



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 10 February 2016 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:33 P.M., 10 February 2016). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	5	CABINET OFFICE	11
ATTORNEY GENERAL	5	■ Cancer: East Sussex	11
■ Members: Correspondence	5	■ Civil Service	11
BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS	5	■ Commission on Freedom of Information	11
■ Apprentices: Northern Ireland	5	■ Electronic Warfare	12
■ Channel Four	5	■ Government Departments: Billing	12
■ Construction: Apprentices	6	■ Public Sector: Pay	12
■ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Debt Collection	6	■ Shared Services Connected: Consultants	13
■ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Departmental Responsibilities	7	TREASURY	13
■ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Greater London	8	■ Cars: Insurance	13
■ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Location	8	■ Debts	13
■ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Sheffield	9	■ Double Taxation: Treaties	14
■ EU Grants and Loans: North West	9	■ Financial Services Compensation Scheme	15
■ Further Education	10	■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance Premium Tax	16
■ Gratuities	10	■ Public Sector Debt: China	16
■ Insolvency Service and Skills Funding Agency: Sheffield	10	■ Soft Drinks: Taxation	16
■ Post Offices: Closures	11	■ Taxis: Income Tax	17
		■ Welfare Tax Credits	17
		COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	17
		■ Council Tax	17

■ Devolution: North East	17	■ Landfill: Odour Pollution	31
■ Homelessness	18	■ Lapwings: Conservation	32
■ Local Government: Devolution	18	■ Litter	32
■ Northstar Ventures	19	■ Regeneration: Redcar	33
■ Regional Planning and Development: Greater Manchester	19	FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	33
CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	20	■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Languages	33
■ Channel Four Television: Privatisation	20	■ Foreign and Commonwealth office: Languages	34
■ Floods and Weather: Cumbria	20	■ India: Human Rights	34
DEFENCE	21	■ Israel: Palestinians	34
■ Armed Forces: Deployment	21	■ Palestinians: Overseas Aid	35
■ Defence Equipment: Iron and Steel	21	■ Spratly Islands: Sovereignty	36
■ Islamic State: Military Intervention	22	■ Terrorism: British Nationals Abroad	36
■ Military Intervention: Parliamentary Scrutiny	22	■ Turkey: Terrorism	36
■ USA: Unmanned Air Vehicles	23	HEALTH	37
EDUCATION	23	■ Antidepressants: Children	37
■ Academies	23	■ Autism: Lincolnshire	37
■ Academies: Sponsorship	23	■ Blood: Donors	37
■ Children in Care: Asylum	27	■ Brain: Tumours	38
■ Children: Day Care	28	■ Compulsorily Detained Mental Patients	39
■ Classroom Assistants: Working Hours	28	■ Cystic Fibrosis	39
■ Schools: Property Development	28	■ Department of Health: Buildings	39
ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE	29	■ Department of Health: Debts Written Off	40
■ Mobile Homes: Energy	29	■ Doctors: Recruitment	40
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	29	■ Drugs: Overdoses	41
■ Bees: Conservation	29	■ Electronic Cigarettes	41
■ Clean Air Zones: Birmingham	30	■ Health	41
■ Fishing Vessels	30	■ Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination	42
		■ Infectious Diseases	42

■ Medical Records: Insurance Companies	42	■ Ethiopia: Malnutrition	55
■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People	43	■ Ethiopia: Overseas Aid	56
■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People	44	■ Israel: Palestinians	56
■ Mental Health Services: Children in Care	44	JUSTICE	57
■ Mental Health Services: Pregnant Women	46	■ Community Rehabilitation Companies	57
■ Mental Health Services: Young People	46	■ Courts: Security	57
■ Mental Illness: Employment	47	■ Crime: Victims	58
■ Musculoskeletal Disorders	47	■ Custodial Treatment: Weapons	58
■ Neurology	48	■ Death: Seas and Oceans	59
■ NHS Litigation Authority	48	■ Domestic Violence	59
■ NHS: Negligence	49	■ Ministry of Justice: UK Membership of EU	60
■ Pregnancy: Diabetes	49	■ Prisoners' Release	60
■ Pregnant Women: Screening	49	■ Prisons: Drugs	60
■ Prostate Cancer	50	■ Tribunals: Scotland	63
■ Suicide: Females	50	PRIME MINISTER	65
■ Vitamin B12: Depressive Illnesses	50	■ Trade Promotion	65
■ Zika Virus	50	SCOTLAND	65
HOME OFFICE	51	■ Abortion: Scotland	65
■ Asylum	51	■ Dover House: Repairs and Maintenance	66
■ Asylum: Housing	52	■ Iron and Steel: Scotland	66
■ Asylum: Wales	52	■ Scotland Office: Travel	67
■ Deportation: EU Nationals	53	■ Urban Areas: Scotland	67
■ European Asylum Support Office	53	■ Welfare State: Scotland	67
■ Offences against Children: Telford	54	SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION	68
■ Visas: Syria	54	■ Constituencies	68
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	55	TRANSPORT	69
■ Antigua: Coconuts	55	■ Aviation: Emergencies	69
		■ Aviation: Safety	69
		■ British Transport Police	70
		■ High Speed 2 Railway Line	70

■ M180	71	■ Personal Independence	
■ Public Transport: Radlett	71	Payment: Motability	76
■ Railways: Compensation	71	■ Supported Housing: Rents	77
■ Road Signs and Markings	72	■ Universal Credit: Poverty	77
■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance	72	MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS	79
■ Transport: Mental Illness	72	SCOTLAND	79
■ Transport: Woking	72	■ Asylum	79
WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	73	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	80
■ Civil Partnerships	73	COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	80
■ Females: Directors	74	■ Review of the Homes and Communities Agency	80
WORK AND PENSIONS	74	DEFENCE	80
■ Employment and Support Allowance: Parkinson's Disease	74	■ Ministry of Defence Votes A Annual Estimate 2016-17	80
■ Employment Schemes: Internet	75	■ Ministry of Defence Votes A Supplementary Estimate 2015-16	81
■ Employment Schemes: Scotland	75	HOME OFFICE	81
■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals	75	■ Launch of the Joint Fraud Taskforce	81
■ Personal Independence Payment: Assessments	76		
■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations	76		

Notes:

Questions marked thus **[R]** indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.
Questions with identification numbers of **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Members: Correspondence

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[\[26354\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2016 to Question 22400, if he will meet the hon. Member for Torfaen to discuss the case of Norman James.

Robert Buckland:

I am happy to meet any Honourable Member where appropriate to discuss any issues for which I am accountable to this House. However, in this case I do not believe that a meeting would serve a particular purpose as I am accountable only for the decisions of the Crown Prosecution Service, and the specific allegations raised by Mr James are ones that would be more appropriate for the police to investigate. As I pointed out in my previous answer the CPS has no investigatory powers in this regard.

BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

■ Apprentices: Northern Ireland

Lady Hermon:

[\[25652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, pursuant to the contribution by the Minister for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise, of 2 February 2016, Official Report, column 884, what steps he is taking to ensure the national advertising campaign for apprenticeships extends to Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Boles:

Education and skills policy (including Apprenticeships) is a devolved matter. It is for the devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to determine how they manage their own programmes. This includes any advertising campaigns.

■ Channel Four

Tim Loughton:

[\[24802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what discussions he has had with Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on options relating to the future of Channel 4.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

My Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills has regular discussions with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and sport on a wide variety of issues.

■ **Construction: Apprentices**

Steve Rotheram: [\[25360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how many apprenticeship starts there were in each construction occupational area in 2015.

Steve Rotheram: [\[25361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how many apprenticeship starts his Department forecasts there will be in the construction sector for 2016.

Nick Boles:

Apprenticeships are categorised according to the Sector Subject Area of the apprenticeship, not the industry sector of the employer.

The Department does not produce forecasts for apprenticeship starts by Sector Subject Area. Apprenticeships are paid jobs and their availability is dependent on employers offering opportunities and hiring apprentices.

■ **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Debt Collection**

Gavin Newlands: [\[25950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how his Department regulates the activities of debt collection agencies during the period that they are under contract with his Department.

Joseph Johnson:

Should any direct contracts be let with debt recovery agencies, the scope and extent of any activity would be agreed as part of the contract negotiation and a process of routine monitoring put in place.

Gavin Newlands: [\[25954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what assessment of the ethical standards of debt collection agencies his Department undertakes before entering into a contract with such agencies.

Joseph Johnson:

Any debt collection contracts let by the core Department would primarily use available framework contracts agreed by the Crown Commercial Service who are responsible for including any required assessment of ethical standards. However, if the need for a specialist debt collection contract should arise that could not be met by a framework contract, the Department's tender and contract documentation would include further assessments as may be deemed necessary.

Gavin Newlands: [\[25972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how much his Department has spent on debt collection agencies in each of the last seven years.

Joseph Johnson:

The core Department has spent £0 on debt collection agencies in the last seven years.

Gavin Newlands: [\[25973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, with how many debt collection agencies his Department has a contract.

Joseph Johnson:

The core Department has no direct contracts with debt collection agencies.

Gavin Newlands: [\[25974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what his Department's policy is on the use of debt collection agencies to collect outstanding payments.

Joseph Johnson:

The core Department's policy is governed by HM Treasury's 'Managing Public Money' guidance. This sets out that public sector organisations should always pursue recovery of debts. In practice there will be both practical and legal limits to how cases should be handled. So each case should be dealt with on its merits. Within BIS, the use of a debt collection agency would only be considered after all other methods of recovery had failed.

■ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Departmental Responsibilities

Louise Haigh: [\[25349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, if he will publish in full his Department's report entitled, BIS 2020: What-why-when-how.

Joseph Johnson:

"BIS 2020: What-why-when-how" (September 2015) was one of a series of internal briefings for BIS staff. Staff are briefed on our change programme on a regular basis. The briefings are not formal documents and, as such, we do not publish them.

The House was informed about the recent BIS 2020 announcements and their impact on BIS staff by my Rt hon Friend the Minister of State for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise (Anna Soubry) on Friday 29 January.

Louise Haigh: [\[25350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, when he plans to announce the full implementation plan for his Department's BIS 2020 strategy.

Joseph Johnson:

Since summer 2015, the Department has been reviewing its business model. By 2020, we want to simplify our structure, become more digital, be cheaper for taxpayers and better for users. As part of this we anticipate reducing the number of our locations from more than 80 to approximately 7 centres plus a regional footprint.

BIS2020 is a rolling programme that will be delivered through a number of different strands of the Department's work.

■ **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Greater London**

Louise Haigh: [\[25505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what recent estimate he has made of the proportion of his Department's civil service workforce based in London (a) at present and (b) at the end of the BIS 2020 restructure programme.

Joseph Johnson:

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) headquarters at 1 Victoria Street, London accounts for around 10% of total employees across the BIS Group. In addition, a number of our Partner Organisations, such as the Insolvency Service and Companies House, have offices in London, as well as regional offices across the country.

By 2020 the majority of employees in BIS and its Partner Organisations will continue to be based outside London through a number of centres – such as in Birmingham, Glasgow, and Swindon – as well as a regional footprint for the provision of local services.

Louise Haigh: [\[25604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what proportion of Senior Civil Servants in his Department are based in London.

Joseph Johnson:

The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills HQ, as at 31 January 2016, had 93.5% of its Senior Civil Servants based in London. The majority of staff from within the BIS Group are based outside London.

■ **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Location**

Louise Haigh: [\[25506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, whether his Department will have a regional hub in every region of the UK once the BIS 2020 restructuring programme is complete.

Joseph Johnson:

As part of the Department's change programme, BIS2020, we anticipate reducing the number of our locations from more than 80 to approximately 7 centres plus a regional footprint. Beyond the announcement made about our Sheffield office at St Paul's Place on 28 January, we do not yet know exactly which sites will be retained or closed over the course of the Parliament. By 2020 the majority of employees in BIS and its Partner Organisations will continue to be based outside London through a number of centres – such as in Birmingham, Glasgow, and Swindon – as well as a regional footprint for the provision of local services.

■ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Sheffield

Gordon Marsden:

[\[24912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, pursuant to the Answer of the Minister for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise to the Urgent Question of 29 January 2016, Official Report, on Closure of St Paul's Place, BIS Office (Sheffield), if he will publish the business case for the closure of that office.

Joseph Johnson:

Since summer 2015 the Department has been reviewing its business model. By 2020, we want to simplify our structure, become more digital, be cheaper for taxpayers and better for users. As part of this we anticipate reducing the number of our locations from more than 80 to approximately 7 centres plus a regional footprint. The intention to close the BIS Sheffield office in St Paul's Place was formed in light of these plans.

Louise Haigh:

[\[24946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, if he will publish his Department's business case on the closure of his Department's office in Sheffield.

Joseph Johnson:

Since summer 2015 the Department has been reviewing its business model. By 2020, we want to simplify our structure, become more digital, be cheaper for taxpayers and better for users. As part of this we anticipate reducing the number of our locations from more than 80 to approximately 7 centres plus a regional footprint. The intention to close the BIS Sheffield office in St Paul's Place was formed in light of these plans.

■ EU Grants and Loans: North West

Tim Farron:

[\[25424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, which projects in the North West have received European Commission funding in each of the last five years; and how much each such project received in each year.

Anna Soubry:

A full list of all the projects funded by European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund in the North West since 2007 are provided on the GOV.UK site.

The total value of grants awarded to organisations in the North West of England from the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) 2007-2013 was €420,441,221 (figure correct at 11/11/2015). The total value of grants awarded to organisations in the North West under the Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) programme is €66,881,642 (figure correct at 29/10/2015). The figures for both programmes include grants that were awarded under the complementary Euratom research and training activities programme.

■ Further Education

Alex Cunningham: [\[24367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, if he will make an assessment of the financial penalties potentially faced by further education institutions resulting from triggering break clauses in the loan agreements they hold with banks resulting from his Department's area reviews.

