he plans to take on the proposed Edinburgh City Region Deal.

**Greg Hands:**

We are working with Edinburgh and South East Scotland on their proposals to drive local economic growth and will continue to do so in discussion with the Scottish Government.

**■ Rangers Football Club: Employee Benefit Trusts**

**Dr Tania Mathias:** [\[17442\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps HM Revenue and Customs is taking to recover money owed by people who benefited from the employee benefit trust scheme used by Glasgow Rangers Football Club.

**Mr David Gauke:**

HM Revenue and Customs has a statutory duty to maintain taxpayer confidentiality and cannot comment on the affairs of individual taxpayers.

**■ Revenue and Customs: Liverpool**

**Ian C. Lucas:** [\[17586\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of capacity on travel routes from Wrexham to Liverpool for HM Revenue and Customs staff redeployed from Wrexham to Liverpool.

**Ian C. Lucas:** [\[17587\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with education and training providers in (a) Wrexham and (b) Cardiff on future capacity to train HM Revenue and Customs staff.

**Ian C. Lucas:** [\[17588\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will undertake a comparative assessment of commercial rents for possible HM Revenue and Customs offices in (a) Wrexham and (b) Cardiff.

**Ian C. Lucas:** [\[17597\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, from which HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) offices staff will be redeployed to the proposed new Liverpool HMRC office.

**Ian C. Lucas:** [\[17659\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the size of the Liverpool HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) office will be at the end of the period of reorganisation of HMRC offices.

Ian C. Lucas: [\[17660\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what criteria his Department used to select sites for HM Revenue and Customs regional offices.

**Mr David Gauke:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) announced the planned locations of its future Regional Centres based on a number of key principles that will enable it to deliver more for less. In addition to cost, HMRC has taken account of the quality of local transport links, the local labour market and future workforce supply, and the need to retain the staff and skills it requires to continue its transformation. These changes will reduce HMRC's estates costs by around £100 million a year by 2025.

HMRC estimates that Liverpool will be home to between 2,800 and 3,100 full time equivalent employees. Consolidation into the Regional Centre is expected to begin in 2019-20. HMRC plans to open the Regional Centre in Cardiff in 2019-20. It is likely that the office at Plas Gororau in Wrexham will close in 2020-21. HMRC will be holding one-to-one discussions with each of its people to discuss the next steps.

#### ■ Revenue and Customs: Welsh Language

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[17631\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people from each constituent part of the UK used the Welsh Language Unit of HM Revenue and Customs in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr David Gauke:**

The details of the numbers of people from each constituent part of the UK who use the Welsh Language Unit of HM Revenue and Customs are not recorded.

#### ■ Welfare Tax Credits

Owen Smith: [\[17065\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reasons expenditure on personal tax credits has increased since 2009.

**Damian Hinds:**

The OBR's Welfare Trends Report 2014 sets out how historical spending changes have been driven by, for example, changes to caseloads and average awards.

As it sets out, policy decisions between 2003 and 2009 increased the caseload of tax credit claimants and increased discretionary uprating of the child element, contributing to expenditure as a percentage of GDP increasing from 1.1% in 2003/04 to 1.9% in 2009/10.

By 2010, 9 out of 10 families with children were eligible for tax credits. Reforms under the Coalition government decreased this to 6 out of 10.

[http://budgetresponsibility.org.uk/wordpress/docs/Welfare\\_trends\\_report\\_2014\\_dn2B.pdf](http://budgetresponsibility.org.uk/wordpress/docs/Welfare_trends_report_2014_dn2B.pdf)

**Frank Field:** [\[17664\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many tax credit claimants lost their entitlement as a result of action taken by Concentrix in the last financial year.

**Mr David Gauke:**

5,244 tax credit claims were amended as a result of checks undertaken by Concentrix during 2014-15. This includes both partial and full loss of entitlement cases.

**Frank Field:** [\[17665\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many complaints about Concentrix HM Revenue and Customs received from tax credit claimants in the last financial year.

**Mr David Gauke:**

HM Revenue and Customs received 159 complaints about Concentrix from tax credit customers during the last financial tax year.

#### ■ Working Tax Credit

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[17418\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the change in expenditure has been on working tax credits between 2013 and 2015.

**Damian Hinds:**

The information requested is available from the HM Revenue and Customs Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15 (Note 6.1 – page 153).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hmrc-annual-report-and-accounts-2014-to-2015>

## CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

#### ■ Cemeteries: Vandalism

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [\[17710\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, how many graves in each church yard in each diocese in England were vandalised in 2014.

**Mrs Caroline Spelman:**

The information requested is not retained at the national level and would incur a disproportionate cost to produce.

Wilful damage and theft of monumental stonework causes much emotional and financial distress. The Church is continuing to work with local Dioceses, police, insurers and local communities to improve security and awareness.

**■ Church of England: Cinemas****Mr Mark Hendrick:** [\[17708\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, what investment the Church of England has in cinemas and buildings housing cinemas.

**Mrs Caroline Spelman:**

The Church Commissioners' UK investments include just over £300,000 of directly held cinema group shares. In addition the Commissioners have indirect investment exposure to cinemas via property holdings in the Metrocentre, Bluewater and Cheshire Oaks retail shopping centres, all of which contain cinemas. Finally, the Commissioners have identified a very small indirect exposure to a cinema in our UK private equity portfolio.

**■ Church of England: Newspaper Press****Mr Mark Hendrick:** [\[17709\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, in which (a) local and (b) national newspapers the Church of England plans to place advertisements with the text of the Lord's Prayer.

**Mrs Caroline Spelman:**

The Church of England has no plans advertisements of the Lords Prayer in local or national newspapers. Many national and local newspapers have already covered the story. As of 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015 online articles had received over 5.15 million views.

**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Council Tax****Neil Coyle:** [\[17721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how he plans for the two per cent council tax precept to fund care services to be monitored to ensure funds raised are used for disabled people, older people, and carers seeking social care and support from local authorities.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

Details of how the two per cent social care precept will operate will be confirmed alongside the provisional local government finance settlement in due course.

**■ Housing: Carbon Emissions****Dr Liam Fox:** [\[17420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to encourage zero carbon housing.

**James Wharton:**

I refer my rt. Hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 23 October 2015, PQ 12627.

## ■ Right to Buy Scheme: Housing Associations

**Tim Farron:**

[\[17698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, from what date his Department has been advertising the Right to Buy scheme for housing association tenants; and how much has been spent on (a) television, (b) radio, (c) print and (d) social media advertisements for the scheme.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Department has not undertaken any advertisement for the extension of the Right to Buy to housing association tenants not currently eligible and as such has incurred no costs. The Department recently set up a 'register of interest' so we could keep these tenants up to date with any developments. This is run on our existing Right to Buy website at no additional cost and we also signpost the register through other owned channels.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ BBC: Local Broadcasting

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[17423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has had discussions with the BBC Trust on making BBC regional production requirements relate to the number of (a) residents and (b) licence payers in that region.

**Mr Edward Vaizey:**

The question of the BBC's role in the nations and regions is being considered through the BBC Charter Review consultation. We are currently analysing responses to the consultation.

### ■ Big Lottery Fund

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[17441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department plans to reduce the Big Lottery Fund budget.

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[17526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department plans to reduce the share of lottery ticket income allocated to the Big Lottery Fund budget.

**Tracey Crouch:**

As set out in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn statement this week, there are no plans to reduce the Big Lottery Fund's budget. The Fund will continue to receive 40% of National Lottery good cause money. Sport, Arts and Heritage will also continue to receive 20% each.

## ■ Broadband

**Vernon Coaker:** [\[17656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent progress he has made on superfast broadband delivery in each region of the UK.

**Mr Edward Vaizey:**

The Government is committed to providing superfast broadband coverage to 95 per cent of UK premises by 2017. At the end Phase 1 of the programme, we expect to reach 90 per cent coverage across the UK - and more than 90 per cent superfast coverage in around two thirds of local body partnership areas. For the longer term the Government will also launch a public consultation early next year in preparation for the implementation of a new broadband Universal Service Obligation, with the ambition to give people the legal right to request a connection to broadband with speeds of 10 Mbps, no matter where in the country they live.

Data on regional and local coverage of superfast broadband was published by Ofcom in its Infrastructure Report in December 2014:

[http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/infrastructure/2014/Fixed\\_local\\_authority.csv](http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/infrastructure/2014/Fixed_local_authority.csv).

DCMS has also placed estimates of superfast coverage at constituency level at the end of the current broadband programme in the House of Commons library, reference DEP2015-0163:

[http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/business-papers/commons/deposited-papers/?fd=2015-02-01&td=2015-04-01&house=1&search\\_term=Department+for+Culture%2c+Media+and+Sport&itemId=122028#toggle-163](http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/business-papers/commons/deposited-papers/?fd=2015-02-01&td=2015-04-01&house=1&search_term=Department+for+Culture%2c+Media+and+Sport&itemId=122028#toggle-163)

## ■ Broadband: Cheshire

**Antoinette Sandbach:** [\[16734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2015 to Question 15873, on broadband: Cheshire, if he will take steps to bring the planned coverage of Eddisbury in line with the Cheshire average.

**Mr Edward Vaizey:**

Eddisbury is eligible for extra funding sources to increase local superfast broadband coverage, including clawback funding BT are offering in response to the high take-up of superfast broadband in Cheshire. It is for Connecting Cheshire to decide which areas to prioritise funding.

In addition, the Prime Minister recently announced the ambition to give people the legal right to request a connection to broadband with speeds of 10 Mbps, no matter where in the country they live.

■ **Department of Culture, Media and Sport: Pay**

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[13161\]](#)

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

**Mr Edward Vaizey:**

Since 2010-11 the Government has restricted awards for senior civilservants to the top 25% of performers (from 65% in previous years), saving around £15 million overall. We have also reformed the system of bonuses, resulting in a reduction of total payments from £735,259 in 2010-11 to £448,000 in 2014-15. This is expected to be cut by a further £75,000 in 2015-16.

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

■ **Radio: Illegal Broadcasting**

**Stephen Timms:** [\[17528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many pirate radio broadcasting installations have been taken off air by enforcement action in each of the last five years.

**Mr Edward Vaizey:**

As part of Ofcom's responsibility for protecting and managing radio spectrum, enforcement operations are carried out every year to remove pirate radio broadcasts. After the success of these operations, and the combined effort of local authorities, the number of pirate stations still broadcasting has significantly reduced, explaining the decline in number of pirate stations taken off air in 2014. This success has led Ofcom to launch a new initiative involving local authorities and other owners of high rise residential buildings to remove the presence of illegal broadcasters. The results have already been positive, with the complete removal of pirate radio broadcasters in the London Boroughs of Haringey and Islington.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PIRATE RADIO STATIONS TAKEN OFF THE AIR</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>69</b>

## Background

This year Ofcom began a new initiative involving local authorities and other owners of high rise residential properties to remove the presence of illegal broadcasters from their buildings. Ofcom has implemented this strategy with a number of London boroughs already. The results have been positive, with the complete removal of pirate broadcasts in the London Boroughs of Haringey and Islington. Ofcom intends to pursue this further.

### ■ Sports: Drugs

**Jim Shannon:** [\[17231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with his Russian counterpart on the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sport.

**Tracey Crouch:**

Both my Department and UK Anti-Doping engage regularly with international counterparts to discuss a range of sporting matters, including tackling doping in sport.

### ■ Television: Licensing

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[17425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what open data requirements apply to the BBC (a) generally and (b) to the publication of or making available licence fee payment numbers by region.

**Mr Edward Vaizey:**

The BBC has a duty under the Charter to observe high standards of openness and transparency. The BBC is also subject to the Freedom of Information Act. The BBC has a Memorandum of Understanding in place with the Open Data Institute and the Open Knowledge Foundation to support to the BBC in its aspirations to open up data where this is appropriate.

The BBC does not collate licence fee income by region, so cannot publish this information.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Armed Forces: Deployment

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** [\[17530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate his Department holds on the number of British military personnel embedded with foreign armed forces; and if he will make a statement.

**Michael Fallon:**

Given the routine nature of embedding, this information has not been coordinated centrally. The Ministry of Defence is in the process of compiling data on UK personnel embedded with other nations' armed forces and deployed on operations, as well as



those who work on operations in deployed coalition or single nation headquarters roles. I intend to update the House after this process is complete.

#### ■ Armed Forces: Pay

**Maria Eagle:** [\[17751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to change the payment of annual increments to military staff between 2015-16 and 2020-21.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

This Government has no plans to remove incremental pay or annual pay increases for serving members of the Armed Forces.

**Maria Eagle:** [\[17753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the projected savings for his Department arising from military pay restraint in the 2015-16 financial year and in each of the next five such years; and what proportion of those savings will arise from (a) pay rises limited to one per cent and (b) the ending of military commitment bonuses.

**Mark Lancaster:**

The estimated military paybill saving in 2015-16 from pay restraint is £98 million.

The Summer Budget confirmed that the Government would fund public sector pay awards at 1% for four years from 2016-17 onwards. The estimated military pay saving is £1.8 billion over the next five years as detailed below.

Figures are all in £millions.

2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
80	180	366	602	625

Commitment bonuses which have not proven effective are to be withdrawn in full with effect from 1 April 2021. The estimated saving from ending commitment bonuses is £118 million over the next five years as detailed below.

Figures are all in £millions.

2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
5	10	20	35	48

**Maria Eagle:** [\[17900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what cost savings his Department plans to make from phasing out the commitment bonus for members of the armed forces.

**Mark Lancaster:**

The estimated saving from phasing out the commitment bonus for members of the Armed Forces is £118 million over the remainder of this Parliament and some £50 million a year thereafter.

**■ Bomb Disposal: Northern Ireland**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[17417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many times explosive ordnance officers were deployed to deal with incidents in Northern Ireland between 1 January 2015 and 1 July 2015.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my predecessor, the right hon. Member for Rayleigh and Wickford (Mark Francois) on 27 February 2015 to Question 225158. The Report of the Independent Reviewer of the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007 which contains the requested information is published annually. The next report will be published in January 2016.

**Attachments:**

1. 20150227 - QnA extract on Bomb Disposals NI  
[20150227\_225158\_Bomb\_Disposals\_Northern\_Ireland.docx]

**■ Commonwealth War Graves Commission: Pensions**

**Chris Stephens:** [\[17964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions his Department has had with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission on that organisation's pension scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mark Lancaster:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 28 October 2015 to Question 13202 to the hon. Member for Gedling (Mr Coaker).

**Attachments:**

1. 13202 - QnA extract on CWC Pensions  
[20151028\_13202\_Commonwealth\_War\_Graves\_Commission\_Pensions.docx]

**■ Defence: Procurement**

**Alan Brown:** [\[17722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 4.34 of the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence Review 2015 and to his Department's press release dated 23 November 2015, what equipment and support (a) was to be procured with the £166 billion programme and (b) will be procured under the £178 billion programme.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The Defence Equipment Plan 2015, placed in the Library of the House on 22 October 2015, set out our plans, before the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 2015, for spending £166 billion on defence equipment and support over the next 10 years.

In the SDSR we set out our plans for additional investment in Armed Forces defence equipment and support. This includes improving Special Forces' capabilities, procuring three new Fleet Solid Support ships and investing in a fleet of nine Boeing P-8 Maritime Patrol Aircraft.

Following the SDSR, we now plan to spend £178 billion on defence equipment and support over the next 10 years.

#### ■ Guided Weapons: European Fighter Aircraft

**Maria Eagle:** [\[17865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, by when he plans for Stormshadow and Brimstone missile systems to be integrated with Typhoon aircraft.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The Strategic Defence and Security Review included a commitment to invest further in Typhoon's capabilities, including ground attack. Under current plans, the in-service dates on Typhoon will be August 2018 for Storm Shadow and December 2018 for Brimstone.

#### ■ Iraq: Military Intervention

**Angus Brendan MacNeil:** [\[17666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many RAF aircraft are conducting military operations against ISIS in Iraq.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

UK aircraft deployed in the fight against ISIL consists of eight Tornado, two C130 transport aircraft, one Voyager re-fueler, one Sentinel surveillance aircraft, one Airseeker surveillance aircraft and Reaper remotely piloted aircraft.

#### ■ Islamic State

**Angus Brendan MacNeil:** [\[17667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on steps to tackle ISIS in Iraq of UK involvement in military operations in Syria.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The fight against ISIL needs to be carried forward in both Syria and Iraq. We judge that increasing action against ISIL's command and control capacity, its military materiel and its cross-border communication and supply routes in Syria will assist the Counter-ISIL/Da'esh campaign in Iraq.

#### ■ Military Bases

**Mrs Madeleine Moon:** [\[17693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will place in the Library all documents relating to the delivery of a system of force development and adventurous training with a contingent whole force construct relating to (a) MOD Greytown-on-Spey, (b) MOD Llanwrst, (c) MOD Fairbourne and (d) MOD Crickhowell; and if he will make a statement.