Nick Boles:

The Area Reviews provide an opportunity for post-16 institutions to explore issues relevant to the provision in their area and consider recommendations for change. The cost of these changes will be considered in the steering group discussions. Additionally, officials are meeting regularly with the main lenders to the post-16 sector. The nature, likelihood and cost implications of break clauses in loan agreements are being explored in these discussions.

■ Gratuities

Paula Sherriff: [\[25985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, when he plans to publish his response to the results of his Department's consultation on tips, gratuities, service and cover charges; and whether he plans that that response will include proposals for reform of those payments.

Nick Boles:

The Government received 183 responses to the investigation into tipping. We are looking closely at the evidence that was submitted and considering the available options. We will consider whether any further action is required and publish our response in due course.

■ Insolvency Service and Skills Funding Agency: Sheffield

Louise Haigh: [\[24982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how many employees are employed at the Sheffield office of the (a) Skills Funding Agency and (b) the Insolvency Service.

Joseph Johnson:

As at 31st January 2016, the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills have a) 13 employees in the Skills Funding Agency and b) Nil employees in the Insolvency Service based in its office in Sheffield.

■ Post Offices: Closures

Neil Coyle:

[\[25919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on benefit and tax credit demand from workers who are Royal Mail employees at franchises of former post offices; and what estimate his Department has made of the potential cost of that demand to the public purse.

George Freeman:

Royal Mail and Post Office Limited are separate independent businesses. Post Office Limited runs and manages its directly managed Crown post offices. Employees of these offices are employees of Post Office Limited. Changes to the Crown network are an operational matter for Post Office.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cancer: East Sussex

Nusrat Ghani:

[\[25960\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cancer mortality rate was in (a) Wealden constituency and (b) East Sussex in each of the last 10 years.

Mr Rob Wilson:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Letter to Member - Cancer Mortality Rate [25960 FINAL.pdf]

■ Civil Service

Louise Haigh:

[\[25047\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his policy is on rebalancing the Civil Service between London and the regions; and if he will make a statement.

Matthew Hancock:

The Civil Service has a significant presence across the UK and we are considering how new government hubs, in strategic locations across the country, will help to make sure that we have an efficient and effective Civil Service at the same time as we consolidate the government estate. Currently, 18.1% of civil servants are based in London.

Any proposed relocation is done based on operational need.

■ Commission on Freedom of Information

Julie Cooper:

[\[25718\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Independent Commission on Freedom of Information will report its findings.

Matthew Hancock:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Rutherglen and Hamilton West on 3 February 2016 to UIN: 24662.

■ **Electronic Warfare**

Steven Paterson: [\[25689\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what Government departments and agencies are represented on the board of directors of the Centre for Cyber Assessment.

Steven Paterson: [\[25791\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many cyber assessments have been undertaken by the Centre for Cyber Assessment in each year since that centre was established.

Steven Paterson: [\[25792\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many Government customers have received reports from the Centre for Cyber Assessment.

Matthew Hancock:

The CCA was avowed in June 2015. We do not comment on security matters.

■ **Government Departments: Billing**

Melanie Onn: [\[26110\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on how many occasions government departments have paid bills to small and medium-sized businesses more than 60 days after the date the invoice was received since 2010-11.

Melanie Onn: [\[26111\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the total value is of the bills government departments have paid to private businesses more than 60 days after the date the invoice was received since 2010-11.

Melanie Onn: [\[26112\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the total value is of the bills that government departments have paid to small businesses more than 60 days after the date the invoice was received since 2010-11.

Matthew Hancock:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to her on 5 February 2016 to UIN: 25347.

■ **Public Sector: Pay**

Mr Roger Godsiff: [\[25245\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his policy is on the exemption of political aides and special advisers from the one per cent public sector pay rise limit.

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[\[26025\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what criteria and pay grades his Department uses to decide on pay rises for political aides and special advisors.

Matthew Hancock:

All public servants, including special advisors, are subject to an overall 1% pay remit.

■ Shared Services Connected: Consultants

Louise Haigh:

[\[25998\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent estimate he has made of the amount spent on consultancy support for Independent Shared Services Centres; and for what reasons the consultants were so engaged.

Matthew Hancock:

[Holding answer 9 February 2016]: No external consultancy support is funded by the Cabinet Office to the Independent Shared Services Centres directly to support operations.

TREASURY

■ Cars: Insurance

Andy Slaughter:

[\[25771\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of competition in the car insurance market; and if he will make an assessment of the potential effect on competition in that industry of a 10 per cent cap on market share.

Harriett Baldwin:

This is a matter for the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), who are operationally independent from Government.

The question has been passed on to the FCA. The FCA will reply directly to the honourable member by letter. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

■ Debts

Jim Shannon:

[\[25270\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to reduce levels of family debt; and what assessment he has made of current trends in those levels.

Jim Shannon:

[\[25302\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to reduce levels of personal debt and household borrowing.

Harriett Baldwin:

In Q3 2015 household debt fell to 142 per cent of household income, down from its peak of 168 per cent in Q1 2008. The Government's plan for a higher wage, lower welfare society makes it easier for families and working people to save, and includes the new National Living Wage which will mean a pay boost for 1.7 million workers this year.

Nonetheless, the Government recognises that there are those who face problem levels of debt. The Money Advice Service (MAS) is responsible for the coordination of publically funded free to client debt advice and is financed by a levy on the financial services industry. MAS is currently consulting on its business plan; it has proposed levying for a constant debt advice budget for 2016/17 providing around £45 million.

The Government is currently reviewing how the public provision of free-to-client, impartial financial guidance, including consumer debt advice services, should be structured. The Public Financial Guidance consultation closed in December 2015 and the Government will report back by budget.

Additionally, we have created the independent Financial Policy Committee within the Bank of England, to ensure emerging risks and vulnerabilities across the financial system as a whole, including in relation to household debt, are identified, monitored and effectively addressed.

Mr David Crausby: [25443]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much was owed to the UK by which countries in the last year for which figures are available.

Harriett Baldwin:

Information on the stock of UK assets, or money owed by other countries to the UK, is captured in the UK's International Investment Position. A country by country breakdown is available in table 10.2 of the 2015 ONS Pink Book which can be found here:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-382775>

■ Double Taxation: Treaties

Helen Goodman: [26067]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what principles or framework HM Revenue and Customs uses to negotiate tax treaties with developing countries.

Mr David Gauke:

The UK's starting point in negotiations of tax treaties is based closely on the OECD Model Double Taxation Convention, which is also the basis for most other countries' tax treaties. Some developing countries prefer to follow the UN Model Convention, the provisions of which differ in some areas to the OECD Model and the UK has agreed to adopt some of the UN provisions in its treaties with those countries. The object of the negotiations is to produce a text acceptable to both countries, balancing their preferences and reflecting compromises.

Helen Goodman:

[26119]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what double taxation treaties the Government expects to sign in the next 12 months.

Mr David Gauke:

Negotiating double taxation treaties involves a number of stages including the requirement for ministerial and parliamentary approval in both countries. Even once the substantive provisions have been agreed, finalising certain technical issues is an unpredictable process over which the United Kingdom is not fully in control. It is therefore not possible to say which treaties will be ready for signature in the next 12 months. However, HM Revenue and Customs does publish the programme of tax treaty negotiations and news of signed treaties at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/double-taxation-agreements-developments-and-planned-negotiations>.

■ Financial Services Compensation Scheme

Andrew Rosindell:

[25512]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will estimate the value of savings held in the UK that are no longer covered under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme as a result of changes implemented in January 2016 under an EU directive on deposit protection units; and if he will make representations to his EU counterparts on reversing the effect of that directive.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Deposit Guarantee Scheme Directive (DGSD) is a single market measure to ensure that depositors are entitled to the same level of protection wherever they deposit their money, and that UK firms are not competitively disadvantaged in relation to firms in other European Economic Area (EEA) jurisdictions.

As a result of the recent strength of the pound in relation to the euro, it was necessary for the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) to review the sterling coverage limit. On 31 December 2015, the FSCS coverage limit changed to £75,000 per person, per authorised firm. The vast majority of UK depositors are not directly affected – more than 95% of depositors are still fully protected by the FSCS after this change.

The Government brought forward legislation to ensure that the deposit protection limit was maintained at £85,000 until 31 December 2015, to ensure those depositors affected had the time to be informed of the change and to take any actions they felt appropriate. In addition, the PRA made new rules to ensure that, until 31 December 2015, depositors with more than £75,000 worth of deposits at a single authorised firm could withdraw those deposits without penalty.

The Government has made representations to the Commission to suggest that the reviews of the coverage level in non-euro states should occur after the Commission completes its review of suitability of the coverage level as a whole and also that changes for non-euro states reflect genuine, very large and lasting changes in exchange rates.

■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance Premium Tax

Karl McCartney: [\[26009\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the effect on motor insurance premiums of the recent increase in insurance premium tax.

Harriett Baldwin:

Insurers must pay IPT on the value of premiums received for general insurance. If insurers pass on the full rate increase to their customers, the impact on premiums would be an increase of only 3.5%.

Tax forms only a small part of the cost of motor insurance. Other factors include competition, the volume of low value personal injury claims and fraud. The government has taken steps to crack down on the fraud and claims culture such as announcing at Autumn Statement 2015 proposals to end the right to cash compensation for minor whiplash injuries. The government expects the insurance industry to pass an average saving of £40 to £50 per motor insurance policy on to consumers.

The government also encourages consumers to shop around for the most suitable cover at the best price.

■ Public Sector Debt: China

Andrew Rosindell: [\[25447\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the UK's outstanding public debt obligations are to China.

Harriett Baldwin:

The majority of the government's public debt is financed through the issuance of UK government bonds, known as 'gilts'. Information on sectoral holdings of gilts is published on a quarterly basis by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The latest figures show that £426.9 billion of gilts (25.9% of the total stock) is held by overseas investors, of which £73.3 billion is held by foreign central banks. The government does not hold detailed information on the identity of foreign central banks or other individual investors holding these gilts.

■ Soft Drinks: Taxation

Andrew Gwynne: [\[25440\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government has commissioned research on the fiscal impact of an additional tax on soft drinks containing sugar.

Mr David Gauke:

The Chancellor keeps all taxes under review as part of the fiscal process.

■ Taxis: Income Tax

Tom Elliott: [\[25311\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will estimate the proportion of tax to income paid by (a) an Uber taxi driver, (b) a black cab driver and (c) a mini cab driver.

Mr David Gauke:

All self-employed taxi drivers are subject to the same rules when calculating trading profits chargeable to tax.

■ Welfare Tax Credits

Frank Field: [\[26098\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of tax credit claims reviewed by Concentrix have, following the review process, been paid in full; and for how long each such claim was suspended.

Mr David Gauke:

The information requested is not available.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Council Tax

Stephen McPartland: [\[26101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 21 January 2016 to Question 23515, what estimate he has made of the total cost to people who pay council tax in (a) Stevenage, (b) Hertfordshire and (c) England of the potential increase in council tax; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Council tax rates are completely up to local councils. All local authorities have the power to freeze council tax if they wish. Any council that wants to raise council tax above the referendum principle needs to go to their local area for consent.

Given the pressures councils face providing adult social care we are giving them the freedom to levy a 2 percent precept to help cover costs. Again, it is up to the responsible authority if they wish to exercise this.

Even if all authorities increase by the maximum under the referendum principles, council tax will still be lower in 2019-20 in real terms compared to 2010.

■ Devolution: North East

Bridget Phillipson: [\[25765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 24 January 2016 to Question 24228, on public transport: North East, what his Department's role is in finalising monitoring arrangements.

James Wharton:

The Government is working with local partners in the North East to design an implementation plan for the North East devolution deal. Officials based in Cities and Local Growth team will work with local places to monitor the progress of implementation. When the necessary statutory instruments are in place, the Mayor will decide how to monitor the area's transport policy, and will be directly held to account by local constituents.

■ **Homelessness****Rebecca Long Bailey:**[\[25362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, which national homelessness prevention and reduction schemes received direct funding from central government (a) in 2015-16 to date and (b) in each financial year since 2009-10; and what the cost of these schemes to the public purse was in those years.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Since 2010 we have invested over £500 million to enable local authorities and the voluntary sector to support those vulnerable and at risk of homelessness. Our initiatives have included funding:

- Crisis – £14 million funding to support their Access to Private Rented Sector scheme, which has helped created 10,000 tenancies.
- Homeless Link – over £30 million, £20 million of which went to their Homelessness Transitional Fund, which provided support to 115 areas to ensure that more rough sleepers are found quicker and given the help they need.
- Help for Single Homelessness Fund – £8 million to help improve local authority support for 22,000 single homeless people.

The Government has provided £470 million funding for homelessness prevention over the last Spending Review period. Salford City Council was allocated the following amounts based on the homelessness prevention funding formula within the Local Government Finance Settlement:

- 2014-2015: £70,591
- 2015-2016: £70,319

■ **Local Government: Devolution****Graham Evans:**[\[25393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the average benefit to local economies of devolution deals.

James Wharton:

The seven devolution deals that the Government has agreed will give local leaders direct control over the levers of growth in their economies, including new powers and substantial budgets ranging from transport, to adult skills, to long term investment

funds. The size of these funds is substantial, for example the West Midlands will receive over £1 billion of additional investment. It will be for mayors and local leaders to set ambitions for growth and job creation as a result of these deals. By giving local areas control over key policies and resources, and making sure that local government more efficient, effective and as possible, devolution deals will give these places the tools that they need to drive forward growth for the benefit of the whole local economy.

■ Northstar Ventures

Chi Onwurah: [\[26044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the remaining time period is of Northstar Ventures' funding through the European Regional Development Funds; and what changes are planned in the terms and control of that funding.

James Wharton:

Northstar Ventures manages five funds that have received funding from the European Regional Development Fund 2000-06 and 2007-13 Programme periods.

Three of these funds are closed to new investments and Northstar Ventures is exiting from remaining deals. This is likely to conclude by February 2017.

Two remaining funds - Proof of Concept and Accelerator Fund - will remain open to new investments until June 2016.

No changes to management arrangements are planned. Northstar Ventures will remain responsible for concluding the funds up to 2020. The Department of Communities and Local Government will remain responsible for directing the use of any legacy funding generated by the funds.

■ Regional Planning and Development: Greater Manchester

Andrew Gwynne: [\[25439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether he has powers to require the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to recommence the consultation on the sites identified in the draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Development Plan; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the current process.

Brandon Lewis:

The authorities have consulted on a number of strategic options and the evidence used to produce them. I understand that the consultation is still open to interested parties and the authorities are asking local residents, businesses, land owners and developers to identify sites that they think could be suitable for housing or employment development.

As I previously set out, it is the responsibility of each authority to ensure that any Development Plan Document is prepared in accordance with its Statement of Community Involvement which should explain how they will engage local communities and other interested parties in producing development plan documents and determining planning applications.

I also refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 4 February, PQ 24412.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Channel Four Television: Privatisation

Tim Loughton: [\[24859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of Channel 4's contribution to television and production training and development skills in the UK; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect the privatisation of Channel 4 would have on training provision for the UK's film and television sector.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

Whilst I have made no specific assessment of Channel 4's contribution to skills in the sector, I am clear that Channel 4's ability to deliver its remit is a priority. This includes the important positive impact it makes on the wider creative industries around the UK.

The Government is looking at a broad range of funding options for Channel 4, to ensure the broadcaster has a strong and secure future.

Maria Eagle: [\[25370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department have had with counterparts in the Cabinet Office on the privatisation of Channel 4 in each year since 2010.

Mr Edward Vaizey:

Ministers and officials regularly meet with counterparts in other departments to discuss a range of issues. Historic records of internal government meetings are not kept.

■ Floods and Weather: Cumbria

Mr Jamie Reed: [\[25170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate his Department has made of the cost to the tourist industry in Cumbria of recent flooding and severe weather.

David Evennett:

The region has some of the most iconic tourist attractions in the UK and tourism is an essential part of the local economy. We want to ensure that our tourism businesses have as much support as possible as they recover from the recent floods. Some tourism businesses in flood affected areas have reported a drop in bookings of up to 60%.

That is why a new £1m PR campaign was launched by the Prime Minister in Cumbria, on the 28th January, to support businesses ready to receive visitors, and this is part of a wider package of immediate measures to help the area.

DEFENCE**■ Armed Forces: Deployment**

Dr Liam Fox: [R] [[25762](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in which countries British Service personnel are deployed.

Dr Liam Fox: [R] [[25763](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average length is of each deployment and posting for armed forces personnel.

Dr Liam Fox: [R] [[25764](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many deployments are family postings.

Penny Mordaunt:

Overseas tours for military personnel can be broadly grouped into three categories: operational deployments, exercises and longer-term postings.

Operational deployment roles are high readiness deployments anywhere in the world where there is an operational requirement and are not family accompanied. UK military personnel are currently performing these roles in parts of Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the South Atlantic Islands.

The standard tour length for operational deployments can vary greatly depending on the circumstances but is likely to be six months, with some Service personnel serving up to 12 months or longer.

Large-scale exercises are conducted in Belize, Canada and Kenya to provide training for UK military operations. There are a small number of permanent UK military staff posted in each location, and these roles are family accompanied. UK military personnel sent to these locations on exercise are not accompanied by their families.

Permanent or longer-term posted roles or assignments can be family accompanied.

Permanent overseas postings which can be family accompanied include Bahrain, Qatar, the USA, Gibraltar, the South Atlantic Islands, the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas and the United Nations Operation TOSCA, Singapore and European countries. Around 4,600 of these posts are family-accompanied.

■ Defence Equipment: Iron and Steel

Kate Hollern: [[26045](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department plans to take to engage with (a) industry bodies and (b) trades unions on the sourcing of steel for equipment procured by his Department from UK suppliers.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Government is committed to implementing measures to address any barriers that prevent UK steel suppliers from competing effectively for public sector contracts. To that end, new guidelines for departments on sourcing and buying steel for major projects

were published in October 2015. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has written to its largest defence contractors to highlight these guidelines, which emphasise the importance of pre-market engagement, including through industry days and signalling future pipelines for steel.

The MOD would not routinely meet with trades unions on this type of issue and has not received any representations. It has met with the UK steel industry through its membership of the Cabinet Office Steel Procurement Working Group. This group is looking to ensure that UK steel suppliers can compete on a level playing field with international suppliers on major projects.

■ Islamic State: Military Intervention

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[25887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of recent progress of the international coalition to tackle Daesh.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Global Coalition is making good progress against Daesh in Iraq. Over 30% of the territory that Daesh took in 2014 has been re-taken. The Iraqi security forces have substantially cleared Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province, and are working to make the area safe for displaced people to return. Further north, Kurdish forces have driven Daesh from the Sinjar area. In Syria, the Coalition is continuing to strike Daesh economic targets, including oilfields where we judge that recent strikes on its illicit oil industry have reduced Daesh's revenues by some 10%.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[25888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what contribution the armed forces are making to the international coalition to tackle Daesh.

Penny Mordaunt:

Around 1,000 British personnel are directly contributing to the counter-Daesh coalition. RAF Tornado, Typhoon and Reaper aircraft are carrying out strike and reconnaissance missions against Daesh over Syria and Iraq, together with C130, Voyager and Sentinel aircraft. In Iraq, UK troops are also delivering counter-IED training to the Iraqi (including Kurdish) security forces together with other infantry skills, weapons maintenance and combat medical techniques as well as providing a key contribution at Coalition HQs throughout the region.

■ Military Intervention: Parliamentary Scrutiny

Mr David Anderson: [\[25543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2016 to Question 23290, what his Department's policy is on (a) the application of the convention on giving Parliament the opportunity to debate military intervention abroad to armed drones and (b) informing the House of any exceptional operation on the grounds of self-defence of the UK.

Michael Fallon:

The Government is committed to the convention that, before UK troops are committed to conflict, Parliament should have an opportunity to debate the matter except when there is an emergency. It is fitting to keep Parliament informed of major new developments and to answer questions on them.

The Government will inform the House of any exceptional operation where there has not been prior debate in Parliament as the Prime Minister did on 7 September 2015 in relation to the precision airstrike that took place on 21 August 2015.

■ **USA: Unmanned Air Vehicles**

Mr Andrew Smith: [\[25312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions his Department has had with the US administration on the siting of a US drone operation centre at (a) RAF Lakenheath, Suffolk and (b) other UK locations.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK and US have routine discussions on all aspects of US visiting forces in the UK.

EDUCATION■ **Academies**

Lucy Powell: [\[26124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what academy trusts there are in each region; and how many academies there are in each such trust.

Edward Timpson:

As at 31 January 2016 there are 2,902 academy trusts. A breakdown of the number of academies in each academy trust in each region is in the attached spreadsheet.

Attachments:

1. No. of academies in each academy trust by region [26124 policy original attachment 090216.xlsx]

■ **Academies: Sponsorship**

Lucy Powell: [\[26125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many applications her Department approved for sponsorship of academies in each region in each year since 2010.

Lucy Powell: [\[26126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many applications her Department received for sponsorship of academies in each region in each year since 2010.

Edward Timpson:

1,014 applications to become sponsors of academies have been received since 2010; of which 814 applications have been approved.

Tables 1 to 3 show the number of applications for sponsorship of academies received by the Department for Education each year since 2010, by Regional Schools Commissioners' (RSC) region.

Applications made in a given year may not be approved until a following year, thus tables 1 and 3 are not comparable. Table 2 shows the number of applications made in a given year that were approved the same year, it does not account for applications made in previous years that were then approved in a following year.

A list of approved academy sponsors and their registered lead RSC region is published on GOV.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-sponsor-contact-list>. This does not include the year of application or approval.

Table 1: Number of applications received by DfE for sponsorship of academies in each RSC region in each year since 2010. Figures only include applications for full sponsorship; they exclude applications from co-sponsors[1] and educational partners[2].

RSC REGION	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	GRAND TOTAL
East Midlands & Humber	15	24	25	30	25	19	4	142
Lancashire 15 & West Yorkshire		29	21	20	26	24	1	136
North	7	9	12	13	8	14	0	63
North East 9 London & East		12	30	29	25	23	5	133
North West London & South Central	22	17	25	28	15	20	1	128
South London & South East	27	20	20	30	28	22	2	149
South West	8	14	28	21	22	28	1	122
West Midlands	13	16	24	28	32	24	4	141

RSC REGION	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	GRAND TOTAL
Grand Total	116	141	185	199	181	174	18	1,014

Table 2: Number of applications for sponsorship made each year since 2010 that were approved by DfE, in each RSC region, by year of application. Figures exclude approvals of applications begun in previous years and only include applications for full sponsorship; they exclude applications from co-sponsors and educational partners.

RSC REGION	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	GRAND TOTAL
East Midlands & Humber	12	16	23	23	17	11	0	102
Lancashire 13 & West Yorkshire		18	14	15	23	20	0	103
North	5	6	7	11	7	11	0	47
North East 7 London & East		11	24	23	20	15	0	100
North West London & South Central	15	10	19	16	11	17	0	88
South London & South East	19	12	18	20	22	21	1	113
South West	8	12	20	16	15	19	0	90
West Midlands	11	11	17	25	24	17	0	105
Grand Total	90	96	142	149	139	131	1	748

Table 3: Total number of applications approved by DfE for sponsorship of academies in each RSC region in each year since 2010, by year of approval. Figures only include applications for full sponsorship; they exclude applications from co-sponsors and educational partners.

RSC REGION	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	GRAND TOTAL
East Midlands & Humber	12	6	25	34	11	17	2	107
Lancashire & West Yorkshire	12	8	20	22	21	21	4	108
North	8	1	12	14	8	11	0	54
North East London & East	8	4	26	34	19	18	1	110
North West London & South Central	17	3	27	22	9	20	2	100
South London & South East	24	7	20	24	23	19	8	125
South West	8	6	23	23	14	17	3	94
West Midlands	13	4	25	28	25	21	0	116
Grand Total	102	39	178	201	130	144	20	814

[1] Co-sponsors can undertake similar activities to that of a lead sponsor, but are unlikely to act as the chair of an Academy trust or that of a Governing Body, a role which is typically undertaken by a lead sponsor. The lead sponsor might appoint co-sponsors as members or directors (governors) of an Academy Trust.

[2] Educational partners deliver specific services to an Academy trust, which may or may not be undertaken as a contracted arrangement between the education partner and a

Trust. These services can include: delivering “back office services”; providing continuous professional development, sharing facilities, sharing Governors, and providing school improvement services.

■ Children in Care: Asylum

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[24987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many care leavers in full or part-time higher education aged between 19 and 21 in (a) 2014 and (b) 2015 were former unaccompanied asylum seeking children looked after by the local authority.

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[25016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many care leavers in part or full-time training or employment aged between 19 and 21 in (a) 2014 and (b) 2015 were former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children looked after by the local authority.

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[25017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many care leavers in part or full-time education other than higher education aged between 19 and 21 in (a) 2014 and (b) 2015 were former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children looked after by the local authority.

Edward Timpson:

[Holding answer 4 February 2016]: The information requested is shown in the table below. This information is for England only.

	CARE LEAVER ACTIVITY [2]	NUMBER OF FORMER UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN [1]
2014	2015	
Higher education	20	40
Education other than higher education	100	260
Training or employment	40	130

Source: SSDA903

Information on the activity of all care leavers in England has been published in tables F1 of the Statistical First Release on looked after children[3].

[1] This includes young people who were unaccompanied asylum seeking children in their final period of care.

[2] Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10.

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

■ Children: Day Care

Melanie Onn: [25894]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many kinship carers her Department estimates will be eligible for the Government's proposed free 30 hours of childcare.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Kinship carers will be able to access the existing 15 hour early education entitlement for any three and four year old children in their care. In addition, two year olds who are looked after by a local council or have left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order are entitled to 15 hours per week of early education.

In respect of the extended entitlement for three and four year olds, kinship carers who have parental responsibility for the child will be able to access the extended entitlement provided that they are earning the equivalent to 16 hours a week at National Minimum or Living Wage and their income does not exceed £100,000. This includes employed and self-employed kinship carers.

The Department does not hold information on the number of kinship carers who would meet the income eligibility criteria and who have three or four year old children.

■ Classroom Assistants: Working Hours

Louise Haigh: [26049]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information her Department holds on the number of hours teaching assistants spent covering classes in the absence of a teacher in each year since 2010.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is not collected by the Department.

■ Schools: Property Development

Andrew Gwynne: [25441]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, by what process a local authority seeking to dispose of school land can obtain Ministerial permission for development.

Edward Timpson:

There are strict rules protecting publicly funded school land. This is set out in published guidance, which is available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/protection-of-school-playing-fields-and-public-land-advice

A copy of the guidance has been placed in the House Library.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE■ **Mobile Homes: Energy****Mr Christopher Chope:**[\[25905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2016 to Question 22397, on park homes and smart meters, what the maximum size is of park home sites which fall within the definition of small non-domestic business sites for the roll-out of smart meters; and what steps are being taken to ensure that residents at such sites are offered a smart meter.

Andrea Leadsom:

[Holding answer 9 February 2016]: Electricity sites are not determined by size, but are settled on their Profile Class. Licence conditions require energy suppliers to install smart meters (or in some circumstances, advanced meters) to all electricity sites in Profile Classes 1-4, and to gas sites where average annual consumption is below 732 MWh per year. We would expect most park home sites to fall into Profile Class 3 (Non-Domestic Unrestricted Customers) or 4 (Non-Domestic Economy 7 Customers).

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 18 January 2016 to Question 22397: park home owners of non-domestic sites have responsibility for any secondary metering equipment within their site and the decision to install smart meters for their tenants lies with them.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS■ **Bees: Conservation****Jim Shannon:**[\[25308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to address the loss of habitat for bees and wasps.

George Eustice:

In November 2014 we launched our National Pollinator Strategy for England, setting out comprehensive measures to support pollinators. This ten-year plan identifies actions for government and other partners, as well as a "Bees' Needs" campaign (www.beesneeds.org.uk) that explains what the public can do to provide food, shelter and nest sites.