**Mark Lancaster:**

I assume the hon. Member is referring to the Force Development and Adventurous Training Review. Whilst the provision of adventurous training for the whole force concept was one of the many factors in the Review, we do not hold documents principally about the whole force concept.

**Mrs Madeleine Moon:** [[17694](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many training courses have been completed at (a) MOD Greytown-on-Spey, (b) MOD Llanwrst, (c) MOD Fairbourne and (d) MOD Crickhowell in each year from 2005 to 2010; how many students of each service attended each such course; what the cost of each such course was per trainee; and if he will make a statement.

**Mark Lancaster:**

Historical data on the number of students and cost per trainee that took part in adventurous training, at any of the centres, from 2005 to 2010 is not held.

**Mrs Madeleine Moon:** [[17695](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the assessment procedure to close (a) MOD Fairbourne and (b) MOD Llanwrst followed investment appraisal on project evaluation policy JSP507; and if he will make a statement.

**Mark Lancaster:**

The review was a study undertaken to understand how best to deliver Adventurous Training to meet the future needs of the RAF and not a financially driven initiative, therefore the principles of JSP 507 were followed although a formal Investment Appraisal was not undertaken.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Northern Ireland****Mr Gregory Campbell:** [[17414](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many times Ministers in his Department visited defence establishments in Northern Ireland in 2014.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

There were five Ministerial visits during 2014.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Pay****Maria Eagle:** [[17750](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of projected savings in his Department arising from the imposition of civilian pay restraint in the 2015-16 financial year and each of the next five such years.

**Mark Lancaster:**

The estimated Ministry of Defence (MOD) civilian paybill saving in 2015-16 from pay restraint is £10 million.

The Summer Budget confirmed that the Government would fund public sector pay awards at 1% for four years from 2016-17 onwards.

The estimated saving for MOD civilians from this pay restraint is £254 million over the next five years as detailed below.

2016-17(£ MILLION)	2017-18(£ MILLION)	2018-19(£ MILLION)	2019-20(£ MILLION)	2020-21(£ MILLION)
7	26	52	92	77

#### ■ Ministry of Defence: Public Expenditure

**Maria Eagle:** [\[17741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of savings to the public purse expected through the reduction in professional fees paid out by his Department in the 2015-16 financial year and in each of the next five such years.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

As a result of Spending Review 2015 the Ministry of Defence will reduce its annual expenditure on fees for professional services over the Spending Review period. The estimated savings from this measure are around £29 million per year.

#### ■ Ministry of Defence: Redundancy Pay

**Maria Eagle:** [\[17749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost of redundancy payments arising from meeting the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 target of reducing civilian staff numbers by 41,000.

**Mark Lancaster:**

A number of change programmes are already under way to reduce Ministry of Defence civilian workforce numbers. The remaining savings will be made through new studies that will identify opportunities for more efficient and innovative ways of working.

#### ■ Ministry of Defence: Staff

**Sir Nicholas Soames:** [\[17729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will place in the Library a copy of the Civilian Manpower Capitation rates for 2015-16.

**Mark Lancaster:**

I will place a copy of the 2015-16 Civilian Manpower Capitation Rates in the Library of the House, subject to the redaction of personal information. The 2015-16 rates will be available early in 2016, their compilation being determined by the timing of the relevant annual pay reviews.

**Maria Eagle:** [\[17733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the planned reductions in current staff numbers in the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, how many of those job reductions will be in (a) 2015-16, (b) 2016-17, (c) 2017-18, (d) 2018-19, (e) 2019-20 and (f) 2020-21; and if he will make a statement.

**Maria Eagle:** [\[17735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Department's planned savings in the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, what plans he has to reduce the number of civilian staff in his Department.

**Maria Eagle:** [\[17752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the reduction in civilian headcount in his Department required to meet the efficiency and reform savings announced in the Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 for the 2015-16 financial year and in each of the next five such years.

**Mark Lancaster:**

The civilian staff reductions announced as part of the Strategic Defence and Security Review will be managed in a number of different ways. In the short term, the Ministry of Defence has agreed to make further savings and adjustments in this current financial year as part of the Government's commitment to reducing the deficit. This is still on-going and may mean restrictions on recruitment.

Over the longer term, a number of change programmes already under way across the Department are reducing our civilian workforce. These programmes will continue, and individuals are already aware if they are affected. We will also drive forward programmes to consider better ways of delivering services, and explore opportunities to deliver outputs in more efficient or innovative ways.

We are confident these programmes will deliver the required reductions to meet the efficiency and reform savings announced in the Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015.

#### ■ Ministry of Defence: Travel

**Maria Eagle:** [\[17738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the savings to his Department from planned reductions in travel expenditure in each of the next five years.

**Mark Lancaster:**

As a result of Spending Review 2015 the Ministry of Defence will reduce its annual transport expenditure over the Spending Review period. The estimated savings from this measure are around £25 million per year.

## ■ Radar: Hebrides

**Brendan O'Hara:** [\[17093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department has taken to communicate to local authorities and developers of onshore wind renewables projects the effect of the time taken to upgrade air defence radars at RRH Benbecula and RRH Buchan.

**Brendan O'Hara:** [\[17105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what operational assessment has been undertaken of proposals to use the upgraded TPS-77 radar systems at RRH Benbecula and RRH Buchan as mitigation for planned wind turbine developments.

### **Mr Philip Dunne:**

In respect of the upgrade of the Air Defence radar at Remote Radar Head (RRH) Buchan, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) is in contact with the developers who proposed the upgrade as mitigation for their wind farm proposal.

At RRH Benbecula, the MOD is in contact with the Western Isles Council and developers via the Council's Working Group. In addition, the MOD provided an Air Defence update at the Aviation Management Board meeting on 5 November 2015 at which Scottish Government, the wind industry and RenewableUK representatives were present.

The MOD continues to undertake full technical and operational assessments of all site specific Air Defence radar mitigation proposals, including those to the upgraded TPS-77 radar systems at RRH Benbecula and RRH Buchan. It remains the responsibility of developers to submit site specific mitigation proposals. The MOD will determine whether the impact upon the radar is of a permissible level.

## ■ Strategic Defence and Security Review

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[17334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what consultations he has had with the chief ministers of the UK Overseas Territories on the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR); if he will take steps to ensure that the security interests and requirements of the Overseas Territories are adequately addressed in the SDSR; and if he will make a statement.

### **Michael Fallon:**

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) consulted widely with external stakeholders and internal staff. As reflected in chapter four of the SDSR, the Government takes seriously its responsibility to support communities in the Overseas Territories and their right to safety, security and determination. My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office responsible for the Overseas Territories (James Duddridge), has written to the Chief Ministers to inform them of the SDSR's outcome and he looks forward to discussing the conclusions further at the Joint Ministerial Council on 1 and 2 December.

**Maria Eagle:** [\[17519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 7.6 of the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence Review 2015, how he plans to meet the £11 billion of efficiency savings; and what assumptions have been made when calculating that figure.

**Michael Fallon:**

The Ministry of Defence plans to deliver £9.2 billion of savings through a number of measures as set out in para 2.4 of the Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015. All of these savings will be directly reinvested to fund the Strategic Defence and Security Review commitments.

The balance of the £11 billion savings will be delivered by the security and intelligence agencies and from cross-Government counter-terrorism spending.

#### ■ Trident Submarines

**Alan Brown:** [\[17621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the feasibility of retaining the Vanguard submarines in service for approximately five years longer than envisaged in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review.

**Alan Brown:** [\[17622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the additional costs of maintenance and other in-service costs that will be incurred by retaining the Vanguard submarines in service for approximately five years longer than envisaged in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

As set out in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review, we have assessed that we can safely manage and maintain the Vanguard boats until the Successor submarines are introduced into service in the early 2030s. The marginal costs associated with maintaining the submarines can be contained within the existing running cost of the deterrent, which is around 6% of the defence budget per year.

## EDUCATION

#### ■ Children in Care: Crime

**Ann Coffey:** [\[17475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked-after children have committed criminal offences in the last three years; what the (a) age and (b) gender was of each such child; what offence was committed in each such case; and what distance away from home each child had been placed when the offence was committed.

**Edward Timpson:**

The numbers of looked after children who were convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand in 2012, 2013 and 2014 by age and gender is published in Table 4 of the



statistical first release 'Outcomes for Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England as at 31 March 2014' at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/outcomes-for-children-looked-after-by-local-authorities>.

The Department for Education does not collect information on the type of offence committed or the location of each child at the time of the offence.

## ■ Children: Day Care

**Tom Blenkinsop:** [17422]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to encourage families with disabled children to access the full free childcare offer.

**Edward Timpson:**

In September 2014 the Children and Families Act introduced the biggest reform to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disability system for 30 years. These reforms, which apply to early years, were supported across the House and are making a real difference for families.

This Government is committed to ensuring that all families have access to high quality, flexible and affordable childcare. Parents with disabled children should have the same opportunities via increased choice and access to high quality childcare. Local authorities are required by law to secure free entitlement places for parents that want their child to take them up. This includes the free entitlement to 15 hours of early education for two year olds, where children in receipt of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or who have an Education, Health and Care Plan are eligible.

From September 2014 all local authorities are required to publish a Local Offer of services for children with SEN and disability, and this must include childcare available in the area. As part of the early implementation phase of introducing 30 hours of free childcare for working parents of three and four-year-olds, we have also encouraged innovative approaches to providing flexible childcare for children who are disabled or have SEN. Early Implementation happens from September 2016, ahead of full roll-out in September 2017.

## ■ Education

**Steven Paterson:** [902430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress her Department is making on early intervention programmes to reduce educational inequality.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

We recognise the vital importance of early intervention, particularly for the most disadvantaged members of society and the crucial role played by education and children's services in promoting good outcomes for children and families. The latest Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-2014-to-2015> show that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in relation to the most deprived areas, SEN, free school meal eligibility,

term of birth, first language and ethnicity is improving. The proportion of children eligible for FSM has increased from 45% in 2014 to 51% in 2015 and the gap between FSM and other children has narrowed from 18.9 percentage points in 2014 to 17.7 in 2015.

## ■ Further Education

**Peter Kyle:** [\[17690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what changes she plans to make to funding for the education and training of 16 to 19 year-olds outside the national base rate per student in each of the next five years; and if she will make a statement.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

We announced, as part of the Spending Review, that we will protect the national base rate of £4,000 per student for the duration of the parliament.

We are aiming to set out full details of the funding rates for 16-19 institutions in 2016/17 this December; and to provide further information on savings that will be required from 2017/18, outside the national base rate, as soon as possible thereafter. We have already announced that this will include the gradual removal of Formula Protection Funding from 2016/17, ensuring sufficient lead-in time for providers to manage this reduction.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Young People

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[17746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how the educational needs of young people in mental health facilities are assessed; and what system is in place to ensure that the needs of those patients are monitored and provided for as they change.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

Local authorities have a duty to ensure suitable education is in place for children of compulsory school age who would not otherwise receive it. This includes pupils with medical conditions that prevent them from attending a mainstream school. Where pupils are in-patients in medical facilities, this education would in many cases be provided by the facility itself via an on-site hospital school.

In all cases, decisions on the education required should be based on an assessment of the pupil's needs and in consultation with the pupil, parents, medical practitioners and other relevant professionals. Providers and the local authority must ensure that the education a pupil receives is of good quality, allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from slipping behind their peers in school and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible. Monitoring and assurance processes should be established to ensure this quality education is in place and in all cases, effective collaboration between all relevant services is essential to delivering effective education for children with additional health needs.

The Department for Education's guidance '*Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs*' sets out the legal duties and

responsibilities of the local authority with regards education for such pupils. It is available at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/269469/health\\_needs\\_guidance\\_-\\_revised\\_may\\_2013\\_final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/269469/health_needs_guidance_-_revised_may_2013_final.pdf)

#### ■ Primary Education: Free School Meals

**Frank Field:** [\[17131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department is undertaking of the effect on children's (a) attainment, (b) health and (c) attendance of the universal infant free school meals policy.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

The decision to introduce universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) was based on pilots of universal free school meals carried out between 2009 and 2011 in Newham and Durham. The pilots demonstrated benefits in terms of children's health, attainment and behaviour, as well as helping families with the cost of living.

The UIFSM policy has been in place for just over a year. We will look carefully at a range of indicators in relation to UIFSM once we are satisfied that we have sufficient time series data to undertake a robust analysis.

#### ■ Pupil Premium

**Kate Osamor:** [\[17287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of the Government's proposed reductions in tax credits on the pupil premium.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

As my Rt Hon Friend the Chancellor announced on 25 November, the government is not proceeding with the changes to the tax credit threshold and taper announced at the Summer Budget 2015.

We are determined to deliver educational excellence everywhere so that every child, regardless of background, reaches their potential. That is why we are delivering on our commitment to continue providing the pupil premium, protected at current rates, so schools receive additional money for pupils from the poorest backgrounds.

**Graham Stuart:** [\[17658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much (a) pupil premium and (b) pupil premium plus funding each local authority (i) received in the most recent year for which figures are available and (ii) will receive in (A) 2015-16 and (B) 2016-17.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

Allocations for the pupil premium and pupil premium plus for each English local authority for financial years 2014 to 2015 and 2015 to 2016 are published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-2014-to-2015-final-allocations> ; and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-2015-to-2016-allocations>.

The allocations for the pupil premium plus for 2015- 2016 will be updated in December 2015 to take account of the numbers of children looked after for at least one day, as recorded on the children looked after data return (SSDA903) completed by local authorities in March 2015.

Allocations for financial year 2016-2017 will be published in June 2016 following the receipt of pupil number data from the spring 2016 schools and alternative provision censuses. The pupil premium per pupil amounts for 2016-2017 will be protected at the current rates, which are:

PUPILS	PER PUPIL RATE
Disadvantaged pupils: Primary	£1,320
Disadvantaged pupils: Secondary	£935
Pupil Premium Plus: Looked After Children (LAC) <sup>1</sup> and those adopted from care or who leave care under a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order (formally known as a residence order).	£1,900
Service children	£300

1. A looked after child is defined in the Children Act 1989 as one who is in the care of, or provided with accommodation by, an English or Welsh local authority.

## ■ Schools: Admissions

**Jeremy Quin:**

[\[902431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to provide parents of summer-born children with flexibility to decide in which year group their children start school.

**Nick Gibb:**

We recognise the vital importance of early intervention, particularly for the most disadvantaged members of society and the crucial role played by education and children's services in promoting good outcomes for children and families. The latest Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-2014-to-2015> show that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in relation to the most deprived areas, SEN, free school meal eligibility, term of birth, first language and ethnicity is improving. The proportion of children eligible for FSM has increased from 45% in 2014 to 51% in 2015 and the gap between

FSM and other children has narrowed from 18.9 percentage points in 2014 to 17.7 in 2015

#### ■ Schools: Finance

**Graham Stuart:** [\[17699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much Dedicated Schools Grant each English local authority will receive in 2015-16; and what the (a) Schools Block, (b) High Needs and (c) Early Years element is of that grant for each such local authority.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

Allocations for the dedicated schools grant for financial year 2015-2016 for each English local authority are published at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-dsg-2015-to-2016>.

These set out the amounts for the schools block, high needs block and early years block. The allocations for the early years block will be updated in June 2016 to take account of the additional take up of the early years entitlements as recorded in the spring 2016 schools, early years and alternative provision censuses.

#### ■ Schools: Mental Health

**James Morris:** [\[902424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to promote mental health education in schools.

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

Children and young people's mental health is a high priority for the department, and that is why my Rt Hon friend the Secretary of State appointed me as the first DfE minister with specific responsibility for this important area.

Over the last 9 months, we have funded guidance for schools on counselling and lesson plans to support age-appropriate teaching about mental health. Today the Government is launching a new campaign to tackle stigma and discrimination which aims to involve schools, children and young people.

We are also contributing £1.5m to a joint pilot for training single points of contact in schools and specialist mental health services; and providing funding worth £4.9m this year, through a dedicated mental health strand within our VCS programme, to support 17 projects delivering a wide range of support across the country to children and young people with mental health issues. These include projects to promote positive mental health in schools with organisations such as MIND and Place2Be, and new resources for parents on MindEd.

#### ■ Schools: Pudsey

**Stuart Andrew:** [\[902426\]](#)

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

**Mr Sam Gyimah:**

As announced at the Spending Review, the Government is investing £23 billion in school buildings to create 600,000 new school places, opening 500 new free schools and addressing essential maintenance needs. This commitment reflects our bold ambitions for education and provides a firm basis from which to deliver our goal of securing educational excellence in every corner of the country.