We published in November last year an implementation plan for the Strategy which sets out progress and future action. This includes the £900 million Defra has made available for the new Countryside Stewardship scheme, launched in July 2015. The dedicated Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package in the new scheme contains options to improve habitats for pollinators.

England's network of protected areas also provides benefits for many bee and wasp species. This network includes local and national sites protected under domestic legislation and international sites protected under European and International law. Rare

and declining bees and wasps are listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). There have been a number of successful recovery actions, such as the re-introduction of the short-haired bumblebee in south east England.

■ Clean Air Zones: Birmingham

Mr Roger Godsiff: [\[26115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding she plans to allocate to Birmingham City Council for implementation of a Clean Air Zone in Birmingham; and how much funding she plans to allocate to that Council under the air quality grant programme.

Rory Stewart:

The air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide we published on 17 December last year confirms that we will be providing funding to help five Local Authorities in England outside London to implement clean air zones and to support the implementation of additional measures where necessary. We will be discussing the details of this with the Local Authorities concerned, including Birmingham City Council.

Birmingham City Council has not received any funding for 2015-16 under our air quality grant programme. No decisions have been made about air quality grant awards for 2016-17 and beyond.

■ Fishing Vessels

Mr Geoffrey Cox: [\[25704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of trends in the overall size of the under-10 metres fishing fleet in (a) England, (b) the South West of England and (c) Devon.

George Eustice:

The Department publishes details on the structure of the UK fishing fleet, including vessels of 10 metres and under, annually in the UK Sea Fisheries Statistics. Data on the change in number of vessels and engine size from 2010 to 2014 is shown in the table below.

ENGLAND	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
No. of Vessels	2569	2573	2562	2602	2573
Engine power (kW)	141524	141164	141855	144863	144045
SOUTH WEST*	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
No. of Vessels	982	994	982	1004	1002

SOUTH WEST*	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Engine power (kW)	49914	49925	49262	51073	51256
DEVON**	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
No. of Vessels	438	447	446	473	465
Engine power (kW)	27836	27835	27854	29651	29289

*using the administration ports of Brixham, Newlyn and Plymouth

**using the administration ports of Brixham and Plymouth

■ Landfill: Odour Pollution

Mr David Anderson:

[\[25697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what support her Department offers to people affected by overpowering odour escapes from landfill sites.

Rory Stewart:

The permits issued to landfill operators by the Environment Agency under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 regulations include conditions covering the management of odour. Operators of landfill sites are required to take appropriate measures to prevent odour pollution or minimise it when prevention is not practicable.

In addition, as landfill sites are likely to give rise to odour problems operators are often required to submit an Odour Management Plan (OMP) for approval to the Environment Agency. The provisions in a site's OMP, once it is approved, are treated as part of the permit and must be complied with.

The Environment Agency undertakes routine monitoring to verify compliance with permit conditions and will respond to and investigate public complaints about odour. The Environment Agency will consider enforcement action to ensure compliance with permit conditions in accordance with its published guidance on enforcement and sanctions.

Environmental permitting will usually provide sufficient protection against overpowering odour from landfill sites. If not, Local Authorities also have powers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to take action against smell from industry, trade or business premises if found to be a statutory nuisance.

■ Lapwings: Conservation

Jim Shannon: [\[25299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to preserve lapwing habitats.

Rory Stewart:

The lapwing is listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 as a species of principal importance in England and is consequently a priority for conservation action. Large aggregations of lapwings, along with other breeding and wintering birds, occur on protected sites containing lowland wet grassland, including over 28,000 hectares of Sites of Special Scientific Interest where lapwings are specifically recognised and benefit from targeted management of their habitats.

Lapwings are a widespread species, and the majority occur outside protected sites in a range of habitats including grassland and open moorland. Under our agri-environment schemes, such as Environmental Stewardship, a range of funded management options has been developed to provide suitable nesting and foraging conditions for lapwings, within and outside protected sites across their diverse habitats, including an option for creating bare-ground nesting plots on arable land. There are currently approximately 7,800 hectares of such plots in place under Environmental Stewardship. The new Countryside Stewardship scheme, launched in July 2015, will continue this important work by providing a Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package, which contains options to improve habitats and provide food for farmland birds such as lapwings. Countryside Stewardship also, for the first time, includes options for capital items supporting the construction of anti-predator fencing, which are likely to increase the survival of lapwing chicks.

■ Litter

Dr Andrew Murrison: [\[25853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to support the Clean for the Queen campaign.

Rory Stewart:

The Government is delighted to support and endorse the Clean for the Queen initiative. Litter and fly-tipping blight communities and pose a risk to human health, which is why tackling them is a priority for the Government. I gave my backing to the campaign when it was launched and we will continue to promote it, to help reach as many people as possible.

Together with the Minister for Local Government, Marcus Jones MP, I shall be writing to every Member of Parliament with an English constituency and every English unitary and district Local Authority, to encourage their participation and leadership in this worthwhile campaign.

Our experience from the first Community Clear-Up Day in March last year demonstrated the enthusiasm and willingness of people across England to give some of their time to improve their local environment. The Clean for the Queen campaign provides a great opportunity for people to come together and clean up our local streets and parks.

We hope the campaign will help lead to a lasting legacy of a cleaner, tidier Britain.

■ Regeneration: Redcar

Alex Cunningham:

[26057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of commissioning an Environment Agency assessment of the SSI steel works site on Teesside to determine what work would be required to prepare that site for redevelopment; and what the costs of the redevelopment would be.

Rory Stewart:

Officials in the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive are already working with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Communities and Local Government to provide the Official Receiver with the necessary support to deliver a 'safe state' position for the SSI site.

We are also working with the Official Receiver, Lord Heseltine, Redland and Cleveland Borough Council and local partners on the longer-term future of the site to realise its economic potential. Once we have a better collective understanding of the potential future use of the site, it will be possible to assess what the costs of the redevelopment will be.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Languages

Charlotte Leslie:

[R] [25484]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2016 to Question 23665, how many (a) Arabic speakers with an Operational level (C1) examination pass and (b) Mandarin/Cantonese speakers there were employed in his Department in each year since 2006.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Records from the last five years show that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has 51 officers who have a current Operational Level (C1) Arabic pass and 44 officers with a C1 pass in Mandarin/ Cantonese. We only record current C1 passes, valid for five years after the date of the exam, and therefore do not have pre-2010 data.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth office: Languages**Charlotte Leslie:****[R] [25525]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many officials in his Department have undertaken Foreign and Commonwealth Office language classes in each year from 2006.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

In 2014 there were 255 officers in full time language training with an additional 332 officers and/ or spouses attending part time language classes. In 2015 there were 332 officers in full time language training and 767 officers/spouses following part time language classes. To provide statistics for the years 2006-2013 would incur disproportionate costs.

■ India: Human Rights**Andrew Rosindell:****[25494]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Indian counterpart on alleged human rights violations in that country; and what progress has been made on promoting a fair and independent judicial system in India.

Mr Hugo Swire:

The Prime Minister, my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr Cameron) discussed human rights with Prime Minister Modi during Mr Modi's visit to the United Kingdom in November 2015. Mr Modi reassured the Prime Minister and honourable members in his address to Parliament that he fully respected India's traditions of tolerance and diversity. I raised the extensive interest taken by right honourable and honourable members in this place with the Indian High Commissioner on 12 January. The Indian Constitution provides for a judiciary which is independent of the legislature and the executive. The courts have proved to be a powerful medium of progressive change in India and a protector of India's Constitution, challenging successive governments on various issues, including human rights. However, we do acknowledge that there is a backlog of cases and are encouraged by discussions in India to address this issue.

■ Israel: Palestinians**Richard Burden:****[25682]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effects of the demolition of structures in the South Hebron Hills on 2 February 2016 on (a) future compliance with UN resolutions and (b) the peace process; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UK position on demolitions is clear: demolitions cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; are harmful to the peace process; and are, in all but the most exceptional of cases, contrary to international humanitarian law. The Fourth Geneva

Convention is clear that the destruction of any real or personal property in Occupied Territory is not justified unless it is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations.

Richard Burden: [\[25683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has (a) received and (b) made on the demolition of structures in the South Hebron Hills on 2 February 2016.

Mr David Lidington:

We have not received any representations on this issue. An official from our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised our concerns about the demolition of structures in the South Hebron Hills with the Israeli Office for the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories on 3 February.

Richard Burden: [\[25725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has (a) received from and (b) made to the Israeli government on a ruling by a military court on 28 January 2016 ordering the residents of Ern ar Rashash to demolish their homes and vacate the area.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

We have not received any representations on this issue. While we have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities, we do, however, regularly raise our concerns with the Israeli authorities over demolitions.

■ **Palestinians: Overseas Aid**

Joan Ryan: [\[R\] \[26050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which organisations, projects, ministries of the Palestinian Authority and public services have received funding from his Department in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the last three years.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office provided funding in 2013 to the Al Aqaba Village Council; Qalandia Local Council; the Palestinian Authority's (PA) Prime Minister's Office; the PA Ministry of Justice through the Slyn Foundation; in 2014 to the Al-Yanoun Village Council; The Slyn Foundation (with Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law); and in 2015 to the Al Aqaba Village Council; The Palestinian Commission Against the Wall and Settlements and the Sinjel Municipality.

We also provided funding to the PA Ministry of Justice from 2012-2014 for a sustainable transformation of the Ministry to become a high performing institution for rule of law within the OPTs and a beacon for other PA Ministries.

■ Spratly Islands: Sovereignty

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[25455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if the Government will take a position on sovereignty of the Spratly Islands.

Mr Hugo Swire:

We take no position on the sovereignty of the Spratly Islands or other disputed features in the South China Sea. However, we are clear that the disputes should be resolved peacefully in accordance with international law.

■ Terrorism: British Nationals Abroad

Patrick Grady: [\[25573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what protocols his Department has in place for supporting and communicating with UK citizens who (a) survive and (b) witness terrorist attacks overseas.

James Duddridge:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's crisis response mechanisms aim to ensure British nationals affected by a crisis overseas receive rapid and professional assistance. During crises, we communicate with affected British nationals through Travel advice and via consular officials in country and in London. Alongside the support offered to all British nationals overseas during a crisis, victims of terrorism may be offered additional assistance according to the circumstances of each situation through our Exceptional Assistance Measures policy. Consular officers work closely with police family liaison officers and overseas authorities to provide support, assistance and information to bereaved families. Through our partnerships with victim support organisations in England, Wales and Scotland we can refer bereaved families to specialist support on return to the UK.

■ Turkey: Terrorism

Jim Shannon: [\[25272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assistance his Department is giving to the government of Turkey to combat terrorism in that country.

Mr David Lidington:

The UK continues to work closely with the Government of Turkey to combat terrorist threats both within Turkey and in the region, including the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C), Daesh and Al-Qaida affiliated groups. In particular, we co-operate closely to prevent extremist travellers from reaching Daesh-held territory in Iraq and Syria. We also work together as members of the International Counter-Daesh Coalition, and of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond) re-affirmed this partnership when he visited Turkey in January.

HEALTH**■ Antidepressants: Children****Mr Roger Godsiff:**[\[26074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will take steps to ensure that the NICE guidelines on prescribing anti-depressants for children will be reviewed following the findings of the recent Nordic Cochrane Centre study, published in the British Medical Journal in January 2016, that use of these medications doubled the risk of suicide in people under the age of 18.

George Freeman:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has processes in place to consider whether to update its guidance in light of significant new evidence.

NICE has advised that it is immediately reviewing the relevance of the Nordic Cochrane Centre study to its guideline on '*depression in children and young people: identification and management*'

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg28

and will update the guidance if required.

■ Autism: Lincolnshire**Karl McCartney:**[\[25310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department and NHS England are taking to ensure that autism diagnosis waiting times for (a) children and (b) adults in Lincolnshire NHS Trust area meet NICE guidance.

Alistair Burt:

NHS England advises that, from 1 April 2016, Lincolnshire West Clinical Commissioning Group will be commissioning an integrated diagnostic pathway for adults with autism spectrum disorder. Performance measures will include a target maximum 12-week waiting time, to ensure that National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines are met.

A review of services for children is also planned as part of the Lincolnshire All Age Autism Strategy, which will include the development of a clearly defined integrated pathway for diagnostic assessment and post-diagnostic support for this age group.

■ Blood: Donors**Jim Shannon:**[\[25259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to increase levels of blood donation.

Jane Ellison:

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) provide blood donation services to the National Health Service, supplying a reliable, efficient supply of blood in England and North

Wales. To secure a consistent donor base, NHSBT runs donor recruitment campaigns throughout the year to attract new donors, for example last year's Missing Types Programme which featured the removal of the letters of A O B from famous locations and high street brands. NHSBT also ran the #BleedForEngland campaign around the World Cup using rugby celebrities which led to 100,000 new donor registrations. The recently completed New Year 2016 recruitment campaign also saw more than 30,000 people register to give blood.

On 1 February 2016 NHSBT confirmed that more than one million people are now registered to book blood donation appointments online.

NHSBT is also taking specific action to increase the number of blood donors from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community, particularly from Black African, Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian communities.

Stuart Andrew: [\[25326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the (a) terms of reference and (b) timeline are of review of blood donations policy.

Jane Ellison:

The Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood Tissues and Organs (SaBTO) decided at its meeting in January 2016 to carry out a review of deferral criteria for blood donors in relation to risks both from sexually transmitted diseases and from infections potentially transmitted by other routes, for example, tattooing or intravenous drug use.

The process will fully involve stakeholders (who can share thinking with and seek feedback from their communities), and will be incremental, with published progress reports and any intermediate advice. The terms of reference will be published once approved by SaBTO.

■ Brain: Tumours

Tom Brake: [\[26024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make it his policy to increase spending on research into brain tumours to enable faster diagnosis.

George Freeman:

Spend by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) in the Health Research Classification System (HRCS) health category 'cancer' has increased by a third from £101 million in 2010/11 to £135 million in 2014/15. There are no HRCS health sub-categories such as for brain tumours or other specific cancer sites and information on total current NIHR spend on brain tumour research is not held.