Local authorities are responsible for planning and securing sufficient school places in their area, and supporting them to do so is one of this Government's top priorities. We allocate basic need funding to local authorities to help create new school places where they are needed. Leeds has been allocated £73 million of basic need funding for the period 2015-18. Leeds also received £99 million between 2011 and 2015, helping to create 8,800 new school places between 2010 and 2014.

**■ Schools: Religion****Patrick Grady:**[\[902423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to tackle religious intolerance in schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

Religious intolerance in schools is unacceptable. All schools are required to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Schools should be places where we promote the understanding of other cultures for example, through the National Curriculum programme for citizenship, which includes teaching about the diverse range of identities in the UK and the importance of respecting others.

**■ Schools: Rural Areas****Tom Pursglove:**[\[902427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to improve schools in rural areas.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government is committed to achieving educational excellence everywhere so that children in all areas of the country benefit from a high-quality education. We made substantial progress in the last Parliament, and a million more pupils are in good or outstanding schools compared to 2010. But there are still too many areas where educational standards are not high enough.

Pupils in rural areas are more likely to achieve 5 or more GCSEs including English and mathematics at grades A\*-C. Considering local area deprivation, however, pupils living in rural areas are less likely to achieve the same standards as pupils living in similarly deprived urban areas of the country.

We have already designated over 690 teaching schools and 1,050 national leaders of education (NLEs) in our drive to ensure that educational excellence is a reality in all areas of the country, particularly those that need most support. The new National Teaching

Service (NTS) will place 1,500 outstanding teachers and middle leaders in underperforming schools by 2020, particularly in rural and other areas of the country that find it hardest to attract, retain and recruit good teachers.

Regional Schools Commissioners are ensuring the availability of strong academy sponsors for schools in all areas of the country including rural areas. The Department recently announced that five sponsors will receive funding from the Northern Fund to set up seven new hubs across three RSC regions.

We will introduce National Funding Formulas (NFF) for schools, high needs and early years so that funding is transparently and fairly matched to need rather than purely historic calculations.

### ■ Schools: Uniforms

**David T. C. Davies:**

[\[902428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many state-funded schools require pupils to wear a burqa or jilbab as part of their uniform.

**Nick Gibb:**

The governing body or academy trust of an individual school is responsible for setting their uniform policy. The Department does not collect information about individual schools' uniform policies.

Schools must have full regard to their obligations under equalities legislation and act reasonably, fairly and flexibly in the interests of all their children.

### ■ Sixth Form Colleges: Standards

**Rebecca Pow:**

[\[902429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that sixth form colleges provide students with a high quality education.

**Nick Boles:**

We are introducing reforms to ensure that sixth form colleges are providing high quality academic and technical education. We are reforming A levels and technical qualifications to ensure that young people are gaining the skills and knowledge they need to progress into employment, apprenticeships or further study.

We want A levels and technical qualifications to be robust and rigorous, so that they match the best education systems in the world and keep pace with universities' and employers' demands. A levels are therefore being reviewed to ensure that the qualifications equip students for higher education and to make them linear (i.e. with the exam at the end of two years), allowing more time for teaching and learning. In addition, all technical qualifications approved for inclusion in 16-19 performance tables now meet rigorous standards and are backed by employers.

The government has recently announced an ambitious plan for reforming technical and professional education which will simplify the skills system and work with employers to ensure that young people develop the skills most needed for the economy. To deliver

the reforms, the Government will work closely with an independent panel, headed by Lord Sainsbury, former Minister of Science and Innovation.

## ■ Teachers: Training

**Lucy Powell:** [17437]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many new undergraduate and postgraduate entrants to initial teacher training there were (a) including and (b) excluding Teach First to teach (i) English, (ii) mathematics, (iii) all science subjects, (iv) biology, (v) chemistry, (vi) physics, (vii) computing, (viii) classics, (ix) design and technology, (x) drama, (xi) modern and ancient languages, (xii) geography, (xiii) history, (xiv) art and design, (xv) music, (xvi) physical education, (xvii) religious education, (xviii) business studies, (xix) other subjects, (xx) all secondary subjects and (xxi) all primary subjects in each year from 2010-11 to 2015-16.

**Lucy Powell:** [17439]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many postgraduate and undergraduate new entrants to initial teacher training (a) including and (b) excluding Teach First there were in each year from 2010-11 to 2015-16.

**Nick Gibb:**

Information on postgraduate entrants to initial teacher training (ITT) for the period 2010-11 to 2015-16 can be found in the ITT Census 2015/16:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/initial-teacher-training-trainee-number-census-2015-to-2016>

In 2015/16, Teach First data was collected for the first time for inclusion in the ITT Census. This reflects the Teacher Supply Model (TSM) methodology. In previous years, Teach First was not included. Please see the tables for historic information on entrants to the Teach First Summer Institute.

**Lucy Powell:** [17438]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what her Department's combined target for postgraduate and undergraduate trainees was for initial teacher training (a) including and (b) excluding Teach First to teach (i) English, (ii) mathematics, (iii) all science subjects, (iv) biology, (v) chemistry, (vi) physics, (vii) computing, (viii) classics, (ix) design and technology, (x) drama, (xi) modern and ancient languages, (xii) geography, (xiii) history, (xiv) art and design, (xv) music, (xvi) physical education, (xvii) religious education, (xviii) business studies, (xix) other subjects, (xx) all secondary subjects and (xxi) all primary subjects in each year from 2010-11 to 2015-16.

**Lucy Powell:** [17440]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the combined target for postgraduate and undergraduate trainees for initial teacher training was (a) including and (b) excluding Teach First in each year from 2010-11 to 2015-16.



**Nick Gibb:**

Information on subject level targets for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) can be found in Table 1b of the ITT Census 2015/16:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/initial-teacher-training-trainee-number-census-2015-to-2016>

There are no targets for the various routes, including the Teach First programme, into ITT.

Prior to 2015/16 there was an aggregated undergraduate and postgraduate target for new entrants to ITT. Recruitment to Teach First was not included in performance against these targets. The 2015/16 target was for postgraduate new entrants only, and for the first time includes recruitment to Teach First.

**ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE****■ Carbon Emissions: International Cooperation****Richard Burden:**[\[17407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what her objectives are for the UN Climate Change Summit in Paris relating to (a) emissions and (b) monitoring emissions performance against targets set.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

The UK Government is committed to securing an ambitious, legally binding, global deal on climate change at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) 21 in Paris.

The UK is working with other countries to secure a deal with ambitious mitigation commitments from all parties that together keep the global goal of limiting global warming to below 2 degrees within reach. We also want an agreement that includes a regular review of targets to increase ambition over time, a global long term goal that sets out a tangible pathway towards our 2 degrees objective and a robust, legally binding rules framework to ensure transparency and accountability of commitments to help the world track progress, improve competitiveness and provide business certainty.

**■ Department of Energy and Climate Change: Employment Agencies****Louise Haigh:**[\[17557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what estimate she has made of the cost of using external agencies for recruitment to Senior Civil Service posts in her Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

The cost of SCS recruitment from 2010 to 2015 can be found in the table below. Data is taken from central finance records. Every effort has been made to exclude non SCS recruitment costs from the figures but where the grade recruited cannot be identified

these figures have been included. Costs include charges provided by recruitment agencies and executive search agencies.

As part of its long-term economic plan, this Government has reduced the size of the Civil Service by 22%, adjusting for Machinery of Government changes that moved staff into and out of the Civil Service since the 2010 General Election, representing a significant increase in efficiency and productivity that helped save taxpayers £2.8 billion last year alone.

YEAR	COST £
2010-11	84,338.00
2011-12	267,268.90
2012-13	306,901.53
2013-14	365,847.87
2014-15	176,080.25

#### ■ Electricity Generation: Competition

**Matthew Pennycook:** [\[17446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what steps she is taking to ensure that the Capacity Market does not favour any class of generators.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

The Capacity Market is technology neutral, i.e. it does not seek to procure specific volumes of capacity from different types of technology. Before the start of pre-qualification for the auction, National Grid discounts the capacity available from each technology according to its historic reliability. These steps ensure that all types of eligible capacity are able to participate on an equal basis. The principle of technology neutrality allows the market to identify which technology type is cost efficient in delivering security of supply.

We are satisfied with the wide range of different technologies that have prequalified for the next Capacity Market auction, which will take place next month.

#### ■ Electricity Generation: Finance

**Matthew Pennycook:** [\[17372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, when she plans for the next contracts for difference auction to take place; and whether she plans to make any amendments to how that auction operates from previous such auctions.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

As my rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015, the current intention is to hold the next Contracts for Difference (CfD) allocation round for 'less established' technologies in late 2016.

We will announce further plans in relation to the next allocation round in due course.

The auction design for the next round will not change materially. It will be a pay-as-clear auction with 'less established' technologies competing for a set budget. Further information will be announced in due course.

Government has also responded to recommendations made by the Energy and Climate Change Committee, and in the recent EMR Evaluation and Competition Market Authority reports. Published responses can be found on the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electricity-market-reform-evaluation>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/444530/50105\\_Cm\\_9090\\_Accessible.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444530/50105_Cm_9090_Accessible.pdf)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/deccs-response-to-the-cma-updated-issues-statement-uis-of-their-investigation-of-the-energy-market>.

**■ Environment Protection: Taxation****Matthew Pennycook:****[17387]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, whether the amount in the Levy Control Framework increased when the Carbon Price Floor was frozen in the 2014 Budget.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

The Levy Control Framework cap was not adjusted in response to the freezing the Carbon Price Floor in 2014 Budget. The Carbon Price Floor is a policy led by HM Treasury. In the 2014 Budget, the Carbon Price Support, the mechanism by which the carbon price floor is delivered, was capped at £18/tCO<sub>2</sub> until 2019/20. DECC analysis on projected levy expenditure under the Levy Control Framework to 2020/21 reflects these rates.

**■ Nuclear Power: Safety****Paul Flynn:****[17204]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what the evidential basis is for the statement in her speech on energy policy at the Institute of Civil Engineers on 18 November 2015 that nuclear power is safe.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

The Government views safety at nuclear sites as paramount. The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) has regulatory and operational independence and is staffed with nuclear safety experts. It carries out inspections across the nuclear estate and has a wide range of enforcement powers with which to hold duty holders to account and secure

sustained compliance with the law. Further, safety is kept under regular review in line with international best practice.

The Chief Nuclear Inspector's Statement about the nuclear industry can be found in the 2014-15 Annual Report and Accounts (pages 26-44), which clearly sets out further the work undertaken by the ONR to ensure that industry meets the safety requirements:

<http://www.onr.org.uk/documents/2015/annual-report-2014-15.pdf>.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Finance

**Alex Cunningham:**

[17392]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what the implications for her policies on support for community-based renewable generation projects are of the proposed changes to the feed-in tariff scheme and HM Treasury's decision to remove such projects from tax relief.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

Part of the purpose of the feed-in tariff (FIT) review consultation was to gather views on the broader economic impact of the proposed changes. We also sought views on whether the scheme should be focussed towards specific groups or sectors which might, for example, include households or communities. We had a strong response from community energy groups via the consultation and workshops.

The actual impact on the community sector will depend on the options taken forward after all responses to the consultation have been considered. We are currently analysing feedback submitted during the consultation and intend to publish a Government response as soon as possible.

The purpose of the tax-advantaged venture capital schemes is to provide funding to smaller higher-risk companies that would otherwise struggle to access finance to develop and grow. To ensure that the schemes are well targeted and deliver value for money, the government announced at the Autumn Statement the exclusion of all remaining energy generation activities from the schemes. This follows the exclusion of certain types of energy generation in 2012, 2014 and 2015, including most recently the announcement that the provision of reserve energy generating capacity and the generation of renewable energy benefiting from other government support by community energy organisations would be excluded from the schemes with effect from 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015, as well as from Social Investment Tax Relief when that scheme is expanded. These changes help to ensure that higher risk investments are not crowded out by lower risk investments.

We will continue to work with the community energy sector over the coming months to develop a joint approach that addresses the priorities of the sector and satisfies our overarching objective of cost-effective emissions reductions.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Angling: Licensing****Mr Charles Walker:**[\[17525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will discuss with the Environment Agency (EA) the proposal by angling bodies of marking the centenary of the birth of the angler Richard Walker with a portrait of Clarissa the Carp on the 2018 EA fishing licence; and if she will make a statement.

**George Eustice:**

Defra has discussed the marking of the centenary of the birth of the angler Richard Walker with a portrait of Clarissa the Carp on the 2018 rod fishing licence with the EA. The EA is happy to consider this option, along with other design proposals. They will be pleased to support celebrations of Richard Walker's achievements, where they can. I have asked the EA to keep me updated.

**■ EU External Trade: Israel****Andy Slaughter:**[\[17755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to (a) enforce the European Commission Interpretative Notice, C2015 7834 final, on the indication of origin of goods from territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 and (b) ensure that penalties for mis-labeling of such products are effective, proportionate and dissuasive.

**George Eustice:**

The principal feature of the Interpretative Notice is a recommendation that goods imported into the EU which originate from Israeli settlements in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 should bear an indication which makes that provenance clear. That recommendation was included in technical advice to UK retailers and importers concerning labelling agricultural produce from the West Bank that was issued by Defra in 2009. We are currently in discussion with other Departments to consider whether revisions need to be made to the 2009 advice in the light of the Interpretative Notice. As regards sanctions and penalties for mis-labelling, these are dealt with in various pieces of legislation depending on the goods concerned.

**■ National Wildlife Crime Unit****Alex Cunningham:**[\[17697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Spending Review 2015, what plans she has for the funding of the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

**Rory Stewart:**

The Government has committed to providing funding to help secure the National Wildlife Crime Unit until at least the end of March next year. Decisions on funding

beyond March will be made as part of consideration of the Department's Spending Review settlement.

#### ■ Public Footpaths: Coastal Areas

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[17575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the funding required to complete the Coastal Path around England by the target date of 2020; and what support her Department is offering to Natural England to achieve that target.

**Rory Stewart:**

The Government has announced Defra's capital allocation for the next five years, and funding to complete the coastal path around England by 2020 will be protected. When complete, the path will be one of longest coastal walking routes in the world at around 2,700 miles in length.

We will publish the detailed allocation of funding in the Department's Main Estimate early next year.

#### ■ Reservoirs: South East

**Mr Charles Walker:** [\[17454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the proposals to site a new reservoir at Abingdon in order to deal with projected population increases in the south east of England are still under consideration.

**Rory Stewart:**

Thames Water has identified in its water resources management plan that new reservoir storage, such as at the Abingdon site, is one of the options it is evaluating in order to maintain a secure water supply.

#### ■ Water Supply

**Mr Charles Walker:** [\[17524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to ensure that water companies build sufficient capacity and tolerance into their infrastructure to cope with low rainfall years or weather cycles.

**Rory Stewart:**

We have a statutory planning framework through which water companies demonstrate how their water supply systems will cope with future demands, taking account of population and economic growth and climate change. Their long-term plans set out how they will ensure they can continue to supply sufficient water, taking account of these changing pressures, weather cycles and drought.

We are currently considering how to enhance our policy framework to ensure we have a strategic approach to delivering resilience over the very long term.

## ■ Water Supply: Greater London

**Mr Charles Walker:** [\[17452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions she has had with water companies on using the proposed High Speed 2 corridor as a route for transferring water from the north of England to London; and if she will make a statement.

**Mr Charles Walker:** [\[17453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of using the proposed High Speed 2 corridor as a route for transferring water from the north of England to London; and if she will make a statement.

**Rory Stewart:**

The Secretary of State has not had any recent discussions with water companies or made any specific assessment relating to water transfers along the High Speed 2 corridor. No such project was proposed during the last round of water company water resources management plans.

Defra and the Environment Agency are now working with all water companies to ensure that they consider the range of options for balancing future supply and demand in their next update to their plans to be published in 2019. This includes looking at bulk transfers between companies.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### ■ Ashraf Fayadh

**Stephen Timms:** [\[17663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Saudi Arabian counterparts about Ashraf Fayadh.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

We are aware of, and concerned about, the case of Mr Ashraf Fayadh. We oppose the death penalty in all circumstances and in every country, especially in cases which include the use of the death penalty for a crime which isn't deemed "the most serious". The UK is a strong supporter of freedom of expression around the world. We believe that people must be allowed to discuss and debate issues freely, challenge their governments peacefully, exercise the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and speak out against violations of human rights wherever they occur.

### ■ Bahrain: Detainees

**Helen Goodman:** [\[17460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will publish a response to the Human Rights Watch report, *The Blood of People Who Don't Cooperate: Continuing Torture and Mistreatment of Detainees in Bahrain*, published on 22 November 2015.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

We are considering the report carefully. The UK Government consistently and unreservedly condemns torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and it is a priority for us to combat it wherever and whenever it occurs. We are aware of ongoing allegations against Ministry of Interior personnel and we have expressed our concerns to the authorities. The Government of Bahrain has previously committed to consider ratifying the Optional Protocol of the Convention Against Torture. The UK strongly supports this and we have been working with the authorities to share best practice on torture prevention measures. We also continue to ask the Government of Bahrain to allow a visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture.

■ **Bahrain: Overseas Aid**

**Helen Goodman:** [\[17459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what funding the Government has committed to provide to (a) projects and (b) the government in Bahrain in each financial year from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

We support Bahrain's ambitious reform programmes and will provide in the region of £2.1 million of funding in support of projects aimed at strengthening human rights and the rule of law in 2015-16. The allocations for subsequent financial years to 2019/20 have not yet been agreed.

■ **Iraq: Kurds**

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** [\[17529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Iraqi counterpart on the autonomy of the Kurdistan region in northern Iraq; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Philip Hammond) last met Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ja'afari in London on 22 January. The autonomy of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq was not discussed at that meeting. However, the Foreign Secretary, the British Ambassador to Baghdad, the Consul General in Erbil and I regularly discuss with both the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government, the importance of working together to defeat ISIL and deliver the stable, secure, prosperous and unified Iraq all Iraq's people want.

■ **Israel: Palestinians**

**Angela Rayner:** [\[16491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent steps the Government has taken to advance peace talks in Israel and the Palestinian territories.



**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

The UK is clear that the best way to achieve a two-state solution is through negotiations between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority. However, there must be an environment conducive to peace, and we are therefore urging all parties to de-escalate current tensions.

On 9 October, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond) spoke to President Abbas and urged him to do everything in his power to reduce tensions and restore calm. Officials at our Embassy in Tel Aviv discuss the situation frequently with Israeli officials. Most recently, on 19 November, our Ambassador to Tel Aviv discussed the ongoing violence with Gilad Erdan, the Israeli Minister for Strategic Affairs, Public Security and Information.

**Mr Charles Walker:**[\[17598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what UN initiatives the UK is supporting that aim to promote reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians and establishment of a Palestinian nation state that is recognised both internationally and by Israel.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

The UK continues to support a negotiated two state solution as the only way to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As part of this, along with other members of the UN Security Council, we welcome efforts by the Quartet to drive forward improvements on the ground. We support the Security Council's efforts to build an environment conducive to peace and achieve our common goal of a two-state solution. In response to the recent violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the UK supports and reiterates the Council's calls on both parties to avoid escalating the situation. We will judge proposals for further UN initiatives on the basis of whether we assess they support progress on the Middle East Peace Process.

**Mr Charles Walker:**[\[17599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he or officials of his Department have had with Dr Salim Munayer and Musalah on prospects for reconciliation between Israel and Palestine; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has not had discussions specifically with Dr Salim Munayer and Musaleh on prospects for reconciliation between Israel and Palestine. However we fund several projects through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund which aim to foster reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis. For example, we support the Peres Centre project to train Palestinian doctors in Israeli hospitals. This not only provides advanced training but also creates people to people relations.

## HEALTH

## ■ Antibiotics: Drug Resistance

Alex Chalk: [\[17130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department is making preparations to plan for widespread resistance to known antibiotics.

**Jane Ellison:**

The Government has already made comprehensive plans to address the threat of antibiotic resistance through the *UK Five Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy 2013 – 2018*

The UK Strategy, which was published in September 2013, sets out our overarching goal to slow the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance. It focusses activities around three strategic aims, namely, to improve the knowledge and understanding of antimicrobial resistance; to conserve and steward the effectiveness of existing treatments; and to stimulate the development of new antibiotics, diagnostics and novel therapies. The strategy is based on the principle of "One Health", tackling the problem of resistance in humans, animals and the environment.

Globally, the UK has led efforts to tackle antimicrobial resistance. For example, we have taken the lead in the development and adoption, in May 2015, of a new World Health Organization (WHO) Resolution on antimicrobial resistance. We are now working towards agreement for a high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance at the United Nations General Assembly in 2016.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[17474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the budget is for implementation of the UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy; and if he will make a statement.

**Jane Ellison:**

The UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy (AMR) Strategy detailed implementation plan, published in December 2014, set out those activities that needed to be undertaken to deliver the strategy in each of seven key areas for action. No separate budget was identified. Activity in the plan is led by the Department of Health, Public Health England, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and NHS England and is incorporated within existing business plans for those organisations.

In March 2015 the Government announced the new £195 million Fleming Fund to strengthen surveillance of drug resistance and laboratory capacity in developing countries. As stated in the Overseas Development Aid Strategy, published on 22 November. The Government will invest a further £70 million in the Fleming Fund and deliver the new Global AMR Innovation Fund launched with China. The Government will continue to push for further international financing for research and innovation to tackle AMR.

## ■ Antibiotics: Drug Resistance

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[17535]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 24 November 2015 to Question 17021, what the number of methicillin resistant (a) staphylococcus aureus, (b) clostridium difficile and (c) E.coli infections were in England and Wales in each of the last five years.

**Ben Gummer:**

Public Health England (PHE) has surveillance data on methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) bacteraemia, *E. coli* bacteraemia and on *C. difficile* Infection (CDI). The reported numbers for both MRSA and *E. coli* bacteraemia cover bloodstream infections only. *C. difficile* data covers all infections. The totals, shown in the table below, are the number of infections reported to PHE each financial year, extracted from the Healthcare Associated Infections (HCAI) data capture system. Mandatory surveillance data covers England only.

Total Number of MRSA, *C. difficile* and *E. coli* infections in England (April 2010 to March 2015)

YEAR:	APRIL 2010 - MARCH 2011	APRIL 2011 - MARCH 2012	APRIL 2012 - MARCH 2013	APRIL 2013- MARCH 2014	APRIL 2014 - MARCH 2015
Total reported MRSA bacteraemia episodes	1,481	1,116	924	862	801
Total reported <i>C. difficile</i> episodes	21,707	18,022	14,694	13,361	14,165
Total reported <i>E. coli</i> bacteraemia episodes	*	*	32,309	34,275	35,676

\* Mandatory surveillance of *E. coli* bacteraemia was introduced in July 2011.

Source: PHE.

**■ Better Care Fund**

**Peter Kyle:** [\[17657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the £1.5 billion for the Better Care Fund by 2019-20 announced in the Autumn Statement 2015 is in addition to existing NHS financial allocations for the next five years.

**Alistair Burt:**

From 2017 the Government will make adult social care funding available to local government, to be included in an improved Better Care Fund, rising to £1.5 billion in 2019-20. This is in addition to the NHS's mandated contribution to the Better Care Fund, which will continue in real terms over the Parliament.

**■ Cancer: Drugs**

**Rachel Reeves:** [\[17604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the funding arrangements are in (a) England and (b) West Yorkshire hospitals for the use of Docetaxel chemotherapy medication.

**George Freeman:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body, which makes decisions on the clinical and cost effectiveness of products based on thorough assessment of the best available evidence. NICE has recommended docetaxel for the treatment of hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer (where the disease becomes unresponsive to hormone treatment). Commissioners are legally required to fund drugs and treatments recommended in NICE technology appraisal guidance.

In the absence of guidance from NICE, it is for commissioners in England to make funding decisions on drugs and treatments based on the available evidence.

**Rachel Reeves:** [\[17669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether Docetaxel chemotherapy medication is available from the Cancer Drugs Fund.

**George Freeman:**

Docetaxel has not been made available through the national Cancer Drugs Fund (CDF) list. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has recommended docetaxel for the treatment of hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer (where the disease becomes unresponsive to hormone treatment). Commissioners are legally required to fund drugs and treatments recommended in NICE technology appraisal guidance.

NHS England will consider Individual CDF Requests for cancer medicines not on the CDF list and not recommended by NICE to treat individuals whose clinician can demonstrate clinical exceptionality.

## ■ Cannabis

**Gavin Robinson:**

[17135]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent clinical assessments his Department has made of the potential medical benefits of cannabis.

**George Freeman:**

Cannabis and its preparations are Class B controlled drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Cannabis is also subject to international drug control under UN Conventions. In the United Kingdom, it is illegal to produce, possess, supply, import and export cannabis except under Home Office licence. Apart from the drug Sativex, which is derived from cannabis, the UK does not recognise herbal cannabis as having any medicinal use.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published a clinical guideline on the management of multiple sclerosis in October 2014 that does not recommend Sativex, a cannabis-derived treatment, as a cost effective use of National Health Service resources. NICE's guideline on multiple sclerosis is published at:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg186/resources/multiple-sclerosis-management-of-multiple-sclerosis-in-primary-and-secondary-care-35109816059077>

## ■ Cardiovascular System: Diseases

**Grahame Morris:**

[17421]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answers of 16 November 2015 to Questions 15277 and 15193, what the outputs are from the NHS England expert forum which were originally initiated in the Cardiovascular Disease Outcomes Strategy; and what plans the NHS England expert group has for future work on familial hypercholesterolemia.

**Jane Ellison:**

The expert forum - the Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) Collaborative Strategy Group - has representation from key CVD stakeholders including NHS England, Public Health England, Department of Health and third sector organisations such as the British Heart Foundation, Diabetes UK and the National Kidney Federation. It provides leadership to the National Health Service in developing approaches to improve the prevention, early diagnosis and management of CVD as highlighted in the CVD outcomes strategy.

As part of its work, the group is exploring approaches to support the earlier diagnosis of atrial fibrillation, high blood pressure, heart failure and valve disease and to improve outcomes from out of hospital cardiac arrest. It is also considering how it can support wider strategic developments arising from the Five Year Forward View, such as the development of seven day services.

In addition, NHS England's National Clinical Director for Heart Disease continues to work with partners on familial hypercholesterolemia (FH). Working with Public Health England, they aim to identify more families with FH and address the importance of cholesterol on general as a risk factor for CVD. The National Clinical Director also chairs an FH Steering Group, which brings together relevant stakeholders, and

supports Strategic Clinical Networks around the country so that good practice can be shared more widely.

## ■ Department of Health: Innovation

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[17110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what effect the sunset review of NHS and his Department funded or sponsored innovation bodies, set out in the Innovation, Health and Wealth report, published in December 2011, had on the form, funding and effectiveness of such bodies.

**George Freeman:**

The sunset review of innovation and improvement bodies was an internal review which helped shape long term plans for a number of organisations, including the 15 academic health science networks.

The Department is funding RAND Europe and the University of Manchester to conduct a formative and summative evaluation of Innovation, Health and Wealth. The project is expected to complete in 2017, the report on the first stage of the evaluation is due to be published imminently. Further details can be found on the RAND Europe website:

[www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/innovation-health-wealth.html](http://www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/innovation-health-wealth.html)

Since the publication of One Year On in 2012, an update on the implementation of the Innovation Health and Wealth (IHW) report, there has been a great deal of progress made in many of the IHW work streams. Much of this has been incorporated into NHS England's Innovation Into Action: Supporting delivery of the NHS Five Year Funding View, published in September 2015 and can be found at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/nhs-innovation-into-action.pdf>

## ■ Electronic Cigarettes

**Steve McCabe:** [\[17114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what (a) the Government's policy is and (b) guidance his Department has issued on the use of e-cigarettes as an alternative to smoking; and if he will make a statement.

**Jane Ellison:**

The Government believes that vaping/using e-cigarettes is significantly less harmful than smoking tobacco products. Evidence suggests that smokers can substantially benefit their health by fully substituting the use of e-cigarettes for smoking. Public Health England has been working with Local Stop Smoking Services encouraging them to be open to the use of e-cigarettes, where clients choose to use them to support their quit attempts, alone or alongside other nicotine replacement therapies and the behavioural therapy that the services offer.

The first e-cigarette was licenced by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency earlier this month. The Government continues to encourage applications for licensed medicinal products to enable both general practitioners and Local Stop Smoking

Services to prescribe products which have demonstrated that they meet appropriate standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.

#### ■ Four Seasons Health Care

**Mr Mark Hendrick:**

[17576]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the Care Quality Commission (CQC) is making an assessment of the financial sustainability of Four Seasons Health Care under section 55 of the Care Act 2014; and whether the CQC has had meetings with (a) ministers and officials of his Department and (b) finance officers and other senior managers of Four Seasons Health Care to discuss that provider's financial position.

**Alistair Burt:**

Four Seasons Healthcare is one of the names included in the Market Oversight scheme that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has run since 6 April 2015. Whilst the CQC is unable to comment on individual providers in the scheme due to commercial sensitivity, the CQC can nevertheless confirm that it is operating the regime in line with the published guidance 'Market Oversight of difficult to replace providers of adult social care' that can be found on the CQC's website at:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/market-oversight-adult-social-care>

#### ■ Hospitals: Weather

**Chloe Smith:**

[17098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the oral reply by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Quality of 17 November 2015, Official Report, column 519, what specific support has been provided to Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals Trust for winter 2015-16; what the financial value of that support is; and what the value is of the total of such support to all hospitals.

**Jane Ellison:**

£400 million in resilience money has been invested in the National Health Service for winter 2015/16. Of this £400 million North Norfolk, South Norfolk, West Norfolk and Norwich clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) received £4.8 million of resilience money in their baseline, however it is not possible to give a specific figure for Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals Trust. Learning from previous years, we have put this money into the CCG baseline for 2015/16 so that the National Health Service can plan effectively at local level for the long-term and take earlier action to tackle the symptoms of seasonal pressures.

As part of the best practice guidance from the Safer, Faster, Better report (April 2015), all System Resilience Groups are implementing eight high impact interventions. These focus on short term priorities needed to improve flow through the system and reduce pressure on emergency departments.

**■ Infectious Diseases: Screening**

**Andy McDonald:** [\[17536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what tests are used in UK microbiology laboratories that are deemed equivalent to the UK SMI B58.

**Andy McDonald:** [\[17537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many UK microbiology laboratories use the UK SMI B58 or equivalent test for detecting group B strep carriage.

**Jane Ellison:**

UK microbiology laboratories that do not use Standards for Microbiological Investigations (SMIs) should be able to demonstrate at least equivalence in their testing methodologies to the relevant accreditation body. Public Health England is not an accrediting body in these circumstances therefore we do not hold information as to what tests are deemed to be equivalent to UK SMI B58.

UK SMIs are not mandatory and Public Health England does not have data as to how many laboratories, National Health Service or otherwise use UK SMI B58 or equivalent testing for detecting Group B Strep.

SMIs are intended as a general resource for practising professionals operating in the field of laboratory medicine and infection specialties in the United Kingdom.

SMIs help laboratories to meet accreditation requirements by promoting high quality practices which are auditable.

**■ Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: Nurses**

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [\[17578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps the Care Quality Commission is taking to ensure that nursing homes in Lancashire (a) assist registered nurses in complying with revalidation with the Nursing and Midwifery Council and (b) provide training to such nurses to assist with achieving such revalidation.

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [\[17579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust is taking to ensure that registered nurses in its employment are able to comply fully with the requirements of revalidation with the Nursing and Midwifery Council; and what training is being provided to such nurses for that purpose.

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [\[17580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is taking to ensure that registered nurses in its employment are able to comply fully with the requirements of revalidation with the Nursing and Midwifery Council; and what training is being provided to such nurses for that purpose.



**Mr Mark Hendrick:**

[\[17581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps Greater Manchester West Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust is taking to ensure that registered nurses in its employment are able to comply fully with the requirements of revalidation with the Nursing and Midwifery Council; and what training is being provided to such nurses for that purpose.

**Ben Gummer:**

Information on support provided by individual National Health Service providers is not collected centrally and may be obtained from the organisations themselves.

All nurses and midwives practising in England are required by law to be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. From April 2016, nurses and midwives will have to revalidate every three years, when they renew their registration.

It is the responsibility of nurses and midwives to register and undertake revalidation. There is no specific requirement for employers to help nurses and midwives through revalidation but it is in their interests and a matter of good practice, to support nurses and midwives to provide safe and effective care.

As part of its inspection process, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) considers staff access to training and related support. Where nurses are employed, the CQC makes enquiries about the maintenance of continual professional development and the levels of support offered by the provider.

## ■ Mental Health Services

**Luciana Berger:**

[\[17515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many mental health services he has visited since March 2015; and what the date was of each such visit.

**Alistair Burt:**

Departmental Ministers have undertaken the following visits to mental health services (including charity visits and community centres) in an official capacity since March 2015 to date:

Former Minister of State (Norman Lamb)

5 March 2015- Turning Point's Crisis Point Centre

5 March 2015- RADAR (Rapid Alcohol Detox Acute Referrals)

Minister of State (Alistair Burt)

21 May 2015- South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

29 June 2015- Hammersmith and Fulham Mental Health Unit/ West London Clinical Commissioning Group

2 July 2015- British Transport Police, suicide prevention and mental health team (street triage)

3 August 2015- Margaret Oats, Mother and baby unit, City and Hackney Centre for mental health

24 August 2015- Bradford Divisional HQ, Nelson Street Police Station

10 September 2015 – Samaritans Visit on World Suicide Day

8 October 2015 – Oxfordshire Mind for World Mental Health day

## ■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

**Luciana Berger:** [\[17725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much of the additional £1.25 billion allocated in the Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 for funding for child and adolescent mental health services over five years will be allocated in each financial year to 2020.