The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including brain tumours. These applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality. In all disease areas, the amount of NIHR funding depends on the volume and quality of scientific activity.

■ Compulsorily Detained Mental Patients

Luciana Berger:

[\[26109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2016 to Question 24145, what support a hospital is expected to provide to people appointed as attorneys to make decisions about property and affairs of people detained under the Mental Health Act 1983.

Alistair Burt:

There are no specific guidelines as to what support hospitals should provide to an individual holding a Lasting Power of Attorney for another individual detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. However, when appointed as an attorney, individuals are registered by the Office of the Public Guardian who make them aware of their responsibilities to act in accordance with the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA). A range of support materials are available on operation of the MCA and hospitals should have an appointed MCA lead person who can help disseminate advice and best practice.

■ Cystic Fibrosis

Norman Lamb:

[\[25392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the annual cost of prescription charges paid by adults with cystic fibrosis; what the effect of prescription charges is on such adults; and if he will make a statement.

Alistair Burt:

We have not made an assessment of the annual cost of prescription charges to those with cystic fibrosis. However, there are a number of prescription charge exemptions in place, for which someone with cystic fibrosis may qualify. These include exemptions based on low income, such as certain out of work benefits and the NHS Low Income Scheme, and age. Where someone does not qualify for exemption, Prescription Prepayment Certificates are available. The three-month and 12-month certificates allow someone to claim as many prescriptions as they need for £29.10 and £104, respectively.

■ Department of Health: Buildings

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[26032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the cost to the public purse was of the rationalisation of his Department's offices in London.

Jane Ellison:

The Department has undertaken a number of refurbishments of its existing buildings, including Richmond House, Wellington House, and Skipton House, to support the rationalisation of its offices in London. In 2015-16 the Department spent £1,786,794 on refurbishment activity.

Refurbishment costs relate to the general fit out, improvement and provision of furniture and equipment.

■ Department of Health: Debts Written Off

Andrew Gwynne: [\[25285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many times debt repayments to his Department have been written off in each year since 2010; and what the value of such debts were in each such year.

Alistair Burt:

The number and value of debt repayments written-off in each year since 2010* is outlined in the table below.

YEAR DEBT WRITTEN-OFF	VALUE OF DEBT WRITTEN-OFF	NUMBER OF CASES WRITTEN-OFF
2014/15	£682,428	9
2013/14	£47,909	4
2012/13	£155,615	8
2011/12	£344,897	3
2010/11	£1,806,698	8

*2015/16 data is still being audited and will be available when the final accounts are published later this year.

Debt repayments written off occur when income due was not collected and deemed not recoverable. The value of debt written-off can vary year on year as they relate to largely external factors. There can be a variety of reasons, but mainly where companies enter liquidation and are unable to pay. This is known in the Departmental Annual Report and Resource Account publication as claims waived or abandoned. Some of the detail of significant claims waived and abandoned (above the reporting threshold of £250,000) are reported separately in the Annual Report and Resource Account Publication and further details are shown below.

■ Doctors: Recruitment

Norman Lamb: [\[25389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the application-to-place ratio prior to interview is for ST1/CT1 posts starting in August to December 2016 at each specialities national recruitment office.

Ben Gummer:

Health Education England (HEE) is responsible for the management of medical specialty recruitment on behalf of the four United Kingdom countries.

The information requested for 2016 is not yet available.

HEE publishes application to place ratios in October on an annual basis. The August to December 2016 data will be published in October 2016.

Competition ratios for 2015 can be found here:

<http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/specialty-recruitment/competition-ratios/2015-competition-ratios/>

To note: The data used to determine the competition ratios for is drawn from the initial recruitment round and does not include re-advertisements.

■ Drugs: Overdoses

Mr Mark Hendrick: [26036]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will introduce guidance to NHS trusts on notification of next of kin after the admission to NHS facilities of a person who has taken an overdose of medication.

Alistair Burt:

We do not intend to introduce guidance to National Health Service trusts on notification of next of kin after the admission to NHS facilities of a person who has taken an overdose of medication. However, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guideline (CG133) regarding the longer-term management of self-harm in over 8s sets out that care plans – including risk management and crisis plans – should be multidisciplinary and developed collaboratively with the person who self-harms and, provided the person agrees, with their family, carers or significant others. Care plans should also be shared with an individual's general practitioner.

■ Electronic Cigarettes

Jim Shannon: [25258]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with the Royal Colleges on research showing that e-cigarettes can cause cardiac damage.

Jane Ellison:

There have been no such discussions.

The Department recognise that e-cigarettes can help smokers quit, and in August 2015, Public Health England published a review of the evidence, which concluded that they are significantly less harmful to health than cigarettes.

■ Health

Andrew Gwynne: [26031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what criteria his Department uses to determine whether public health issues require a national strategy to tackle them.

Jane Ellison:

We take account of a wide range of factors in determining the best approach to different public health issues. This includes consideration of the available evidence on

the nature of the need or problem. The Department may take expert advice from Public Health England and other sources on these issues.

■ Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination

Dr Sarah Wollaston: [\[25359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he has received requests to expedite the timetable of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation for a decision on HPV vaccination for boys; and whether he plans to review that timetable.

Jane Ellison:

The Department and Public Health England (PHE) have received correspondence from hon. members, organisations and members of the public asking for the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's (JCVI's) advice to be expedited.

The JCVI has requested modelling work to help inform whether a human papillomavirus vaccination programme for boys would be cost-effective. It is anticipated that PHE will submit this to JCVI by early 2017. This is not an issue of resources, as the process of model development and checking the validity of the results is complex and requires close working between the modelling team and the scientific and clinical experts. We need to follow due process and ensure that decisions are based upon robust and rigorous cost-effectiveness analysis.

■ Infectious Diseases

Justin Madders: [\[25383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the most effective way to implement the use of rapid diagnostic technology for the purpose of accurately diagnosing infections in hospitals.

Ben Gummer:

An expert group has been looking at how we can improve access to rapid diagnostic testing as part of the implementation of the UK Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy. The group is currently formulating its conclusions and intends to start working with stakeholders to implement improvements across the system from 2016; a part of this work will include an economic analysis to support the rapid adoption of new tests.

The Department has been feeding this work into the Accelerated Access Review, which will make recommendations to Government on speeding up access to transformative new medicines and technologies, including diagnostics, for National Health Service patients. The review is due to report in April 2016.

■ Medical Records: Insurance Companies

Chi Onwurah: [\[26053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what access insurance companies have to NHS health records; which insurance companies accessed such records in 2015; and what the process is for accessing such records.

George Freeman:

The Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) holds a range of personal data but not individual medical records. Individual organisations such as general practices and hospitals have their own controls in place for access to health records under the Data Protection Act. National Health Service organisations should seek a patient's explicit consent before disclosing confidential personal information to insurance companies.

The HSCIC Data Access Request Service did not make any releases of identifiable or potentially identifiable data to insurance companies in 2015. Evidence for this is provided via the quarterly Data Release Registers available on the HSCIC website:

<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/dataregister>

The provisions in the Care Act 2014, clarify that the HSCIC may only share data where it would be for the provision of health or adult social care or the promotion of health. Further clarifications were provided via the notes to the Care Act stating that this should not be for wholly commercial purposes, citing insurance companies as an example.

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**Norman Lamb:**[\[25516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to implement the conclusions set out in the *Future in Mind* report on vulnerable young people in transition from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service to Adult Mental Health Service.

Alistair Burt:

The Government's report, *Future in Mind*, sets out a 'vision' for a comprehensive approach to promoting, supporting and treating our children and young people's mental health, and to supporting their families. Local Transformation Plans (LTPs) which have been developed by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to deliver this 'vision' have been successfully assured by NHS England. These plans must cover the whole spectrum of services for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, including improved transitions between services. The Government recognises that vulnerable young people are especially at risk at points of transition, which is why local strategic planning as part of the LTPs should take their needs into account.

123 local transformation plans have been produced covering 209 CCGs. All LTPs were required to be published locally by 31 December 2015 and the CCGs have been asked to provide details of where they are published, as part of the continued assurance process. At least 74 of the 123 LTPs are available online and by mid-February a link will be available to all 123.

Ms Karen Buck:[\[25822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what change there has been in the proportion of children and young people referred to Tier 2 CAMHS services since 2013 in (a) England, (b) each region, (c) each clinical commissioning group area and (d) each local authority area.

Alistair Burt:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Julie Cooper:

[25852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to implement the conclusions of his Department's report, entitled *Future in Mind*, published in March 2015, on vulnerable young people's transitioning from the child and adolescent mental health service to the adult mental health service.

Alistair Burt:

Future in mind, the report of the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce, recognised that transition at 18 years of age is not always appropriate and that there should be flexibility around age boundaries, in which transition is based on individual circumstances, rather than absolute age, with joint working and shared practice between services to promote continuity of care.

The Government has acknowledged that the transition for young people into adult mental health services can undoubtedly be challenging, particularly if a young person has been receiving support from children's mental health services for some time. In January 2015, NHS England published new service specifications for commissioners, giving guidance and best practice on transition from children and adolescent mental health services to adult services (or elsewhere). These specifications intentionally do not stipulate an age threshold for transition (for example, 18) but state that transition should be built around the needs of the individual.

■ Mental Health Services: Children in Care

Norman Lamb:

[25481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to improve access to mental health services for care leavers aged 18 to 25 years old.

Norman Lamb:

[25482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he is planning to allocate a proportion of the proposed £1.4 billion mental health funding for children and young people over the next five years funding to be invested in mental health services to support (a) children in care and (b) care leavers.

Alistair Burt:

The Government is committed to making the full £1.4 billion investment available over the course of this Parliament to improve mental health services for children and young people.

In line with guidance published by NHS England, all clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have produced Local Transformation Plans (LTPs) for children and young people's mental health and these have all now been assured and funding allocated for implementation. These plans required all key partners to agree locally how best to meet the mental health needs of children and young people in their local populations and should cover the whole spectrum of need, which includes improving access to mental health services for vulnerable groups such as children in care and care leavers so that

they can receive high quality mental health care when they need it. It is for local partners to decide how much of the funding which will be allocated to CCGs to improve local services throughout the five years will be spent specifically on children in care and other vulnerable groups. However, this will be based on an assessment of local needs and set out in the LTPs.

The Government's overall strategy to improve outcomes for care leavers is set out in the *Care Leaver Strategy: A cross-departmental strategy for young people leaving care* report (October 2013), and a one-year-on document, *Care Leaver Strategy: One year on progress update*, (October 2014) that reported on progress made and set out how the Government intends to further improve support for care leavers. The Government intends to publish its refreshed Care Leaver Strategy later this year.

The Local Government Association has produced a spreadsheet giving details of every LTP can be found using the following webpage address:

www.local.gov.uk/camhs

Julie Cooper:

[25867]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the Prime Minister's announcement of 11 January 2016 on £1.4 billion of funding for mental health services, what proportion of that funding will support children in care and care leavers.

Alistair Burt:

The Government is committed to making the full £1.4 billion investment available over the course of this Parliament to improve mental health services for children and young people.

In line with guidance published by NHS England, all clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have produced Local Transformation Plans (LTPs) for children and young people's mental health and these have all now been assured and funding allocated for implementation. These plans required all key partners to agree locally how best to meet the mental health needs of children and young people in their local populations and should cover the whole spectrum of need, which includes improving access to mental health services for vulnerable groups such children in care and care leavers so that they can receive high quality mental health care when they need it. It is for local partners to decide how much of the funding which will be allocated to CCGs to improve local services throughout the five years will be spent specifically on children in care and other vulnerable groups. However, this will be based on an assessment of local needs and set out in the LTPs.

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The Local Government Association has produced a spreadsheet giving details of every LTP which can be found using the following webpage address:

www.local.gov.uk/camhs

■ Mental Health Services: Pregnant Women

Luciana Berger:

[26117]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2016 to Question 24674, what steps he is taking to ensure that trained specialist mental health staff are available to support mothers in every birthing unit by 2017; if he will provide an interim progress report on that work; and how he plans to assess whether that objective has been achieved by 2017.

Alistair Burt:

Health Education England (HEE) has a mandate commitment to ensure that trained specialist mental health staff are available to support mothers in every birthing unit by 2017.

Formal arrangements are in place between the Department and HEE to review performance on a regular basis. These include reports on progress against mandate commitments and quarterly accountability meetings between the Department's senior officials and the HEE chief executive and executive directors.

The HEE Perinatal Mental Health programme aims to ensure that the maternity workforce has access to the right, skills and knowledge that will enable them to provide high quality perinatal mental health care from prevention through to treatment for women throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. This includes partnership working with stakeholders, including the Royal College of Midwives to meet the multi professional education and training requirements.

At local level, it is for employers to ensure that staff have received appropriate perinatal mental health training to enable them to deliver high quality care and support to mothers during pregnancy and the first year after birth.

■ Mental Health Services: Young People

Norman Lamb:

[25451]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that adult mental health services have the expertise to support young people with attachment disorders.

Alistair Burt:

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have responsibility for the commissioning of comprehensive secondary adult mental health services. The exact nature of support

available will vary by CCG and be subject to local decision making. NHS England's programme of work to develop mental health access and waiting time standards spans all ages with a focus on enabling timely access to care delivered in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence recommendations.

■ Mental Illness: Employment

Luciana Berger: [\[26065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 4 February 2016 to Question 25105, when he expects the new resource for businesses on addressing mental health issues to be available.

Alistair Burt:

It is anticipated that the guidance will be published in spring 2016.

■ Musculoskeletal Disorders

Mr Geoffrey Cox: [\[25320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent discussions his Department has had with representatives from the health sector on the development of services to treat arthritis and musculoskeletal disorders.

Mr Geoffrey Cox: [\[25321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he plans to publish a funded arthritis action plan.

Jane Ellison:

The Department is in regular contact with stakeholders, such as Arthritis Research UK, and hosted a roundtable with them in November. The group is in the process of producing a toolkit for commissioners to support commissioning of physical activity interventions for people with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions.