**Alistair Burt:**

In total £1.4 billion will be made available over the course of this Parliament to improve children and young people's mental health. In addition to the £1.25 billion made available in the March 2015 budget, which includes £75 million for perinatal mental health services, an additional £150 million was also allocated in the 2014 Autumn Statement to improve community-based eating disorder services.

The Government is firmly committed to delivering the major changes needed to improve services for children and young people with mental health problems, including investment in early intervention and prevention.

The Government is taking a targeted and phased approach to the additional investment to enable local areas to develop additional capacity and a collaborative approach across health, education and children's services. This is what is needed to make a real difference. We are spending £143 million this year, much of which is going to local area, underpinned by a national programme of work.

Exact allocations for each financial year will be confirmed as part of the annual planning process, but the government remains committed to delivering the full amount over the five year period to 2019/20.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Female Genital Mutilation

**Luciana Berger:** [\[17538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of provisions in place to provide psychological treatments for victims of FGM.

**Jane Ellison:**

As part of its £3 million Female Genital Mutilation Prevention Programme, the Department is actively looking at the provision of mental health and wellbeing services for FGM survivors.

A ministerial roundtable with senior stakeholders was held on 29 October 2015 to discuss this issue. The Department is working with specialist mental health professionals

and professional bodies to evidence the needs of FGM survivors, and will consider how best to support commissioners to ensure FGM survivors can access existing mental health services that are able to meet their individual needs.

The Department has also commissioned specialist FGM mental health e-learning and we are also updating existing mental health training materials to support awareness and recognition by health professionals of how FGM may impact mental health.

#### ■ Mental Health Services: Finance

**Luciana Berger:** [\[17723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much of the £600 million additional funding for mental health announced in the Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 will be allocated in (a) the 2015-16 financial year and (b) each financial year.

**Luciana Berger:** [\[17726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether the additional £600 million funding for mental health announced in the Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 is funding previously not included in figures for total spending of the Department involved.

**Luciana Berger:** [\[17727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what proportion of the £600 million additional funding for mental health announced in the Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 will be allocated to (a) talking therapies, (b) perinatal mental health support and (c) crisis support.

**Alistair Burt:**

The additional £600 million for mental health over the next five years announced in the Spending Review and Autumn Statement is additional to current spending. The levels of funding in individual years and the specific mental health service improvements it will fund will be determined in the new year, once the Mental Health Taskforce has reported.

#### ■ NHS

**Justin Madders:** [\[17461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his oral contribution of 21 October 2014, Official Report, column 754, whether he has received a copy of the OECD study of the four NHS systems in the UK.

**Ben Gummer:**

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has yet to publish its United Kingdom Health Care Quality Review. The four UK countries have had sight of a draft of the final report.

**■ NHS: Innovation**

**Andrew Gwynne:** [17109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department made of the effect of the Innovation Health and Wealth report, published in December 2011, on innovation in the NHS.

**George Freeman:**

The Department is funding RAND Europe and the University of Manchester to conduct a formative and summative evaluation of Innovation, Health and Wealth. The project is expected to complete in 2017 and the report on the first stage of the evaluation is due to be published imminently. Further details can be found on the RAND Europe website:

[www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/innovation-health-wealth.html](http://www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/innovation-health-wealth.html)

Since the publication of *Creating Change: Innovation, Health and Wealth one year on* in 2012, there has been a great deal of progress made in many of the IHW work streams. Much of this has been incorporated into NHS England's *Innovation Into Action: Supporting delivery of the NHS Five Year Funding View*, published in September 2015 and can be found at:

[www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/nhs-innovation-into-action.pdf](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/nhs-innovation-into-action.pdf)

**■ Ophthalmic Services: Greater Manchester**

**William Wragg:** [17533]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the level of provision of eye clinic liaison officers is in eye clinics and hospitals in (a) Greater Manchester and (b) Hazel Grove constituency.

**Alistair Burt:**

This information is not collected centrally.

Eye clinics and their staffing, including eye clinic liaison officers, are commissioned and funded by individual clinical commissioning groups on the basis of local assessments of need.

**■ Psychiatry**

**Luciana Berger:** [17516]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many and what proportion of NHS psychological therapists are Improving Access to Psychological Therapies practitioners.

**Luciana Berger:** [17517]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many hours were worked by a (a) Improving Access to Psychological Therapies practitioners and (b) other therapists in the NHS in each of the last five years.

**Alistair Burt:**

There were 756 training places commissioned for Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (Adult IAPT) programme in 2014/15. The commissioning intention for 2015/16 is 946.

Information is not available of what proportion of National Health Service psychological therapists are IAPT practitioners. We also do not hold information on the number of hours worked by IAPT practitioners and other therapists.

**Luciana Berger:**[\[17518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the proportion of Improving Access to Psychological Therapies patients who have dropped out of their treatment before completion in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

**Alistair Burt:**

The table below provides data on the number of people that did not complete a course of treatment under the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme from 2012/13 – 2014/15. Data is not available prior to 2012/13.

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/2015-11-24/17518>

**■ Suicide****Luciana Berger:**[\[17724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the implications of coroners recording narrative verdicts in cases of suicide on the provision of accurate suicide statistics.

**Alistair Burt:**

We have been working with the Chief Coroner to address areas around suicide, including narrative verdicts and the information recorded by coroners in deaths where suicide may have been suspected. However, coroners must meet the standard of proof of an intention beyond reasonable doubt in order to record a conclusion of suicide – to establish beyond reasonable doubt that a person took their own life and that they intended to take their own life.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has also worked with the Chief Coroner to improve the coding for narrative verdicts to improve data quality around suicide. The suicide rates published by the ONS may include deaths that were given an open verdict where the person's intent was unknown.

**HOME OFFICE**■ **Home Office: Families**

**Caroline Ansell:** [\[17927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what training her Department has provided to staff on the family test; what other steps she has taken to raise awareness of the family test among staff of her Department; and if she will make a statement.

**Karen Bradley:**

The Family Test has been integrated into the Department's impact assessment process. Workshops are being scheduled to further assist staff in understanding how to apply the guidance introduced for the Family Test issued by the Department for Work and Pensions.

■ **Home Office: Northern Ireland**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[17416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times Ministers in her Department (a) visited and (b) met personnel at national security establishments in Northern Ireland in 2014.

**Mr John Hayes:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2015]:* Home Office Ministers have visited and met a wide variety of organisations and individuals involved in supporting security in Northern Ireland. Details of ministerial meetings are passed to the Cabinet Office on a quarterly basis and are subsequently published on the Gov.uk website: <http://data.gov.uk/dataset/ministerial-data-home-office>.

■ **National Wildlife Crime Unit: Finance**

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[17696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has for the funding of the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

**Mike Penning:**

The Spending Review announcement set the overall budget for the Home Office. Officials are now going through the detail and will provide advice to the Home Secretary on individual allocations and spending commitments.

■ **Refugees: Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross**

**Dr Paul Monaghan:** [\[14983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many refugee families she expects to be relocated to Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross constituency; where such families will be housed; and what steps the Government is taking to ensure that such families have access to education for their children.

**James Brokenshire:**

With regard to the resettlement of 20,000 Syrians that the Prime Minister announced on 7 September, this is a voluntary scheme whereby local authorities sign up to accept refugees on a voluntary basis and there is no expectation on any particular local authority.

We are working closely with those local authorities that have indicated they wish to be involved as well as with the Local Government Association and with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. We do not disclose the details of where refugees are resettled upon their arrival in the UK under the Government resettlement schemes as this may undermine the privacy and recovery of this vulnerable group of people.

The Home Office alongside other departments and the Local Government Association and the Convention of Scottish Authorities will work with individual local authorities who are volunteering to take Syrian refugees to secure appropriate accommodation.

The Government has committed to investing £7 billion on new school places over the next six years, and in the last Parliament funding for school places doubled to £5 billion to create 445,000 additional places. Local Authorities are allocated funding for school places based on their own local data on school capacity and pupil forecasts, in which they take account of factors including rising birth rates, housing development, trends in internal migration and migration to England from elsewhere in the United Kingdom and from overseas. We continue to work with Local Authorities to make sure that every child has a school place.

**■ Religious Hatred: Islam****Sadiq Khan:**[\[17630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Muslim women reported being the victim of abuse or hate crime in each police authority area in England and Wales in (a) 2013, (b) 2014 and (c) 2015; and how many such reports (i) have been investigated, (b) resulted in prosecution and (c) resulted in a conviction.

**Mike Penning:**

The Home Office does not hold the requested information. While the Home Office collects information on the number of recorded hate crimes by police force area, we cannot tell from these data the religion or the sex of the victim.

The Home Office does not hold information on prosecutions; these figures are the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice.

I refer the Right Honourable Member to my answer of 3 November in response to question 13254. In the future, we intend to collect a breakdown of religion-based hate crime data from the police to help forces build community trust, target their resources and enable the public to better hold them to account.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ **Department for International Development: Employment Agencies**

**Louise Haigh:** [\[17558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate she has made of the cost of using external agencies for recruitment to Senior Civil Service posts in her Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

**Mr Desmond Swayne:**

The table below confirms DFID's spend on using external agencies for recruitment to Senior Civil Service posts in the last five years.

YEAR	SPEND
2012/13	£14,760
2013/14	£40,500
2015/16	£38,000

As part of its long-term economic plan, this Government has reduced the size of the Civil Service by 22%, adjusting for Machinery of Government changes that moved staff into and out of the Civil Service since the 2010 General Election, representing a significant increase in efficiency and productivity that helped save taxpayers £2.8 billion last year alone.

■ **Refugees: Children**

**Mike Kane:** [\[17195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how her Department plans to ensure that data is collected on stateless children so that such children can be taken into account in measuring progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Mr Desmond Swayne:**

The UK has played a key role in creating a set of Global Goals that are universal and inclusive; underpinned by a commitment to leave no one behind. Goal 17 target 18 concerns the need for high-quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data. It will be essential to have this data to ensure we leave no one behind, including data on stateless children. DFID is currently undertaking a bilateral aid review to address priorities for this parliament and this will address how we will support better data to ensure the Prime Ministers Leave No One Behind promise is delivered.



## ■ Yemen: Non-governmental Organisations

**Edward Argar:**

[\[17341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of the security situation in Yemen on the ability of non-governmental organisations to operate and deliver aid in that country.

**Mr Desmond Swayne:**

Conflict in Yemen has made it difficult for agencies to operate and deliver humanitarian aid to all those who need it, particularly in the five governorates most affected by the fighting (Abyan, Aden, Al Dahle, Hajjah and Taiz). The city of Taiz, where fighting has intensified in recent weeks, is currently of particular concern. Humanitarian agencies have been denied permission to deliver lifesaving supplies and there are reports of severe shortages of food, healthcare, water and sanitation.

We continue to call on all parties to facilitate rapid, safe and unhindered access to all people in need and to safeguard key infrastructure, including airports, sea ports, fuel distribution sites and major access routes in Yemen. We will continue to fund those agencies and NGOs who have the best access and ability to deliver humanitarian assistance in Yemen.

## ■ Yemen: Overseas Aid

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[17201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she has taken to ensure that the additional £40 million of aid her Department allocated in June 2015 to Yemen benefits its intended recipients.

**Mr Desmond Swayne:**

To ensure UK aid reaches its intended recipients, we work with trusted and impartial actors such as UN agencies and NGOs who have a strong track record of prioritising assistance to those most in need, and delivering and monitoring assistance in difficult and dangerous places. We operate a zero tolerance approach to fraud and corruption and have an independent monitoring programme to provide assurance on what we are delivering.

Since the start of the crisis in Yemen, UK aid has assisted at least 700,000 people directly affected by the conflict including vulnerable host communities, internally displaced people and migrants. We have provided critical support for healthcare, malnutrition, water and sanitation, protection and shelter. We have also continued to strengthen and protect local capacity and community assets from further shocks by providing agricultural and other livelihoods assistance.

## ■ Yemen: Ports

**Edward Argar:**

[\[17342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment the Government has made of (a) the condition of the port infrastructure at Hodeida in Yemen

and (b) Hodeida's ability to function as a port for the purpose of delivering and unloading international aid.

**Mr Desmond Swayne:**

The UK assessed the damage to Hodeidah port in August 2015. The port is currently running but with significant constraints: cranes and warehouses have been damaged and the lack of a reliable electricity supply is affecting port operations. However, the port is still operational: it can receive and unload shipments and is capable of servicing between 3 and 5 ships at a time, dependent on size. Between 1-15 November (most recent data), 12 ships berthed in Hodeidah port.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Courts: Fines

**Mr Mark Hendrick:** [\[17720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which (a) magistrates and (b) crown courts in the North West and London ask for wage slips, P60s, certified accounts or letters confirming benefit entitlement when setting fines.

**Mr Shailesh Vara:**

Data on the number of instances when individual magistrates' or the Crown Court make such directions is not collated by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service.

### ■ Dangerous Driving

**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[17435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will clarify the definitions of careless driving and dangerous driving during his review of driving offences and penalties.

**Andrew Selous:**

The legal meaning of careless or inconsiderate driving, and of dangerous driving, and the associated offences are set out in the Road Traffic Act 1988.

Since the announcement of the review of driving offences and penalties the Ministry of Justice has received a number of representations about the distinction between careless and dangerous driving.

It is important that all criminal justice agencies, including the police, Crown Prosecution Service and the judiciary, should explain clearly any decisions made in relation to careless or dangerous driving.

### ■ Employment Tribunals Service: Pregnant Women

**Julian Sturdy:** [\[17481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what account he has taken of trends in reports of pregnancy discrimination as in his review into employment tribunal fees.

**Mr Shailesh Vara:**

On 11 June we announced the start of the post-implementation review of the introduction of fees in the Employment Tribunals. The review will consider, so far as is possible, the impact the fees have had on those with protected characteristics and the types of case they bring. In order to do this, we will be giving all relevant material the appropriate consideration.

The review is underway and will report in due course.

**■ Immigration: Appeals****David T. C. Davies:**[\[17668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much has been spent from the public purse on providing legal aid for asylum seekers who wish to pursue immigration appeals in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

**Mr Shailesh Vara:**

The Ministry of Justice cannot separately report on legal aid specifically awarded to asylum seekers. This information is not recorded, as it is not relevant to the administration of the legal aid scheme.

**■ James Thompson****Bill Esterson:**[\[17450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make representations to the Criminal Cases Review Commission to open an investigation into the case of James Thompson.

**Mike Penning:**

As I stated in response to Questions 14066 and 16560, although the Criminal Cases Review Commission is funded by my Department, it is entirely independent of Government, and Ministers cannot, and should not, attempt to intervene in its reviews or decisions.

**■ Ministry of Justice: Employment Agencies****Louise Haigh:**[\[17559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the cost of using external agencies for recruitment to Senior Civil Service posts in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

**Mike Penning:**

From July 2014, recruitment for SCS posts have been managed centrally by Civil Service Resourcing. Data prior to that date is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

As part of its long-term economic plan, this Government has reduced the size of the Civil Service by 22%, adjusting for Machinery of Government changes that moved staff into and out of the Civil Service since the 2010 General Election, representing a

significant increase in efficiency and productivity that helped save taxpayers £2.8 billion last year alone.

#### ■ Prisoners: Gender Recognition

**Andy Slaughter:** [\[17754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners undergoing a transition from male to female gender have been placed in the female estate prior to receiving legal recognition of that change of gender.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

This information is not held centrally and as my Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Prisons, Probation and Rehabilitation, committed to the House on 20 November, my Department will publish data on the number of trans people in prison in due course.

#### ■ Prisons: Crimes of Violence

**Andy Slaughter:** [\[17628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many assaults in which the victims was transgender were recorded in prisons in the last 12 months.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

This information is not held centrally and as my Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Prisons, Probation and Rehabilitation, committed to the House on 20 November, my Department will publish data on the number of trans people in prison in due course.

**Andy Slaughter:** [\[17692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many homophobic assaults were recorded in (a) male and (b) female prisons in the last 12 months.

**Andrew Selous:**

Centrally held records do not record data identifying homophobic assaults. This information could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

#### ■ Sexual Offences: Alcoholic Drinks

**Fiona Bruce:** [\[17329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many sexual offences in which the offender was under the influence of alcohol were recorded in each of the last five years.