Whilst the Department has no plans to publish an arthritis action plan, NHS England and Public Health England are taking forward a number of projects.

Specifically on MSK conditions, the National Health Service National Clinical Director for MSK, Peter Kay, has been working in partnership with the Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance, to develop new MSK clinical networks across England to build consensus on the way forward for models of care. In addition, in February 2015, Public Health England, in partnership with NHS England and the Department, ran a local pilot campaign to raise public awareness of the signs and symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis in Nottingham City and Hardwick Clinical Commissioning Group. The aim of the campaign was to support earlier diagnosis and thereby enable treatment to begin earlier to improve the quality of life for people with the condition. The results of the campaign are currently being evaluated.

■ Neurology

Andrew Gwynne: [\[25394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, which National Clinical Director will be responsible for overseeing the neurology intelligence network from March 2016; and if he will make a statement.

Jane Ellison:

Sir Bruce Keogh, NHS England's Medical Director, has undertaken a review of the National Clinical Director (NCD) resource designed to focus clinical advisory resources on areas where major programmes of work are currently being taking forward, or areas identified as priorities for improvement. As a result of the review, NHS England has proposed to change the way in which clinical advice is received in speciality areas in the future.

Where there will no longer be a specific NCD role, NHS England will secure expert clinical advice from its Clinical Networks and through its relationships with professional bodies and by appointing clinical advisors. For neurology it is planned that access to advice will be through clinical leads and members of the NHS England-funded neurology clinical networks, the Neurology Clinical Reference Group and Royal Colleges. It is expected that these new arrangements will be in place from 1 April 2016.

The Neurology Intelligence Network (NIN) is a joint partnership programme between Public Health England (PHE) and NHS England to support the generation and dissemination of neurology related health intelligence. PHE currently funds the on-going design, development and management of the NIN.

■ NHS Litigation Authority

Bridget Phillipson: [\[25651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what data sets are maintained by the NHS Litigation Authority.

Ben Gummer:

The National Health Service Litigation Authority maintains data sets relating to the following:

1. Management of clinical negligence and other non-clinical claims against the National Health Service in England on behalf of member organisations;
1. Referrals to the National Clinical Assessment Service;
1. Appeals in primary care contract disputes;
1. Notifications made under the Performers List Regulations; and
1. Operation of the Healthcare Professional Alert Notice System.

■ NHS: Negligence

Ian Austin:

[\[26118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what equality assessment his Department has undertaken on the introduction of fixed recoverable costs in clinical negligence cases; and if he will make a statement.

Ben Gummer:

The consultation stage assessment for the introduction of fixed recoverable costs for clinical negligence is work in progress. The Department has established a working group to look at the impact of the proposal on equalities, health inequalities and families. Membership (which has not been finalised) currently includes representatives of claimant lawyers, defence lawyers, patients and the National Health Service. We will also seek views on the impact of the policy on equalities, health inequalities and families within the consultation.

■ Pregnancy: Diabetes

Jim Shannon:

[\[25262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with the Royal Colleges on the possible connection between potato consumption and diabetes in pregnancy.

Jane Ellison:

No such discussions have been held.

■ Pregnant Women: Screening

Jim Shannon:

[\[25261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make the test for levels of fetal fibronectin to assist in detecting likely premature births available through the NHS.

Ben Gummer:

In November 2014, the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) recommended that screening for pre-term birth should not be offered as the available screening test is not reliable. Further research is also needed to better understand the use of fetal fibronectin as a screen indicator in an antenatal screening programme.

The UK NSC concluded that based on the published peer reviewed evidence preterm birth should not be offered for the following reasons:

- The available tests for identifying which asymptomatic women were at risk of preterm labour, including the measurement of cervical length, are not reliable enough to meet the UK NSC's criteria for use as a screening tool. Screening would identify many women as at risk when they are not, leading to unnecessary preventive treatment;
- The measurement of cervical length has no agreed measurement for establishing which pregnancies are at risk and which are not; and

— There is not enough evidence to suggest that the most effective treatment from preventing preterm labour, vaginal progesterone provides any overall benefit or reduced the likelihood of a baby dying.

■ Prostate Cancer

Jim Shannon: [\[25260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans his Department has to make high-dose prostate therapy available on the NHS.

Jane Ellison:

Intensity modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) is commissioned by NHS England. NHS England's commitment was to ensure that a minimum of 24% of patients requiring radical radiotherapy had access to inverse planned IMRT from April 2013, and this has been achieved nationally.

■ Suicide: Females

Luciana Berger: [\[26077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many women have taken their own lives in the first year after the birth of their child in each of the last five years.

Alistair Burt:

This information is not collected centrally.

■ Vitamin B12: Depressive Illnesses

Luciana Berger: [\[26078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what guidance is issued to (a) mental health professionals and (b) GPs on the relationship between vitamin B12 and depression-like symptoms.

Alistair Burt:

The issuing of clinical guidance to healthcare professionals is the responsibility of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and the relevant Royal Colleges and professional associations.

General practitioners (GPs) are usually the first health professional an individual will see when in contact with health services. GPs should be familiar with the signs, symptoms and complications, including psychiatric abnormalities, of vitamin B12 deficiency and with the methods for diagnosing and treating it. Guidance is available from sources commonly consulted by GPs, including Clinical Knowledge Summaries and Patient.co.uk.

■ Zika Virus

Andrew Gwynne: [\[25387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what role the UK pharmaceutical industry is playing in the development of a vaccine for the Zika virus.

Jane Ellison:

The United Kingdom pharmaceutical industry will play a leading role in the development of a vaccine for the Zika virus, in collaboration with a range of the UK's infectious disease experts, who are world leaders in this area.

In the Spending Review, the £1 billion Ross Fund, run jointly by the Department of Health and Department for International Development, includes over £350 million for the development of new vaccines, drugs and diagnostics for infectious diseases.

Particularly noteworthy within this, the UK Vaccine Network, with up to £120 million of funding, brings together industry, academia and Government to finance the development of new vaccines for priority infectious diseases with epidemic potential, including Zika. Indeed, the Network will launch a major funding call to finance the development of vaccines for Zika and other priority diseases at the end of February.

HOME OFFICE■ **Asylum****Mr David Crausby:**[\[23654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average waiting time for a decision on an asylum application was in each of the last 10 years; and what steps her Department is taking to reduce the waiting time for such decisions.

James Brokenshire:

The table below shows the average time, in calendar days, from date of claim to date of decision including the number and percentage of cases that received a decision in six months. Figures for the year 2015 are not available.

YEAR OF APPLICATION	APPS	MEAN	MEDIAN	DECISIONS IN 6 MONTHS	AS A % OF APPS
2005	26,939	133.90	46	23,671	87.87%
2006	25,020	165.06	52	21,065	84.19%
2007	24,732	191.38	62	19,722	79.74%
2008	27,182	223.65	97	19,944	73.37%
2009	25,759	159.22	71	20,985	81.47%
2010	20,012	82.11	29	18,391	91.90%
2011	21,211	115.89	32	18,131	85.48%
2012	21,315	161.70	30	16,098	75.52%
2013	24,960	181.78	46	15,874	63.60%

YEAR OF APPLICATION	APPS	MEAN	MEDIAN	DECISIONS IN 6 MONTHS	AS A % OF APPS
2014	26,070	141.32	135	19,287	73.98%

The exercise in the financial year 2014-15 to clear all straightforward cases with a claim date preceding 1 April 2014 led to a rise in the average time for some of the years above most notably 2008. This required the progression of a number of cases far older than 12 months which would have influenced the average decision times on those cases.

The Home Office continues to target resources to drive down the waiting time for decisions and currently strives to give decisions on all straightforward cases within 6 months, a timescale which it has been consistently meeting since April 2014.

■ Asylum: Housing

Stuart C. McDonald:

[\[25593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what profit has been made by the three contractors and sub-contractors under the provision of contracts for asylum accommodation since the contract with Compass began in 2012-13.

James Brokenshire:

[Holding answer 8 February 2016]: The Home Office is unable to release details of the profit / loss made against specific contracts as this information is commercially sensitive.

Stuart C. McDonald:

[\[25594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been accommodated in temporary dispersal accommodation under a contract with Compass for the provision of asylum accommodation in each Compass region in each month since April 2015.

James Brokenshire:

[Holding answer 8 February 2016]: The Home Office does not centrally record the number of people accommodated in temporary dispersal accommodation each month and such information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Asylum: Wales

Stephen Doughty:

[\[25749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers who are (a) men, (b) women and (c) under 18 were accommodated by her Department in each constituency in Wales in each of the last six years.

James Brokenshire:

[Holding answer 8 February 2016]: The Home Office publishes quarterly data on the number of asylum seekers in Section 95 dispersal accommodation, by local authority.

Data regarding the precise locations of asylum applicants cannot be provided at ward or constituency level as to do so would incur disproportionate costs and be precluded by the provisions of the Data Protection Act, given that individuals could reasonably be identified by such data.

■ **Deportation: EU Nationals**

Chris Philp: [\[25687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU citizens who have not started working have been deported after six months to which countries since May 2015.

James Brokenshire:

We do not hold the information requested centrally and providing it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ **European Asylum Support Office**

Tulip Siddiq: [\[25351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) funding and (b) personnel support was provided by her Department to the European Asylum Support Office in each year since 2009-10; how many (i) missions and (ii) expert days the UK provided for that office in each such year; and what her plans are for (A) funding, (B) personnel support, (C) missions and (D) expert days provided in 2015-16.

James Brokenshire:

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) is funded directly by the EU budget.

The first EASO operating plan to support the reconstruction of the Greek asylum system was signed on 1 April 2011. Support from Member States to support missions commenced after this date. We do not hold a precise record of personnel support provided to EASO from this period but in the last three years EASO advises that the UK has contributed over 1,000 expert working days in deployments to Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Cyprus.

During the current financial year the UK has provided EASO with 11 asylum experts and an interpreter in over 16 separate deployments. This includes one UK expert on long term deployment to Greece to assist Greek authorities with European funding matters and an expert to support the Italian country of origin information unit for six months followed by one week a month until March 2016.

So far we have provided EASO with four experts to assist with their coordination and operation of 'hotspots' in Greece and Italy. These measures are due to continue until the end of 2017 and we envisage that we will continue to contribute for this duration. On 28th January the Government announced further initiatives to assist unaccompanied children in the region which include further resources to EASO to help identify and register children at risk on first arrival in the EU in "hotspots" such as Greece and Italy. We are working closely with EASO to monitor the situation and provide expertise as necessary.

Deployment lengths vary according the task but typically personnel providing support to a hotspot mission will be released for a month's duration.

■ Offences against Children: Telford

Lucy Allan: [\[24755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce the number of sexual offences committed against children in Telford.

Karen Bradley:

Tackling child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a top priority for this Government and we are taking a wide range of actions to reduce sexual offences against children. We have prioritised child sexual abuse as a national threat in the Strategic Policing Requirement, setting a clear expectation on police forces to collaborate across force boundaries, to safeguard children, to share intelligence and to share best practice.

We have introduced new powers for the police to tackle offenders including new Sexual Risk Orders in the Serious Crime Act. The College of Policing and the National Policing Lead have set the requirement for all forces to train all new and existing police staff to respond to child sexual abuse. We have also made £1.5 million available to the National Policing Lead to fund National CSE Action Plan regional co-ordinators and analysts to drive improvements in the police response and better identify organised abuse.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary published a report on its National Child Protection re-inspection of West Mercia Constabulary on 21 January this year. Although HMIC highlighted some areas that needed improvement, inspectors found that West Mercia Police had reviewed its public protection structures, systems and processes and had invested significant extra resources into child protection.

■ Visas: Syria

Mr David Jones: [\[24708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications by Syrian nationals resident in Syria for UK visitor visas have been (a) received and (b) granted in each of the last five years.

James Brokenshire:

[Holding answer 2 February 2016]: The available information is given in the table below, relating to all Syrian nationals.

Entry clearance visitor visa applications and resolutions (grants, refusals, withdrawn or lapsed): All Syrian nationals

Year	APPLICATIONS		OF WHICH		
		Decisions	Granted	Refused	Withdrawn or lapsed
2010	6,181	6,157	4,349	1,724	84

	APPLICATIONS		OF WHICH		
2011	6,681	6,640	4,596	1,965	79
2012	5,366	5,368	2,691	2,604	73
2013	5,432	5,421	2,537	2,805	79
2014	5,370	5,477	1,495	3,910	72

Source: Immigration Statistics July - September 2015, Home Office, tables vi_01_q, vi_06_q_o and corresponding datasets.

Notes. Information is not available on centrally collated statistical databases on the country of residence of applicants. Corresponding data for the calendar year 2015 will be published on 25 February 2016. Some applications made in a particular year may be resolved (granted, refused, withdrawn or lapsed) in a subsequent year.

The latest quarterly Home Office immigration statistics on entry clearance visas are published in ' *Immigration Statistics, July-September 2015* ', available from the Library of the House and from the Home Office website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-statistics>

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Antigua: Coconuts

Ms Diane Abbott: [25788]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to help tackle the destruction by lethal yellowing of coconut palms in Antigua.

Justine Greening:

The identification and control of significant plant and animal diseases is an important part of DFID's research programmes, delivered through co-funded projects with the UK research councils, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and through the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research.

■ Ethiopia: Malnutrition

Ms Diane Abbott: [25786]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what information her Department holds on steps that the Ethiopian government has taken to prevent potential widespread starvation in South Omo.

Justine Greening:

The Government of Ethiopia is assisting people in South Omo through food or cash via the Government's Productive Safety Net Programme to help them through the leanest months of the year. Additionally, the local government is working with the World Food

Programme to meet humanitarian needs, allocating over 4,000 MT of food for distribution in South Omo over the coming six months.

■ **Ethiopia: Overseas Aid**

Ms Diane Abbott: [\[25784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which projects her Department funds in South Omo and Bench Majji, Ethiopia.

Ms Diane Abbott: [\[25785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what information her Department holds on the potential effect on tribal communities of planned sugar cane plantations in South Omo, Ethiopia; and whether her Department plans to take steps to help communities whose lands may be lost to such plantations.

Justine Greening:

DFID Ethiopia's programmes predominantly support provision of basic and other services across the whole country. This includes programmes focussing on health, climate investment, primary education and many other areas of development.

DFID holds necessary information to run effective programmes in Ethiopia.

■ **Israel: Palestinians**

Richard Burden: [\[25684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether any of the structures destroyed by the Israeli authorities in the South Hebron Hills on 2 February 2016 were fully or part-funded by the Government; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

The UK government is concerned by the increase in demolitions of properties in Area C of the West Bank which are harmful to peace, and continues to raise this with Israeli authorities. According to OCHA, at least 21 of the 23 structures demolished on 2nd February in the South Hebron Hills had been funded by international donors. We are awaiting confirmation from OCHA, however we understand 10 of these structures were funded by the EU.

Joan Ryan: [R] [\[26100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department has provided to projects fostering co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians in each of the last five years.

Mr Desmond Swayne:

DFID does not directly fund joint Israeli-Palestinian programmes. However, through the Conflict Stability and Security Fund (CSSF), the UK provides support for the 'Youth Creating Peace On/Line' project which encourages educational cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis. The project, run by NGO 'Kids Creating Peace', uses dialogue and leadership workshops to train participants to become peace advocates in their

communities and beyond. The UK is providing £40,000 to 'Youth Creating Peace On/Line' for 2016/17.

DFID provided £349 million in support of Palestinian development from 2011-15 and will provide a further £72 million in 2015-16. For a breakdown on how financial assistance in the Palestinian Territories is spent, information is published on DFID's Development Tracker website (<https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk>).

JUSTICE

■ Community Rehabilitation Companies

Bridget Phillipson: [\[25618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2016 to Question 24848, on the South Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company, what areas of that company's activities the action plan referred to covers; in what way his Department plans to monitor the implementation of that plan; and what steps his Department can take if a community rehabilitation company fails to implement such a plan in the agreed timescale.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[25619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2016 to Question 23948, what the names are of the seven community rehabilitation companies referred to.

Andrew Selous:

The information requested is commercially sensitive. It is normal Government practice not to release commercially sensitive information.

The use of action plans is part of an ongoing standard contract management process used routinely with all 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) to promptly and proactively address issues which have been identified.

We have robust contract management in place to monitor these plans, including commercial and financial specialists to ensure that providers deliver effective services and value for money. Robust performance management systems and audit arrangements are in place to manage the contracts. This approach is in line with National Audit Office contract management standards.

■ Courts: Security

Andy Slaughter: [\[26051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 10 December 2015 to Question 18874, on offensive weapons: confiscation orders, how many such confiscations took place in each Crown and magistrates' court in each of those years.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

The information requested could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Andy Slaughter:

[\[26052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 10 December 2015 to Question 18874, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the increase in the number of knives confiscated in Crown courts between 2012-13 and 2014-15.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

My Department takes the issue of security within courts extremely seriously and has robust security and safety systems in place to protect all court users and judiciary. These systems include mandatory bag searches, modern detection equipment, X-ray machines and surveillance cameras, as well as court security officers with the legal powers to seize items where required. Security procedures, including the detection technology used, are continuously reviewed to ensure that security is as effective as possible.

The increase in the number of knives taken from people as they enter Crown Courts between 2012/13 and 2014/15 may be due to the implementation of more robust training for Court Security Officers; improved rates of recording for the taking of such items and improved searching of people entering Crown Courts.

■ Crime: Victims

Keir Starmer:

[\[26033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to publish proposals to introduce a victims' law.

Mike Penning:

In the Queen's Speech we made a commitment to bring forward measures to increase the rights of victims of crime. Further detail on our plans will be published in due course.

■ Custodial Treatment: Weapons

Andy Slaughter:

[\[25395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2016 to Question 24706, how many toy guns or home-made replicas and imitation guns have been confiscated in prisons or young offenders institutes in each year since 2010.

Andrew Selous:

The table below shows the number of home-made, replica and toy firearms found in prison over the 5 year period requested.

FIREARMS REPORTED ON THE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM (IRS) ^{1,2} 2011 TO 2015

Firearm description	2011	2012	2013	2014 2015	
Home Made	3	4	0	0	2
Replica	0	3	1	1	4
Toy	1	1	0	0	3

FIREARMS REPORTED ON THE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM (IRS) ^{1,2} 2011 TO 2015

- (1) Includes NOMS operated Immigration Removal Centres.
- (2) Excludes finds of real (functional or non-functional) guns.

■ Death: Seas and Oceans

Christian Matheson: [\[25576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many inquests have taken place related to the death of UK citizens whilst at sea in each year including and since 2010.

Caroline Dinenage:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Domestic Violence

Alex Cunningham: [\[26113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will commission an assessment of the effect on victims of domestic abuse and their families of the use of common entrances at family courts for both the perpetrators and victims of that crime.

Alex Cunningham: [\[26114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children and women were seriously injured by a perpetrator of domestic violence after a Family Court decision to allow child access for a perpetrator of that crime in each of the last five years.

Mike Penning:

Every family court has a system to support vulnerable court users. Protective measures are put in place whenever a court is aware that an individual involved in a case may be violent. These can include separate waiting areas, additional security and the use of separate entrances where appropriate.

Information on the number of children or women injured by a perpetrator of domestic violence after a Family Court decision relating to child contact is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost by manually checking case files in criminal and family courts and matching records.

The family court takes the issue of domestic violence extremely seriously. Where domestic violence or abuse is admitted or proven, any child arrangements order put in place must protect the safety and wellbeing of the child and the parent with whom the child is living, and not expose them to the risk of further harm. In particular, the court must be satisfied that any contact ordered with a parent who has perpetrated violence or abuse is safe and in the best interests of the child.

Where the court does conclude that direct contact is safe and beneficial for the child, it can impose conditions such as supervised contact to protect the child.

■ Ministry of Justice: UK Membership of EU**Andy Slaughter:** [\[25770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effects of UK membership of the EU on policy areas in the remit of his Department.

Dominic Raab:

The Prime Minister has made clear that the European Union needed to reform if it was to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The Government is fighting hard to fix the aspects of our EU membership that cause so much frustration in the UK, so we can get a better deal for our country and secure our future. We are confident that the right agreement can be reached.

■ Prisoners' Release**Alex Cunningham:** [\[25492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make it his policy to send prisoners returned to jail having broken their licence conditions to a different prison than the one from which they were released.

Andrew Selous:

Prisoners recalled to custody having breached the conditions of their licence will be arrested by the police and then taken to the nearest local prison for the area in which they were arrested. Prisoners who, prior to release had been held in the closed training estate or in an open prison, will not therefore be returned to the same prison from which their release took place. Those prisoners who had been held in a local prison prior to release on licence, may be returned to the same establishment if that is the nearest local prison for the area in which they were arrested.

Once returned to a local prison, prisoners will be re-assessed and a decision made on which prison is best suited to their needs, taking into account all factors in the case including the risks they present and other security issues. Prisoners recalled for short periods may remain in the local prison until release unless there are specific reasons, including security reasons, why they should be transferred elsewhere.

■ Prisons: Drugs**Jim Shannon:** [\[25298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many incidents there have been of usage of illegal highs in prisons in each of the last five years.

Andrew Selous:

We do not tolerate drugs in prison. Prisoners are tested for a range of controlled drugs through our mandatory drug testing (MDT) system, which randomly tests up to 10% of the population in each prison, each month. In addition, prisoners can be subject to testing in response to specific threats. Any prisoner found through MDT to have used controlled drugs will face an internal adjudication and could receive a range of sanctions including days added to their time in custody.

We have begun a pilot to expand this testing to include new psychoactive substances and in April we plan to introduce this across the prison estate. We have also introduced new legislation to counter the smuggling of NPS into prisons and are training 300 sniffer dogs to detect NPS.

The table below shows the number of positive MDT tests for illegal drugs over the past five financial years.

YEAR	NUMBER OF POSITIVE MDT TESTS
2010/11	10324
2011/12	10268
2012/13	9956
2013/14	8659
2014/15	6742

Notes:

- Table shows instances where a prisoner has tested positive for a controlled drug, one of amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepine, cannabis, cocaine, heroin, opiates, methadone and buprenorphine.
- Where a prisoner is found to have used more than one substance, a separate positive will be reported for each substance found to have been used.
- Includes MDT tests arising from all prison MDT programmes including random, suspicion, at risk, frequent and reception testing

Alex Cunningham:

[25485]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his Department's policy is on investing in drug detection technology to tackle illicit substances being brought into prisons; and if he will make a statement.

Alex Cunningham:

[25486]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he expects to have body scanners to help detect illicit substances installed in prisons.

Andrew Selous:

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) deploys a comprehensive range of robust searching and security measures to detect items of contraband both at the point of entry to the prison and concealed within the prison. NOMS continues to explore new methods of preventing drugs coming into prisons and body scanners are seen as a valuable part of this strategy.

An independent expert panel is assessing the use of a body scanner at HMP Wandsworth, as required by the Justification of Practices Involving Ionising Radiation Regulations 2004.

Alex Cunningham: [\[25487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to prevent new psychoactive substances being used among the prison population.

Andrew Selous:

We take a zero tolerance approach to drugs in prison and there are already a range of robust measures in place to detect drugs, including the use of search dogs and intelligence-led searches.

We recently introduced tough new laws which will see those who smuggle packages over prison walls, including new psychoactive substances, face up to two years in prison. We are piloting mandatory drug testing for new psychoactive substances from this month, and intend to roll it out to all prisons by April 2016.

Those who involve themselves in the distribution of drugs in our prisons should know that they will face prosecution and extra time behind bars.

Alex Cunningham: [\[25488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of prison officers injured on duty in incidents involving new psychoactive substances in the last year.

Andrew Selous:

Where injury to prison officers is suspected to be wholly due or due in part to new psychoactive substances, this is noted but the figures are subjective and the connection with NPS cannot be proven. We are piloting mandatory drug testing for new psychoactive substances from this month, and intend to roll it out to all prisons by April 2016.

Alex Cunningham: [\[25491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of prisoners returned to jail having broken their licence conditions and subsequently been found to be carrying concealed drugs.

Andrew Selous:

Prisoners recalled to custody having breached the conditions of their licence will be arrested by the police and then taken to the nearest local prison for the area in which they were arrested.

Once returned to a local prison, prisoners will be searched and risk assessed in line with the prisons' local policy for stopping contraband. Prisons deploy a comprehensive range of robust searching and security measures to detect items of contraband, both at the point of entry to the prison and concealed within the prison. We will continue to explore new methods of preventing drugs coming into prisons

Prisoners found with drugs on entry to prison are sanctioned, potentially including days added to their sentence, or, in cases where the quantity of drug or packaging suggests

possession with intent to supply, will be referred to the police. All visitors or staff caught with drugs are referred to the police.

■ Tribunals: Scotland

Kirsty Blackman: [\[26103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many non-devolved tribunals there were in Scotland HM Courts and Tribunals Service between (a) April 2013 and March 2014 and (b) April 2014 and March 2015.

Kirsty Blackman: [\[26107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2016 to Question 24107, on tribunals: Scotland, how many people whose data was breached were making an appeal in respect of personal independence payment; and how many such people had their appeal upheld.

Kirsty Blackman: [\[26108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2016 to Question 24107, on tribunals: Scotland, if he will estimate how many of the people whose data was breached in incidents related to non-devolved tribunals were assessed as vulnerable.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

The table below shows the number of non-devolved tribunals there were in Scotland between April 2013 to March 2014 and April 2014 and March 2015.

TRIBUNAL DISPOSALS IN SCOTLAND 2013-2014 AND 2014-2015

Year	2013-2014	2014-2015
Social Security and Child Support	59,984	15,450
Immigration and Asylum (First-tier)	3,580	2,637
Immigration and Asylum (Upper Tribunal)	275	299
Employment	22,098	14,767
Employment Appeals Tribunal	44	37
Administrative Appeals Chamber (Upper Tribunal)	1,229	868
Tax ¹	-	-
General Regulatory Chamber ²	-	-

 TRIBUNAL DISPOSALS IN SCOTLAND 2013-2014 AND 2014-2015

Criminal Injuries Compensation - 148

³

Tax (Upper Tribunal) ⁴ - -

1) Disposals only held at UK level

2) Disposals only held at UK level, but hearings are recorded in Scotland, 5 in 2013-2014 and 6 in 2014-2015

3) Disposals only recorded for Scotland since August 2014.

4) Disposals only held at UK level, but hearings are recorded in Scotland, 13 in 2013-2014 and 3 in 2014-2015

HM Courts & Tribunals Service does not hold the information requested in central records of data breaches.

Kirsty Blackman:

[26104]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2016 to Question 24107 on tribunals: Scotland, how many of those people whose data was breached were made aware that that breach had occurred.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service takes its responsibility for data incidents very seriously and treats each case on its individual merits. Notifying individuals of data breaches or incidents is considered, but is not a mandatory action in every instance.

Informing people and organisations about a breach is not an end in itself. Notification should have a clear purpose, whether this is to enable individuals who may have been affected to take steps to protect themselves or to allow the appropriate regulatory bodies to perform their functions, provide advice and deal with complaints.

The above criteria is considered when deciding whether or not to inform individuals or organisations of a data breach. In relation to the incidents referred to in this PQ it is unclear, as no statistical information has been retained, as to whether or not individuals were notified.

Guidance on data breach notification is set out by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) in the link below:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/principle-7-security/>

Kirsty Blackman:

[26105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2016 to Question 24107 on tribunals: Scotland, how many of those people whose data was breached were not made aware that that breach had occurred.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service takes its responsibility for data incidents very seriously and treats each case on its individual merits. Notifying individuals of data breaches or incidents is considered, but is not a mandatory action in every instance.