**Andrew Selous:**

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

**■ Witnesses: Location**

**Philip Davies:** [\[17247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many remote sites are operational to enable witnesses to give evidence away from court; in which areas such sites are located; how many such sites are available to children under the age of 18; and how many such sites have been used by children under the age of 18.

**Philip Davies:** [\[17248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress his Department has made on the provision of remote sites from which children and young people can give evidence other than in a court building.

**Philip Davies:** [\[17344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure that fewer children who have been subject to abuse need to attend court to give evidence.

**Philip Davies:** [\[17345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many remote sites (a) are operational to enable witnesses to give evidence away from court, (b) were available for use by children under the age of 18 in 2014-15 and (c) were used by children under the age of 18 in that year.

**Philip Davies:** [\[17346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children under the age of (a) 13 and (b) 18 gave evidence from a (i) remote site and (ii) court building in 2014-15.

**Mike Penning:**

The Ministry is committed to supporting all victims and witnesses, including children, when giving evidence in criminal trials. All victims and witnesses are eligible for special measures to relieve stress when giving evidence, including giving evidence by video remotely.

We have secured over £700m of funding to invest in our courts and tribunals. We have worked closely with the senior judiciary to develop a plan for investing this in reforming the courts and tribunals so they can deliver swifter, fairer justice at a lower cost. This will include digitisation and modernisation of our IT infrastructure. This will mean court users can attend hearings remotely, and not be inconvenienced by having to take a day off work to come to court. It will also mean victims of crime can give evidence from somewhere they feel safe.

Since March 2015 vulnerable and intimidated witnesses, including child abuse victims, can give evidence from a remote site which is away from the court environment. There is at least one remote site in each of the seven Regions in England and Wales, and twelve sites in total.

In addition, the court estate is video-enabled so that any victim or witness can give evidence from a court building other than the trial site to ensure they do not come into contact with the defendant, or their family and supporters.

Whilst HMCTS collates data on the number of witnesses giving evidence by video, the ages of the victims and witnesses are not recorded.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Human Rights Act 1998: Northern Ireland

**Ms Margaret Ritchie:** [\[17476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment she has made of the effect of potential reforms of the Human Rights Act 1998 on the Good Friday Agreement; and if she will make a statement.

**Ms Margaret Ritchie:** [\[17477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment she has made of the effect of the Human Rights Act 1998 on society and communities in Northern Ireland; and if she will make a statement.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

The Government was elected in May with a clear mandate to implement its manifesto commitment to replace the Human Rights Act with a British Bill of Rights.

We believe that it is entirely possible to do that in ways that are consistent with the Belfast Agreement.

### ■ Northern Ireland Government

**Tom Elliott:** [\[17419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how much of the Stormont Agreement's financial package of £2 billion in extra spending power to the Northern Ireland Executive is a loan to be paid back to the Government by the Executive.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

Through the Stormont House Agreement the Government committed to allow the Executive to use £700 million of Reinvestment and Reform Initiative (RRI) capital borrowing to fund Voluntary Exit Schemes (VES). The Executive expect full implementation of VES to deliver around £500 million in annual savings, which can be deployed to other public services.

The Government also agreed to allow the Executive increased access to RRI borrowing to fund £350 million of capital projects, over four years. This funding is for economic projects.

## ■ Veterans: Northern Ireland

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[17235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland of 18 November 2015, Official Report, what steps her Department is taking to support military veterans who served in Northern Ireland in 1972.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

The Government accepts that we have a duty of care to all current and former members of the Armed Forces, and the MoD pay for independent legal advice when both current and former members of the Armed Forces face prosecution in matters related to their service.

The Armed Forces Covenant sets out the relationship between the nation, the government and the armed forces recognising that the whole nation has a moral obligation to members of the armed forces and their families, and it establishes how they should expect to be treated.

In Northern Ireland, there is a bespoke aftercare package in place to support former members of the UDR and R IRISH (Home Service), their dependents and widows. This consists of welfare teams spread across Northern Ireland which offers vocational resettlement training, medical support, and a UDR/ R IRISH benevolent fund. In August 2015, the MoD agreed that the UDR & R IRISH (HS) Aftercare Service should continue to exist and be funded since circumstances leading to its inception have not markedly changed, need is still evident and demand is being effectively met. However, in line with other defence restructuring, it has been decided that eventually it should become owned by the MoD's main veterans' support organisation, known as Veterans UK.

This is in addition to the services available to all veterans; including Veterans UK (in particular the Veterans Welfare Service which has welfare representatives based across the UK); Service and ex-Service charities such as the Army Benevolent Fund – the Soldiers charity, SSAFA – the Armed Forces charity and Combat Stress.

## PRIME MINISTER

## ■ Detainees: Rendition and Torture

**Mr Andrew Tyrie:**

[\[17297\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what recent discussions he has had with the Chair of the Intelligence and Security Committee on the progress of its inquiry into the role of the Government and intelligence and security agencies in the alleged rendition and torture of detainees.

**Mr David Cameron:**

I meet the Chairman of the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament on a regular basis to discuss the Committee's priorities for the period ahead. The Committee

announced on 29 October that these priorities would include their follow-up examination of the themes and issues identified by the Detainee Inquiry.

■ **Prime Minister: Travel**

**Mrs Madeleine Moon:** [\[17184\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, (a) whether the RAF Voyager aircraft being refitted for ministerial travel has been leased to the Government, (b) what the capacity of that aircraft was before it was refitted and (c) what the cost of Prime Ministerial air travel has been since 2010; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr David Cameron:**

Details about the RAF Voyager aircraft being refitted for ministerial travel can be found on page 32, section 4.49, of the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, copies of which are available in the Vote Office.

Details about Ministerial overseas travel are published on a quarterly basis and can be accessed via gov.uk website.

## TRANSPORT

■ **Department for Transport: Employment Agencies**

**Louise Haigh:** [\[17560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the cost of using external agencies for recruitment to Senior Civil Service posts in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

The cost to the Department for Transport (including its executive agencies, but excluding its non-departmental public bodies) using external agencies for the recruitment of Senior Civil Service posts in the last three financial years is set out below:

Financial year 2012/2013 - £195,596.40

Financial year 2013/2014 - £219,587.08

Financial year 2014/2015 - £198,740.56

The financial data on the cost of using external agencies for the recruitment of Senior Civil Service posts in the financial years 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 are not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Large Goods Vehicle Drivers**

**Mr Christopher Chope:** [\[17549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that a sufficient supply of large goods vehicles drivers is available for the road haulage industry.



**Andrew Jones:**

The Department is working with its motoring services agencies to reduce times and delays in obtaining a driving test appointment and medical licence renewals.

In order to reduce waiting times for LGV driving tests the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is currently recruiting examiners and is focusing its efforts particularly in areas where waiting times are higher. To date, DVSA has recruited 78 new driving examiners during 2015/16 with a further 65 either attending or are booked on to new entrant courses. DVSA has also offered posts to a further 41 potential examiners.

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) are now dealing with vocational applications with no declared medical condition within 5 working days. DVLA has also made some changes to improve the processing of applications where a driver has declared a medical condition. However processing these applications relies on the timeliness of third parties including medical professionals and drivers.

The latest estimates from the Labour Force Survey show that the number of HGV drivers employed across all sectors such as manufacturing and retail has continued to grow since the 259,000 low in 2013 to 299,000 drivers in 2015.

**■ Newcastle Station****Chi Onwurah:**[\[17745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the decision was taken to transfer Newcastle Central Station to Virgin East Coast rather than to Network Rail.

**Claire Perry:**

The East Coast Franchise Agreement provided for the potential transfer of Newcastle Station to Network Rail. The decision to continue with the existing management arrangements of the stations was taken in late August 2015 following a period of negotiation between Virgin Trains East Coast and Network Rail.

The Department concluded that the best value to the public purse and passengers was to continue with the existing arrangements already in place at Newcastle rather than transfer the station.

**■ Railways: North of England****Angela Rayner:**[\[17097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what role he plans for Rail North in (a) assessing bids for the Northern and TransPennine Express rail franchises and (b) drafting the agreements for those franchises.

**Andrew Jones:**

The Department for Transport (DfT) has been working with Rail North throughout the process to renew the Northern and TransPennine Express franchises. As well as their active involvement during the development of the franchise specifications and public consultation, Rail North staff have also been part of the DfT teams evaluating the bids and have commented on key parts of the draft Franchise Agreements.

**■ Railways: South East**

**Peter Kyle:** [\[17603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October 2015 to Question 13496, when his Department expects to receive the findings of the London and South Coast Rail study.

**Claire Perry:**

The Department anticipates receiving the findings of the London and South Coast Rail Corridor Study by the end of 2015.

**■ Railways: Telecommunications Systems**

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[17427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 20 November 2015 to Question 16679, on railways: telecommunications systems, how much was spent from the public purse on the Quicksilver project before it was terminated.

**Claire Perry:**

Project Quicksilver was a Network Rail programme that was initiated prior to the reclassification of Network Rail as a public body and was conducted from 2011 to 2015. Project Quicksilver covered two discrete programmes of work but was run by a single team – focused on mobile connectivity and commercial exploitation of the network. These two elements cannot be disaggregated.

The industry was not able to find a solution that satisfied the commercial requirements of all parties to deliver the mobile connectivity improvements. As a result, Network Rail terminated the procurement.

The total cost recorded by Network Rail was £6.86m.

**WOMEN AND EQUALITIES****■ Females: Recruitment**

**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[17107\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what research the Government Equalities Office has (a) commissioned and (b) assessed on the extent to which women are asked about their plans to have children during job interviews; and what steps the Government plans to take to reduce the incidence of that practice.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

Pregnancy and maternity discrimination is unlawful and wholly unacceptable. The Government and the Equalities and Human Rights Commission are working together on the largest independent research project of its kind in Great Britain to better understand the issues, including that of inappropriate interview questions.

The Government's next steps will be informed by the final findings of this research, due to be published later this year.

### ■ Government Equalities Office: Career Development

Liz Kendall: [\[17650\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how many (a) men and (b) women have been promoted within the Government Equalities Office in each year since 2010.

**Edward Timpson:**

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

### ■ Government Equalities Office: Ministerial Policy Advisers

Liz Kendall: [\[17651\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how many people of each gender have worked as special advisers in the Government Equalities Office in each year from 2010-11 to 2014-15.

**Edward Timpson:**

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

Liz Kendall: [\[17653\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how many people of each gender work as special advisers in the Government Equalities Office.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

There are currently two special advisers, one male and one female, who work for the Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities, whose responsibilities include women's and equalities issues.

### ■ Government Equalities Office: Staff

Liz Kendall: [\[17652\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how many people of each gender have worked in the Government Equalities Office in each year from 2010-11 to 2014-15.

**Edward Timpson:**

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

Liz Kendall: [\[17654\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how many people of each gender work in the Government Equalities Office.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

There are currently 35 female and 20 male members of staff in the Government Equalities Office.

**WORK AND PENSIONS**■ **Apprentices: Disability**

**Mr David Anderson:** [17115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure that disabled people are supported to participate in apprenticeship schemes.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Apprenticeships are paid jobs with substantial training. Whilst we would not want to interfere in employers' recruitment decisions, we believe that there is more that can be done to ensure that people from a diverse range of backgrounds are in the best possible place to apply for and secure an apprenticeship.

The Apprenticeships Equality and Diversity Advisory Group helps the Government to understand and address any apprenticeship equality and diversity issues in order to reduce barriers and make apprenticeships as inclusive as possible.

Apprentices with a learning difficulty or disability can apply for Access to Work funding for reasonable adjustments in the workplace, and individuals whose circumstances mean they were not able to undertake an apprenticeship before their 19th birthday may qualify for enhanced funding as long as they start an apprenticeship before their 24th birthday.

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) has also produced an employer toolkit including resources and links to help employers of disabled apprentices.

In 2012 Government published the findings from Peter Little OBE's detailed review of the inclusiveness of apprenticeships for people with learning difficulties or disabilities. The National Apprenticeship Service is working with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Department for Education (DfE) to meet the recommendations made by this report, which can be viewed here:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141006151154/http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/~/\\_/media/documents/AU-CreatingAnInclusiveApprenticeshipOffer-Report-May2012.ashx](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141006151154/http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/~/_/media/documents/AU-CreatingAnInclusiveApprenticeshipOffer-Report-May2012.ashx)

Apprenticeships are accessible - in 2013/14, 38,170 people who declared a disability or learning difficulty started an apprenticeship.

■ **Children: Day Care**

**Carolyn Harris:** [17265]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans his Department has to ensure that there will be sufficient childcare places in place by April 2017 for pre-school aged children of parents who will be expected to seek work from that date under the provisions of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill.

**Priti Patel:**

We expect the childcare market to adapt and expand as it has done so successfully in the past. There has been an increase of 230,000 places since 2009 and a significant increase in the take up of childcare provision in low and middle income areas. To support that continued growth and build capacity in the sector, the government has made capital funding available to create nursery provision as part of new Free Schools which will create at least 4,000 places. This government has supported existing providers to expand by reducing bureaucracy and making it easier for providers such as childminders and schools, to provide places and will continue to do so. In addition, we are trialling innovative ways of providing the extended entitlement next year, in particular to look at how the childcare can be provided more flexibly to suit the needs of working parents and increase choice. So far, there have been over one thousand expressions of interest to take part in the early implementation of the extended entitlement.

There is an extensive menu of childcare support in addition to the Department for Education offer including: the Universal Credit Childcare element; Tax-Free Childcare; and help with childcare costs under the Jobcentre Plus Flexible Support Fund to enable parents to undertake training, attend interviews or start work. Work related requirements should be tailored to individual circumstances and compatible with child care responsibilities. Parents should not be asked to undertake work related requirements which they cannot fit around their childcare responsibilities if suitable childcare is not available in their local area.

**■ Children: Maintenance****Ms Karen Buck:**[\[17606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the value is of outstanding child maintenance arrears owed in respect of cases using the 2012 statutory maintenance scheme where the arrears were (a) accrued under the 2012 scheme and (b) transferred from the 1993 and 2003 statutory schemes.

**Priti Patel:**

a) As at August 2015, outstanding maintenance arrears stood at £35.1 million. More details can be found on page 6 of the Child Maintenance Service 2012 Scheme experimental statistics which can be accessed online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2012-statutory-child-maintenance-scheme-aug-2013-to-aug-2015-experimental>.

b) Information on the amount of arrears in respect of the 1993 and 2003 Schemes transitioned from the 1993 and 2003 systems to the 2012 system will be published in the 1993 / 2003 Client Fund Accounts due for release shortly after the accounts have been audited by the National Audit Office.

Previous publications can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/child-maintenance-client-funds-accounts>

**Ms Karen Buck:**

[17607]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, in what proportion of Child Maintenance Service cases was a contribution made to their current liability (a) in full, (b) in part or (c) not at all (i) paying by Direct Pay and (ii) using the Calculation and Collection service in the last quarter for which figures are available.

**Priti Patel:**

i) As shown in the CMS 2012 experimental statistics, at August 2015, 70% of cases are paying by Direct Pay (see table 6.1 which can be accessed online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2012-statutory-child-maintenance-scheme-aug-2013-to-aug-2015-experimental>).

Direct Pay cases are assumed to be fully meeting their current liability (since clients can come back to the CMS if there is a default on their payment or to request a revised calculation), therefore 100% of Direct Pay cases were assumed to be paying in full.

ii) Information regarding the proportion of cases making a contribution to their current liability via the Calculation and Collection service is not currently available. Contribution towards current liability is reported at case group level because of the way cases are administered on the 2012 system. (see table 4 which can be accessed online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2012-statutory-child-maintenance-scheme-aug-2013-to-aug-2015-experimental> ).

Note:

At August 2015, the overall proportion of Case Groups Contributing towards Current Liability was 88%.

**Ms Karen Buck:**

[17608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many cases using the 2012 statutory child maintenance scheme are being dealt with by the legal enforcement team.

**Priti Patel:**

The information you have requested is not currently available for publication.

The Department published its strategy for releasing experimental statistics on the 2012 scheme on 26 February 2014, and this was updated on 30 September 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/publication-strategy-for-the-2012-scheme-administered-by-the-child-maintenance-service>

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[17609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Deduction from Earnings Orders (a) have been issued and (b) are in place in respect of cases using the 2012 statutory maintenance scheme.

**Priti Patel:**

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

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[17610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether, where there is a Direct Pay arrangement for child maintenance between parents but the liabilities required by the Child Maintenance Service have not been fully paid, that Service seeks to collect unpaid amounts retrospectively.

**Priti Patel:**

The Child Maintenance Service has a wide range of effective powers to facilitate the collection of child maintenance.

Where a direct pay arrangement is in place between parents and the Child Maintenance Service is informed and satisfied that payments have been missed, action will be taken to collect these amounts retrospectively at the request of the receiving parent.

#### ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Employment Agencies

**Louise Haigh:** [\[17556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the cost of using external agencies for recruitment to Senior Civil Service posts in his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The actual Departmental cost of using external agencies for recruitment to Senior Civil Service posts in each of the last 5 years is:

<b>FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	<b>COST (£)</b>
2010/11	3,944
2011/12	0
2012/13 <sup>1</sup>	394,511
2013/14 <sup>1</sup>	362,616
2014/15 <sup>1</sup>	141,232

<sup>1</sup> Includes Child Maintenance Group expenditure which joined DWP in August 2012.

Data excludes NDPBs

## ■ Employment Schemes

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[17161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many hours each week Jobcentre Plus work coaches are expected to spend with each participant in the Mandatory Intervention Regime under the Help to Work scheme.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[17162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many times participants in the Mandatory Intervention Regime under the Help to Work scheme are required to attend appointments at Jobcentre Plus each week.

**Priti Patel:**

The Mandatory Intervention Regime (MIR) under the Help to Work scheme delivers all the employment support measures available through the JCP Offer and, to supplement those, provides more intensive, personalised support through increased work coach interviews. The length, nature and frequency of these additional interviews is determined locally on a case by case basis and may vary over time.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[17163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether participants in Daily Work Search Review under the Help to Work scheme are set quotas for completing a minimum number of job applications.

**Priti Patel:**

Under Daily Work Search Review claimants need to provide evidence of their work search activity on a daily basis. Their Claimant Commitment will specify their work search activity requirements which can be up to 35 hours a week. The Claimant Commitment is tailored to claimants' individual circumstances.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[17164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what organisations are providers of Community Work Placements under the Help to Work scheme.

**Priti Patel:**

DWP Community Work Placement Prime Providers:

Seetec Business Technology Centre Limited

G4S Regional Management (UK&I) Limited

Advanced Personnel Management Group (UK) Limited

Learndirect Limited

Rehab Jobfit LLP



Working Links (Employment) Limited

Interserve Working Futures Limited

**Emily Thornberry:**

[17171]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people referred to Help to Work since April 2014 who have participated in (a) Community Work Placements and (b) Daily Work Search Review have subsequently been referred to the Mandatory Intervention Regime.

**Priti Patel:**

The information is in the table below:

PERIOD APRIL 2014 TO JUNE 2015	<sup>1</sup> NUMBER OF PEOPLE REFERRED TO HELP TO WORK	<sup>2</sup> NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUBSEQUENTLY REFERRED TO THE MANDATORY INTERVENTION REGIME	PROPORTION OF PEOPLE SUBSEQUENTLY REFERRED TO THE MANDATORY INTERVENTION REGIME
Community Work Placement	51,430	5,706	11%
Daily Work Search Review	40,060	15,230	38%

1. Source of Information: The Help to Work quarterly statistics provides Official statistics to June 2015 on the numbers of people joining the Help to Work Scheme. This information can be found on the Gov.UK website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/help-to-work-quarterly-statistics>

1. Source of Information: This management information does not form part of any official statistics and is intended for DWP internal use only.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[17190]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people referred to Help to Work since April 2014 have left the scheme after opening a claim for working tax credit.

**Priti Patel:**

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

The information that is available on Help to Work, on the number of programme referrals and Community Work Placement starts can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/help-to-work-quarterly-statistics>

The latest published information on Help to Work covers the period from April 2014 to June 2015 inclusive.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[17191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people referred to Help to Work scheme since April 2014 have left the scheme after a job outcome fee was paid to the relevant provider.

**Priti Patel:**

From April 2014 to the end of June 2015 there were 25,340 participants who started a Community Work Placement. These would all have triggered a start fee to the relevant provider.

The department intends to publish further information on Community Work Placements on the 22 December 2015. This release will cover the number of Short placement completion, Long placement completion and Job Outcome fees paid to providers.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[17198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people claiming which benefit have been referred to Help to Work since April 2014.

**Priti Patel:**

The number people claiming Jobseekers Allowance or Universal credit who have been referred to Help to Work between April 2014 and June 2015 is approximately 162,000. This breaks down as 51,430 people referred to Community Work Placement, 70,510 referred to Mandatory Intervention Regime, 40,060 referred to Daily Work Search Review.

The Help to Work quarterly statistics: provides Official statistics to June 2015 on the numbers of people joining the Help to Work Scheme. This information can be found on the Gov.UK website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/help-to-work-quarterly-statistics>

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[17353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria his Department has set for referral to (a) Community Work Placements and (b) Daily Work Search Review once a claimant has joined the Help to Work scheme.

**Priti Patel:**

Under Help to Work Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches have the flexibility to decide which of the three options that are part of the programme, Mandatory Intervention Regime, Community Work Placements or Daily Work Search Reviews, would best suit each individual jobseeker. They base their decisions on an exit report from their Work Programme provider and discussions with the jobseeker about the particular barriers still stopping them from getting work.

## ■ Employment Schemes: Disability

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[17167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Government plans to maintain a separate programme of employment support for people with disabilities after the end of the current contracts for the Work Programme and Work Choice.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[17168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he plans that referral to welfare to work schemes will be voluntary for people with disabilities after the end of the current contracts for the Work Programme and Work Choice.

**Priti Patel:**

Increasing disability employment is a key part of the Government's aim to achieve full employment. That is why this Government is committed to halving the disability employment gap by creating the opportunity for a million more disabled people to work.

The Spending Review announced that a new 'Work and Health Programme' will replace Work Choice and the Work Programme when current contracts end, restructuring our current provision to providing the best possible support for claimants with disabilities or health conditions as well as those who are long term unemployed. The Department will work with stakeholders on the design, including the structure and how people will be referred to the programme.

The Government will publish a White Paper next year that will set out reforms to improve support for people with health conditions and disabilities and further reduce the disability employment gap.

## ■ Employment Schemes: Fees and Charges

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[17166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) start fees, (b) short placement completion fees, (c) long placement completion fees and (d) job outcome fees have been paid to providers of Community Work Placements under the Help to Work scheme since April 2014.

**Priti Patel:**

From April 2014 to the end of June 2015 there were 25,340 participants who started a Community Work Placement. These would all have triggered a start fee to the relevant provider.

The department intends to publish further information on Community Work Placements on the 22 December 2015. This release will cover the number of short placement completion, Long placement completion and Job Outcome fees paid to providers.

## ■ Employment Schemes: Young People

**Derek Thomas:** [\[17478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will take steps to ensure that every young person covered by the youth obligation receives appropriate financial advice, education and support for the first six months as part of their preparation for work.

**Priti Patel:**

From April 2017, we will be introducing the new Youth Obligation for Universal Credit claimants aged 18-21 who we expect to look for work. This new programme of support will help young people develop skills and experience to get on in work.

The first three weeks of this will be a Work Coach led Intensive Activity Period (IAP), where young people on the Youth Obligation will complete a set curriculum of activity designed to help establish them as effective full time job-seekers straight away and support them into work as soon as possible.

Once the claimant has completed the curriculum they will continue to see a dedicated IAP Work Coach who will work with them, continuously reviewing what was achieved during the intensive start-up period.

We will be conducting a stakeholder engagement exercise to help inform the design of the Youth Obligation and will be inviting stakeholders with an interest in the provision of financial advice.

We will set out our policy design for the Youth Obligation in due course.

## ■ Employment: Disability

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[16955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans the Government has to improve employment support for people with disabilities who are in receipt of the support component of employment and support allowance.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[16994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans he has to improve employment support for people who are classed as economically inactive due to long term sickness or disability.

**Priti Patel:**

In the Autumn Statement on Wednesday 25 November, the Chancellor announced a real terms increase in funding to help people with health conditions and disabilities including those in receipt of the support component of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), return to, and remain in, work.

Government will be launching a new 'Work and Health Programme' - restructuring our current provision so that it provides the best possible support for people with health conditions or disabilities, including those classed as economically inactive due to long term sickness or disability.

At least £115m of funding will go to the Work and Health Unit, including a work and health innovation fund to test new ways to join up health and employment to help people with disabilities and health conditions to return to and stay in work.

Government will publish a White Paper in the New Year that will set out further reforms to improve support for people with health conditions and disabilities and further reduce the disability employment gap.

**Mr David Anderson:** [\[17116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how his Department plans to monitor the Government's progress on halving the disability employment gap; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr David Anderson:** [\[17117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the economy of halving the disability employment gap; and if he will make a statement.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Progress against the disability employment gap is a key factor in progress towards full employment. This is consistent with the Government's manifesto commitment which said 'as part of our objective to achieve full employment, we will aim to halve the disability employment gap'. The annual report on progress towards full employment will include an update on the Government's progress towards halving the disability employment gap.

Bringing disabled people out of inactivity and into employment increases the productive capacity of the economy. While it is not possible to quantify exactly the economic impact of halving the disability employment gap, it would directly benefit both the individuals affected, through higher employment allowing more people to support themselves and their families, and also the wider economy, by supporting economic growth and the public finances.

#### ■ Jobcentre Plus: Food Banks

**Mr Roger Godsiff:** [\[17112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 18 November 2015 to Question 16265, what procedures jobcentre advisers follow when their clients request a referral to a foodbank for the fourth time in any given year.

**Priti Patel:**

If a claimant wishes to access the services of a foodbank, Jobcentre Plus can signpost them to an appropriate organisation.

**■ Jobcentre Plus: Plaistow****Stephen Timms:** [\[17718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason the finance officer at Plaistow Jobcentre until December 2013 was not interviewed in the investigation which led to the dismissal of two advisers from that jobcentre in May 2014.

**Priti Patel:**

Allegations of misuse of the Flexible Support Fund at Plaistow Jobcentre were investigated fully by the Department's professionally trained investigators.

It is not appropriate for the Secretary of State to disclose detailed information regarding individuals who may or may not have been contacted by investigators, as providing this information would risk individuals being identified.

**■ Personal Independence Payment****Gavin Newlands:** [\[17197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what his Department's policy is on the maximum travelling time for applicants to personal independence payment assessments; and what proportion of such assessments have complied with that maximum time in the last 12 months.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The requirement placed on the providers delivering Personal Independence Payment assessments is that claimants are not expected to travel more than 90 minutes by public transport to attend assessments. We expect them to minimise travel times wherever possible but, in scheduling appointments, they need to balance both keeping journey times down and ensuring claimants are assessed in a reasonable time period. To increase capacity and reduce journey times the providers have been opening new assessment centres across the country.

The information requested about the proportion of such assessments having complied with the maximum time in the last 12 months is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Alcoholism****Fiona Bruce:** [\[17330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of people with alcohol-related problems who would be affected by the Government's proposals to withhold sickness benefits from people who refuse treatment.

**Priti Patel:**

The Government has commissioned Professor Dame Carol Black to undertake an independent review into how best to support benefit claimants who are addicted to drugs or alcohol, or who are obese, back into work or to remain in work. The review will consider the case for linking benefit entitlements to take up of appropriate treatment or support.

We will give full consideration to any recommendations made by the Review and, if accepted by the Government, the decision and financial implications would be published in the usual way. The review is due to report in early 2016.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification****Emily Thornberry:**[\[17165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of participants in (a) the Mandatory Intervention Regime, (b) Community Work Placements and (c) Daily Work Search Review under the Help to Work scheme have been sanctioned since April 2014.

**Priti Patel:**

Information on how many participants in Mandatory Intervention Regime and Daily Work Search Review, who have been sanctioned since April 2014, is not available

The number of Community Work Placements individuals with an adverse benefit sanction applied due to Failure to Participate in the Community Work Placement is 7,880 (between April 2014 and June 2015). This represents 15% of the total number of individuals referred to Community Work Placements in this time period.

**■ State Retirement Pensions****Frank Field:**[\[17700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many new state pension statements have been returned due to being sent to the wrong address since May 2014.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

We do not have the information requested. I can confirm we have a robust process in place to review all incorrect address returns and properly scrutinise and update customer account details when address is confirmed.

**Frank Field:**[\[17701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when he plans to update the Pension Service leaflet entitled, A detailed guide to State Pensions to include the introduction of the new State Pension from 6 April 2016.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

"A detailed guide to State Pensions" (publication NP46) was a technical guide aimed primarily at third party advisers and stakeholders, not general members of the public. This guide has not been available since 2010.

We continue to work with stakeholders to supply detailed information on the new State Pension before April 2016.

#### ■ State Retirement Pensions: Northern Ireland

**Mr Laurence Robertson:** [\[17531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what his Department is doing to deliver the full pension entitlement for those people in Northern Ireland who started work at the age of 14.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Following the fundamental reforms of the National Insurance scheme in 1975 the law provided that only paid contributions and credits from the year in which a person reached age 16 to the year before the one in which they reached state pension age should count for the purposes of entitlement to the state pension. The Government has no plans to review the position reached by Parliament and which has been in place for the past 40 years, since 1975.

#### ■ Universal Credit: Prescriptions

**Stephen Timms:** [\[17527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether he has made an assessment of the effect of the new rules for free prescriptions for Universal Credit claimants on incentives for work and progression; and if he will make a statement.

**Priti Patel:**

No such assessment has been made.

#### ■ Winter Fuel Payments

**Alison Thewliss:** [\[17592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will review the application allocation of winter fuel payments criteria to ensure that all eligible people living in buildings with a high number of occupants in separate homes receive such payments.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

There are already procedures in place to try and ensure that the correct amount of Winter Fuel Payment is paid in this situation, using data that is available to the Department, to minimise the need for individual notifications of circumstances. The Department seeks to act quickly to resolve any errors that are brought to its attention.

#### ■ Work Programme: Qualifications

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[17169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of (a) referrals to the Work Programme since 2011 and (b) current participants in the Work Programme had no classifiable qualifications at the time of their referral.



**Emily Thornberry:**

[[17170](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people referred to the Work Programme since 2011 who had no classifiable qualifications at the time of their referral achieved a qualification before leaving that programme.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[[17373](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people referred to the Work Programme since 2011 who had no classable qualifications at the time of their referral achieved a job outcome at any stage during their time on the Work Programme.

**Priti Patel:**

The information requested, in the above three questions, is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

#### ■ Energy: Meters

Adam Afriyie:

[16346]

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what proportion of in-home displays need to remain in operation after installation for the smart metering implementation programme to have the potential to deliver overall economic benefit for customers and energy providers.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 24 November 2015. The correct answer should have been:**

Andrea Leadsom:

We are supporting older and vulnerable people to keep warm through support including the Energy Company Obligation and the Warm Home Discount. Over 1.6 million measures have been installed in around 1.3 million households through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) alone.

This year, over 2 million households will get help under the Warm Home Discount scheme including an automatic electricity bill discount of £140 for over 1.3 million of the poorest pensioners. In winter 2014/15, Winter Fuel Payments were made to around 12.5 million older people in around 9 million households. The Cold Weather Plan, published by Public Health England, helps to raise awareness of the harm to health from cold, and provides guidance on how to prepare for and respond to cold weather.

The Government has also provided around £3 million to fund the creation of the 'Big Energy Saving Network' which focuses on helping consumers understand tariffs and switching options as well as how they could benefit from energy efficiency programmes available to them. As we approach winter, DECC officials will continue to maximise awareness of the Energy Saving Advice Service (ESAS contact number 0300 123 1234), which also provides a referral service for ECO Affordable Warmth.

**DECC's most recent Impact Assessment for the roll-out of smart metering, published in January 2014, estimates a positive net present benefit of £6.2 billion over the period to 2030, with total benefits of £17.1 billion and costs of £10.9 billion.**

**Of the £17.1 billion of overall benefits around one third stems from energy savings, for which the In Home Displays (IHDs) are a critical enabler. They are an important first step in wider consumer engagement and behaviour change that can unlock additional economic benefit, for example through the development of a smart grid and more flexible and resilient future energy system.**

**Smart metering also enables significant operational efficiency savings within the energy industry, so even without the energy savings benefits the Smart**

**Metering Implementation Programme has the potential to deliver overall economic benefit for UK customers and energy providers.**

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### EDUCATION

#### ■ National Reference Test Consultation

Minister of State for Schools (Nick Gibb):

[\[HCWS342\]](#)

#### **Consultation on arrangements to implement the National Reference Test**

Today, 30 November 2015, I am launching a public consultation on the introduction of secondary legislation to require selected schools to take part in the National Reference Test (NRT). The legislation will come into force on 1 September 2016 and the first full NRT will take place in March 2017.

The NRT is the next step in the Government's reform agenda, which will deliver robust and rigorous qualifications for England's students. Before 2010, pupils received successively higher grades at GCSE each year, but in international league tables England's performance stagnated. Ofqual has halted this grade inflation through the use of comparable outcomes<sup>[1]</sup>.

Ofqual is now introducing the NRT which will indicate if GCSE results should change from year to year. Over time, this will provide an additional method of measuring real changes in national performance at GCSE which is distinct from the use of international comparisons such as the PISA study.

This consultation is an opportunity for teachers, parents, pupils, and all those with an interest to provide their views, which will be taken into account when preparing the final legislation.

#### **The National Reference Test**

Each year, a different sample of 300 secondary schools, both in the state and independent sectors, will be selected to take part. Random samples of pupils from each selected school will take a test lasting about an hour. About 30 pupils will take the English language test and another 30 will take the mathematics test. Ofqual will publish information about overall test performance each summer when GCSE results are announced. The results will not be used for school accountability purposes and results will not be given to individual pupils. Instead, the NRT will provide Ofqual with additional evidence on year-on-year changes in performance.

Participation in the test will benefit both schools and pupils, as it will help to provide more direct evidence of improving school performance at the national level which can be reflected in the grades that are awarded at GCSE, ensuring higher attaining cohorts are rewarded.

The proposed legislation would apply to maintained schools. It would also apply to most academies and free schools through an existing provision in their funding agreement that requires them to comply with guidance issued by the Secretary of State in relation to assessments. It would not apply to independent schools although pupils at independent

schools will also be asked to take the test to ensure that the sample of pupils that take the test is nationally representative.

[1] For further information, see <https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2015/08/05/gcse-marking-and-grading/>

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Security Industry Authority – Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15

The Minister of State for Policing, Crime and Criminal Justice (Mike Penning):  
[[HCWS340](#)]

The 2014-15 Annual Report and Accounts for the Security Industry Authority are being laid before the House today and published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). Copies will be available in the Vote Office.

## PRIME MINISTER

### ■ CHOGM 2015: Malta

Prime Minister (Mr David Cameron): [[HCWS341](#)]

I attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Valletta, Malta, between 27 and 28 November. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Minister of State for the Commonwealth (Hugo Swire), the Minister for Trade and Investment (Lord Maude) and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department for International Development (Baroness Verma) also attended.

Her Majesty the Queen opened the meeting in her role as Head of the Commonwealth. Her Majesty was accompanied by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, and TRHs the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall.

The Government took office this May with a manifesto commitment to strengthen the Commonwealth's focus on promoting democratic values and development. I believe firmly that the Commonwealth has unique strengths rooted in its global reach, its diversity and its shared legal systems, language and values. Combined with the 60% of the Commonwealth's population under 30, these are foundations on which the Commonwealth can build as it takes on the challenges of a modern world.

The challenges have never been greater. This meeting provided an opportunity for leaders to discuss in particular extremism, climate change, the challenges faced by small states and sustainable development. Leaders were united in condemning the recent terrorist atrocities in Paris and elsewhere. They agreed that the Commonwealth has an important role to play in broadening international efforts to counter extremism, including by working through its civil society, youth and education networks to reduce the appeal of poisonous ideologies. To help the Commonwealth to take practical action, I announced that the Government would be committing £1 million each year for 5 years to establish and run a new Commonwealth unit dedicated to supporting efforts to counter the causes of radicalisation. A number of

Commonwealth states face significant challenges and the unit will coordinate the sharing of expertise.

I also announced £200,000 of seed funding to expand a recently established European counter-radicalisation youth network to the countries of the Commonwealth. The initiative will support moderate youth voices in their efforts to counter violent extremist messaging.

Heads also met in a Special Session to discuss climate action. This was timely, coming just ahead of the UN Climate Conference in Paris. President Hollande, as host to the climate negotiations, and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon addressed Heads, as did HRH the Prince of Wales. I spoke to encourage unity and ambition ahead of Paris and to set out UK priorities for a climate deal. Heads adopted a Climate Action Statement setting out what they wanted the Paris climate negotiations to achieve.

I also announced a number of practical initiatives demonstrating UK support for the Commonwealth's small island developing states, many of which are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and have a major stake in the Paris conference. The initiatives I announced include £20m to allow more small island states to access disaster risk insurance and to aid disaster risk contingency planning. I also pledged £5.6 million of technical assistance to help small island states develop their maritime economies, and a further £1m for expert assistance to access development finance. I also highlighted: up to £400,000 from existing budgetary contributions to support a new Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub; UK support for a new working group within the Commonwealth to identify ways to lever private sector investment for green projects; and £50,000 to the Commonwealth Small States Offices in New York and Geneva.

Heads also observed, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, that good governance and respect for the rule of law are vital for stable and prosperous societies, as well as for efficient, effective and accountable public institutions. At the Foreign Ministers' meeting, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs encouraged the Commonwealth, with its record of support for judicial independence, legislative capacity building and election monitoring, to make a strong contribution to Goal 16. I also chaired a side meeting on anti-corruption, which provided welcome momentum ahead of the UK's Anti-Corruption summit in 2016. Heads agreed to strengthen efforts to tackle corruption including through increased transparency and coordination between law enforcement agencies.

On the wider values agenda, Heads resolved, through the Communiqué, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms and to support the empowerment of women and girls. I spoke about the importance of the Commonwealth seeking to narrow its divisions on LGB&T issues and announced UK support for reconciliation and human rights in Sri Lanka, as part of a £6.6 million wider programme of support. I was also pleased, in this regard, to note that Northern Ireland will take on chairmanship of the Commonwealth Forum on National Human Rights Institutions, with our support. I welcomed the report of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) and the decision to put the Maldives under formal consideration, and to visit there in early 2016. The Commonwealth has an important role to play in helping its members adhere to its values. It is vital for the organisation's integrity that it acts to uphold the values and principles of its Charter.

I am grateful to Baroness Verma for attending the first ever Commonwealth Women's Forum and for chairing a session on LGB&T issues at the pre-CHOGM People's Forum, where she urged the Commonwealth to do more to defend LGB&T rights.

On business and trade, Heads agreed to advance global trade negotiations and in particular ratify the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. Lord Maude and Mr Swire both spoke at the Commonwealth Business Forum. Mr Swire also spoke at an event to mark the Magna Carta's presence in Malta, as well as an event to highlight the progress made to eradicate polio – where he drew attention to the UK's £300m contribution to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative since 2013. He also attended an event with Commonwealth Scholarships alumni.

I congratulate Baroness Scotland on her appointment as Secretary General. The UK wanted the strongest possible candidate to steer the Commonwealth through reform, to ensure that it has a voice on the most pressing global challenges and to unite its members behind the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. I believe Baroness Scotland is the right person to do that and look forward to working with her in the years ahead.

Finally, leaders agreed the UK's offer to host the next CHOGM in 2018, and welcomed Malaysia's offer to host in 2020. In hosting CHOGM, I believe that we can build on the excellent progress made in Malta to continue to increase the Commonwealth's stock and standing in the world.

**Attachments:**

1. Climate Action Statement [CHOGM 2015 Leaders' Climate Action Statement final version 29 November 2015.pdf]
2. Communique [CHOGM 2015 Communique 29 November 2015 final version.pdf]
3. Leaders' Statement [CHOGM 2015 Leaders' Statement final version 29 November 2015.pdf]

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Haulage: road tank vehicle compliance

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Andrew Jones):**  
[\[HCWS338\]](#)

Further to the Written Ministerial Statement given by my Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Claire Perry), on 18th December 2014, the Department for Transport has continued to work with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and industry to resolve an issue with fuel tankers manufactured and incorrectly certified in South Africa. Following a detailed investigation these tankers were found not to be in full compliance with internationally agreed regulations (the European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road – 'ADR').

Since the previous statement, around 60 new replacement tankers have entered into service, reducing the number that are not in full compliance to about 70 tankers, all built after the middle of 2010.

During this time the Department for Transport commissioned further research of around £0.5 million, the outcome of which, published today on the Department's website [www.gov.uk/dft](http://www.gov.uk/dft), found no reason to extend further the use of the 70 tankers, which are to be withdrawn by 31 December 2015 as planned.

The research has also shown that improvements could be made to the international regulations and the standards referred to therein to enhance the safety of fuel tankers in the event of a collision or rollover incident. The Department is already developing proposals with other European countries, and working with HSE and the industry to prevent any similar issues of non-compliance.

In addition, the research, in going beyond the scope of the normal inspections required by legislation, found a fuel tanker properly certified in the UK to contain defects of a lesser significance than those in the tankers found not to be in full compliance with regulations. A full scale test of the tanker undertaken during the research found that the safety of the tanker was not compromised by these defects, which due to the research are being addressed by the manufacturer.

## ■ HS2 and the Northern Powerhouse

Secretary of State for Transport (Mr Patrick McLoughlin):

[\[HCWS339\]](#)

### **HS2 and the Northern Powerhouse**

Good strategic transport links are central to the success of our country. This Government - more than any before - is committed to making sure we have the infrastructure we need to deliver economic growth and rebalance the country's economy, not just in the immediate future, but for the long term.

I am therefore making announcements today on how transport is continuing to deliver the Northern Powerhouse through HS2 and the Northern Transport Strategy.

### **HS2**

HS2 is a key part of the future of our country's railways. Last week's Spending Review announcement confirmed the Government's commitment to the scheme. This is a big step forward for HS2 and the creation of a Northern Powerhouse. This gives funding certainty to HS2. It also gives more certainty to the towns and cities that would be served by HS2 that they can plan for its arrival, and to the private sector that there will be future investment opportunities.

HS2 will not be a separate, standalone railway. It will be the new backbone of our national rail network, with HS2 services running from London and Birmingham to cities in the North of England including Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle and on to Scotland. It will not only deliver significant journey time savings, but also much needed additional capacity and increased connectivity. Private sector companies will be able to bid to run HS2 services, and will also be able to use this capacity to offer a wider range of services.

We are making good progress with HS2 Phase One (from London to Birmingham). The hybrid Bill for this part of the railway is proceeding through Parliament and we are aiming to achieve Royal Assent by the end of 2016, so that construction can begin in 2017.



In his reports, "HS2 Plus" (March 2014) and "Rebalancing Britain" (October 2014), Sir David Higgins recommended that we seek to build the section of the route to Crewe more quickly to deliver further benefits to the North sooner. We agree that we should realise the benefits of HS2 as soon as possible. I am therefore announcing today my decision on the section of the route from Fradley in the West Midlands to Crewe – now referred to as "Phase 2a". We intend to accelerate Phase 2a so that it opens six years earlier than planned, in 2027. This will bring more capacity and faster HS2 services to the North West of England, including Crewe, Liverpool, Manchester and Scotland much sooner than originally planned. Our plans will help to support growth and deliver jobs more quickly.

Powers to build this section of the route will be sought through a separate hybrid Bill which I intend to introduce to Parliament in 2017. HS2 Ltd have now procured Professional Services Consultants (PSCs), for the purposes of supporting the hybrid Bill development.

In the light of my decision on the HS2 route from the West Midlands to Crewe I am also today issuing safeguarding directions for that part of the route, having considered responses to the November 2014 consultation on this. The directions will ensure that new developments in this corridor do not affect the ability to build or operate Phase 2a or lead to excessive additional costs. Safeguarding also triggers the Statutory Blight Regime. Qualifying owner-occupiers whose property is within the safeguarded zone will have the right to ask the Government to buy their property by serving a blight notice. We are committed to assisting people affected by HS2. All those living within the safeguarding zone will receive a letter informing them about potential entitlements. And I am also today launching a consultation on a wider package of assistance measures for owner-occupiers, which go well beyond what we are required to do by law, for those living along this section of the route, as we have already done for Phase One.

We set out our initial preferred route for Phase Two of HS2 in January 2013 and later that year conducted a public consultation exercise seeking the public's views on the route. Today, we have published the independent analysis by Ipsos MORI of all the responses to the 2013 Phase Two route consultation. My route decision on Phase 2a takes account of the consultation responses regarding that section of the route; and the Command Paper also responds to the cross-cutting issues raised.

We continue to progress plans for the rest of the HS2 Phase Two route. I welcome the way Local Authorities, most recently those in Leeds, the Northern Gateway Partnership and the East Midlands, have come together to support HS2 plans in their areas. Further work is needed on the remainder of the Phase Two route before a decision can be taken. I intend to make a decision in autumn 2016, but today I can update the House on my thinking as follows:

- Leeds: We have now received Sir David Higgins' report on Leeds Station – which is also published today. It recommends an integrated design for the HS2 station, while maintaining a southerly route into the city. I am minded to agree with Sir David's proposal.
- South Yorkshire: Sheffield Meadowhall was the Government's preferred station location in the Phase Two route consultation. The evidence continues to suggest that

this is likely to be the best way of serving the wider South Yorkshire region and we are working with the National Infrastructure Commission and Transport for the North on the possible interfaces with Northern Powerhouse Rail. However, we acknowledge there are arguments in favour of a city centre location and continue to examine relevant analysis.

- East Midlands: Sir David Higgins has confirmed that HS2 Limited recommends a hub station should be located at Toton. Toton is also supported by the East Midlands local authorities who are united behind this proposed location. The Government therefore continues to support Toton as the best location for an East Midlands Hub. Last week the Chancellor announced growth funding to allow the area to start its planning for HS2. Part of this will be released this year, and the remainder would be released when a decision is made.
- Manchester: Manchester Piccadilly continues to look like the right location for HS2's Manchester terminus. To maximise its potential to support economic growth in the region, it will be important to ensure effective co-ordination with the development of Northern Powerhouse Rail to transform east-west links across the north of England. We are continuing our work through Transport for the North, and with the National Infrastructure Commission, to explore synergies and integration between the schemes, in order to develop the right rail infrastructure that delivers growth across the whole of the north of England.
- We also remain of the view that a Manchester Airport station is likely to be the right option, subject to agreeing an appropriate third party funding contribution to the costs.
- In 2014, Sir David Higgins recommended that HS2 serve a North West hub station at Crewe. While I am not taking decisions on Crewe Hub today, I do support the vision for a Crewe Hub. Work is ongoing I intend to make further announcements in 2016, and any Crewe Hub scheme will be subject to consultation. To support the work that the Northern Gateway Partnership is doing to develop growth and regeneration plans ahead of a decision I am releasing part of this funding this year.
- I have asked HS2 Ltd to explore options for how we might best serve Stoke and Macclesfield, including through classic-compatible trains via Handsacre Junction. Handsacre Junction is part of Phase One and will allow HS2 trains to serve Stafford.
- Scotland will benefit from reduced journey times as soon as Phase One opens (3 hours 56 minutes from London to Glasgow, compared with a typical journey time of 4 hours 31 minutes at present). Accelerating delivery of Phase 2a between the West Midlands and Crewe will further reduce the journey time from London to Glasgow to 3 hours 43 minutes. The full "Y" network will provide faster services from London to both Glasgow (3 hours 38 minutes) and Edinburgh (3 hours 39 minutes). The UK Government and the Scottish Government are working closely together to consider options to further reduce journey times. We hope to make a statement on next steps in the New Year.

I have not taken any decision on the remainder of the Phase Two route. We will respond in full to consultation responses relating to the rest of the Phase Two route when a route decision is taken in 2016.

Copies of the Command Paper: "High Speed Two: East and West – The next steps to Crewe and beyond" and other accompanying documents have been made available in the libraries of both Houses and can be found on the Department's website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-phase-two-from-the-west-midlands-to-leeds-and-manchester>

The cost of HS2 has not changed since the Spending Review 2013. The Spending Review 2015 confirmed an overall budget of £55.7bn in 2015 prices. This is consistent with the £50.1bn (in 2011 prices) set in 2013, but has been updated to take account of inflation.

### **Transport for the North and the Northern Transport Strategy**

Today, jointly with Transport for the North, we are publishing a progress report on the Northern Transport Strategy, which includes updates on our progress across the full range of the strategy, including international connectivity, freight, smart and integrated ticketing, strategic roads and Northern Powerhouse Rail. The fast, frequent, reliable and comfortable rail service we plan will underpin the Northern Powerhouse economy. Copies of the report "The Northern Transport Strategy: Autumn Report" have been placed in the libraries of both Houses and can be found on the Department's website at: [www.gov.uk/dft](http://www.gov.uk/dft).

The Government has also taken steps to support the development of Transport for the North as an organisation that represents the whole of the North of England and can speak to Government with one voice on the region's transport priorities.

Last week's spending review committed £50m of funding over this Parliament to help Transport for the North drive forward plans to transform the North's transport links and build a single regional economy.

Today, I am delighted to announce, jointly with Transport for the North, the appointment of John Cridland as the new independent Chair of the Transport for the North Partnership Board. Together with his Chief Executive, David Brown, John Cridland will have the responsibility for delivering the Northern Transport Strategy, working closely in partnership with Lord Adonis and the National Infrastructure Commission.

Following advice from the National Infrastructure Commission in March 2016, schemes such as Northern Powerhouse Rail will have access to a brand new £300m national Transport Development Fund.