Informing people and organisations about a breach is not an end in itself. Notification should have a clear purpose, whether this is to enable individuals who may have been affected to take steps to protect themselves or to allow the appropriate regulatory bodies to perform their functions, provide advice and deal with complaints.

The above criteria is considered when deciding whether or not to inform individuals or organisations of a data breach. In relation to the incidents referred to in this PQ it is unclear, as no statistical information has been retained, as to whether or not individuals were notified.

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<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/principle-7-security/>

PRIME MINISTER**■ Trade Promotion**

Mr David Hanson: [25865]

To ask the Prime Minister, what the (a) job description, (b) budget and (c) selection criteria is for each of his trade envoys.

Mr David Hanson: [25866]

To ask the Prime Minister, who he has appointed as a trade envoy to which countries since May 2010.

Mr David Hanson: [26060]

To ask the Prime Minister, which hon. and Right hon. Members have been appointed by him to which countries as a trade envoy.

Mr David Cameron:

Information regarding trade envoys can be found on the gov.uk website.

SCOTLAND**■ Abortion: Scotland**

Kate Osamor: [903495]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with ministers of the Scottish Government and women's organisations on devolving competence for abortion legislation to Scotland.

David Mundell:

I have discussed the issue of devolution of competence for abortion law in Scotland with representatives of several women's organisations and I have a regular dialogue with the Scottish Government's Deputy First Minister on all aspects of implementation of the Smith Agreement.

Jo Stevens:

[\[903498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with ministers of the Scottish Government and women's organisations on devolving competence for abortion legislation to Scotland.

David Mundell:

I have discussed the issue of devolution of competence for abortion law in Scotland with representatives of several women's organisations and I have a regular dialogue with the Scottish Government's Deputy First Minister on all aspects of implementation of the Smith Agreement.

■ Dover House: Repairs and Maintenance

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[24607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much his Department spent on renovations and repairs to Dover House in each year since 2010-11.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office spend on Dover House since 2010-11 on renovations and repairs, including planned and preventative maintenance, is shown below:

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Cost (£)	146,572	192,968	230,688	169,143	382,029

■ Iron and Steel: Scotland

Tom Pursglove:

[\[903494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment he has made of the future of the steel industry in Scotland.

Anna Soubry:

The problems affecting the steel industry apply across the UK. As does the action we have been taking to help the steel industry on electricity costs and unfair imports.

We will work with the Scottish Government, Scottish Development International and the industry to ensure a sustainable future for UK steel.

■ Scotland Office: Travel

Margaret Ferrier: [\[24609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much his Department has spent on (a) taxis, (b) first class train tickets and (c) business class air travel in each year since 2010-11.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office spend on air, rail and taxi travel since 2010-11 is shown below:

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Air	£73,376	£141,601	£171,483	£131,538	£158,897
Rail	£32,314	£30,492	£47,694	£57,487	£55,718
Taxi	£14,946	£19,967	£20,967	£23,845	£27,165

The Scotland Office does not separately record information and expenditure on first or business class travel. It is Scotland Office policy not to use first or business class travel for officials. All ministerial travel is undertaken by the most efficient and cost effective way, in accordance with the Ministerial Code, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

■ Urban Areas: Scotland

John Stevenson: [\[903496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with local authorities in Scotland on City Deals.

David Mundell:

I have had very useful discussions with almost every local authority in Scotland since last May, where I have discussed a range of matters, including City Deals and their equivalents.

My officials also work closely with bidding authorities to refine proposals and I was delighted to sign the £250 million Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire deal on 28 January.

■ Welfare State: Scotland

Angela Crawley: [\[903497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the effects of the Government's welfare programme on social and economic inequalities in Scotland.

Priti Patel:

I refer the hon Lady to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon Members for Glasgow North East and Angus.

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION■ **Constituencies****Mr Roger Godsiff:**[\[26068\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for South West Devon, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, whether the Local Government Boundary Commission is under an obligation to ensure that proposals for boundary changes reflect representations it has received from people in the areas affected.

Mr Gary Streeter:

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England informs me that the procedure for electoral reviews is set out in the *Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009*. The Act requires the Commission to publish recommendations and consider representations made on them.

In drawing up new ward or electoral division boundaries, Section 58 of the Act requires the Commission to take into consideration any representations made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England within its consultation periods.

In practice, the Commission always conducts at least two phases of public consultation for every electoral review. First, in advance of drawing up draft recommendations, the Commission will invite local proposals for new ward or electoral division boundaries.

Following the initial consultation, the Commission publishes draft recommendations and consults on them before finalising ward boundaries and the wider electoral arrangements for a local authority.

After each phase of consultation, the Commission will consider all local representations against the statutory criteria which are set out in Schedule 2 of the *Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009*. The criteria oblige the Commission to have regard to delivering electoral equality for voters, to build electoral arrangements that reflect community interests and identities as well as ensuring that wards or divisions promote effective and convenient local government.

The Commission analyses all local representations to assess the extent to which they meet the statutory criteria. If submissions present a fair reflection of the criteria and can be accommodated within an authority-wide scheme, it will usually adopt them. In the event that multiple (but conflicting) submissions meet the statutory criteria, the Commission will choose the option which it believes most strongly reflects them. If no local representations provide a satisfactory reflection of the statutory criteria, the Commission will substitute its judgement and draw up its own pattern of wards or divisions for the area in question.

TRANSPORT■ **Aviation: Emergencies****Richard Burden:**[\[25769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what reports he has received of an emergency landing by American Airlines Flight AA 109 to Heathrow as a result of crew and passenger illnesses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

As this event occurred in a US registered aircraft and appears to have occurred in international airspace the airline would report it to the American authorities and any investigation would be the responsibility of the US Federal Aviation Administration in the US. When the aircraft returned to Heathrow Airport the UK emergency services attended the scene, and stand ready to assist the US authorities in their enquiries should they request it. We await further developments with interest.

■ **Aviation: Safety****Dr Tania Mathias:**[\[26102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with his European counterparts about EU proposals to block public access to Mandatory Occurrence Reports; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect of those proposals on public confidence in aircraft safety.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The reporting, analysis and follow-up of occurrences in civil aviation is governed by Regulation (EU) No 376/2014 which was adopted on 3 April 2014 and became applicable on 15 November 2015.

The open reporting of safety occurrences is vital to help ensure that significant issues can be identified and addressed before they lead to an accident. To foster open reporting the Regulation aims to create a just culture in which occurrences can be reported without fear of any detriment. To support the just culture the Regulation requires that reports be given an appropriate level of confidentiality and that information derived from occurrence reports shall be used only for safety related purposes. However, the Regulation does permit information to be released on request to interested parties that have a genuine safety related need for the information.

The Regulation also recognises the need to keep the public informed on aviation safety matters. It requires Member States to publish, at least annually, a safety review setting out the type of occurrences and safety-related information that has been reported, any trends that have been identified and any corrective action taken. In addition, the European Aviation Safety Agency is required to include information about the analysis of occurrence reports in its annual safety review.

■ British Transport Police

Lilian Greenwood: [\[26116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 4 February 2016 to Question 25019, what efficiency savings he expects the British Transport Police to make in cash terms in each year up to 2020-21.

Claire Perry:

During the recent spending review, the Department made clear to the British Transport Police Authority that it considered that appropriate efficiencies should be identified and made. However, it also emphasised that any efficiencies identified should not materially impact on the operational policing capability of the British Transport Police, including in relation to counter-terrorist activity. The British Transport Police Authority identified savings of over 8% that can be made between 2016/17 and 2019/20 from the British Transport Police's (BTP) core policing budgets, focussed on those areas where reductions would not have a material operational impact on the rail network. The Department has set out its expectation that these savings should be achieved during the course of the spending review period. Any efficiency savings could, however, potentially be reinvested into counter-terrorist activities, depending on the need.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Tulip Siddiq: [\[26120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 4 February 2016 to Question 24387, whether the proposed changes to mitigate the effect of lorry traffic on the hedgehog population in the area of Regent's Park will require an amendment to the High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Bill.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The identified impact on the Regent's Park hedgehog population is from the provision of replacement car parking for the Zoological Society of London rather than from lorries accessing the proposed lorry holding area. The measures being considered to mitigate this effect in the Regent's Park area do not require an Additional Provision to the Bill. Any mitigation measures outside the limits of the Bill would be delivered with the cooperation of The Royal Parks.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[26121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 4 February 2016 to Question 24387, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of changing the route used by lorries involved in the High Speed 2 construction away from the hedgehog population in the Regent's Park area as an alternative to establishing replacement habitats; and whether such a change would require an amendment to the High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Bill.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The identified impact on the Regent's Park hedgehog population is from the provision of replacement car parking for the Zoological Society of London rather than from lorries

accessing the proposed lorry holding area. Therefore, no assessment has been made of changing the route used by HS2 construction vehicles in the Regent's Park area for the purpose of mitigating the impact on hedgehogs. Such a change would require an Additional Provision to the Bill.

■ M180

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[25541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he expects the undulations in the road surface of the M180 east of junction 4 in respect of which warning signs have been erected, to be eradicated; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Jones:

Highways England are aware of a problem with the underlying road construction of the M180 east of junction 4, which affects the ride quality on that section of the motorway. Highways England has carried out, and will continue to carry out, surface repairs to ensure the road surface remains safe and serviceable. In the longer term, substantial reconstruction works will be required to prevent the recurrence of these problems and investigations into this are being undertaken.

■ Public Transport: Radlett

Oliver Dowden:

[\[25620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking on ensuring the extension of the Oyster card pay as you go system to Radlett.

Claire Perry:

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) has a Committed Obligation to deliver proposals with an acceptable business case for Oyster Pay As You Go (PAYG) and contactless payment (CPAY) to five stations and their respective Lines of Route; this obligation includes Radlett.

The works needed to complete this obligation are technically complex and require a substantial amount of work by Transport for London (TfL) - including a significant upgrade to the Oyster back office which will not be complete before 2017 - before they can be introduced.

GTR, TfL and DfT officials meet at a Project Board every month to review progress.

■ Railways: Compensation

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[25709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that season ticket holders are fairly compensated for delays in rail services.

Claire Perry:

Delay/Repay is already one of the most generous compensation schemes in Europe and we are committed to improving compensation for delayed rail passengers even further.

As the Chancellor stated in his Autumn Statement, we are committed to reducing the time threshold for which passengers can claim from 30 minutes to 15 minutes.

We have already changed the system to get compensation paid in cash, not travel vouchers, and we are putting new compensation obligations like automatic Delay/Repay into future franchise specifications.

We will negotiate hard with rail operators to get even better compensation arrangements for passengers but also focus on ensuring that the trains run on time.

■ Road Signs and Markings

Paul Maynard: [\[25691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 will be implemented.

Andrew Jones:

We aim to bring the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 into force in the Spring, subject to Parliamentary scrutiny.

■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance

Sir Greg Knight: [\[25542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what further resources from the Local Growth Fund he intends to make available to allow additional road improvements; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Department for Transport is contributing over £6 billion to the Local Growth Fund in this parliament. This is already helping to fund over 300 road improvement schemes in Local Enterprise Partnerships' programmes. Local Enterprise Partnerships will soon have the opportunity to make further bids to the Local Growth Fund for new projects, including a £475m element for very large major transport schemes. The Government will be providing details shortly.

■ Transport: Mental Illness

Luciana Berger: [\[26059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the number of people working in logistics and transportation who experience mental health problems.

Andrew Jones:

The Department for Transport does not assess the total number of people working in logistics and transportation who experience mental health problems.

■ Transport: Woking

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[25707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to improve transport links between Woking and London since 2010.

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[25708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to create additional capacity on peak weekday rail services on the South West Main Line between Woking and London Waterloo.

Claire Perry:

In March 2015, I announced a £50 million investment to deliver improvements across the South Western franchise before the end of the current franchise in 2017. This package of improvements included an additional Monday to Thursday late night service from London to Woking, and new ticket machines at Woking and London Waterloo Stations.

An additional 108 carriages are being added to the South Western franchise which should all be in passenger service by March of this year, with a further 150 carriages on order and due to arrive in 2017. These additional carriages provide additional capacity across a number of the routes operated, including those serving Woking.

The Department is running a competition to award the next South Western franchise, which is expected to start in 2017. The detailed franchise specification will be finalised following analysis of the responses to the public consultation, which closes on 9 February. It is expected that bidders will be asked to make proposals to provide capacity where it is needed most.

With regard to road links, Highways England is currently making improvements to the nearby M3 by constructing a smart motorway between junctions 2 and 4a (13.4 miles/21.6km). The aim of smart motorways is to help relieve congestion by using technology to control traffic flows, to assist in the management of incidents and provide information to road users. They deliver these benefits at a significantly lower cost than conventional motorway widening and with less impact on the environment during construction. This is achieved by converting the existing hard shoulder to a permanent running lane. Work started in November 2014 and is expected to be completed towards the end of June 2017.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Civil Partnerships

Mr Alistair Carmichael:

[\[25442\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if the Government will make it its policy to bring forward legislative proposals to allow heterosexual couples to enter into civil partnerships; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Dinenage:

In 2014, after the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 was passed, the government carried out a review of the operation and future of the Civil Partnership Act 2004, including a thorough public consultation on potential changes to civil partnership. Views

were invited on three options: abolishing, or phasing out civil partnerships; or extending them to opposite sex couples.

The review found that there was no clear consensus on the future of civil partnerships. A majority of respondents to the consultation were against extending civil partnerships to opposite sex couples and several important organisations thought it was too soon to consider making changes to civil partnerships until the impact of extending marriage to same sex couples is known. Given the lack of any consensus the government has no current plans to make changes to the Civil Partnership Act 2004.

On 29 January 2016, the High Court dismissed a legal challenge to the lack of availability of civil partnerships to opposite sex couples. The Court ruled unequivocally that the current regime of marriage and civil partnership does not disadvantage anyone nor does it infringe anyone's right to family or private life. We also welcome the Court's view that it is entirely reasonable for the Government to wait to see the impact of extending marriage to same sex couples before deciding on the way forward.

■ Females: Directors

Dan Jarvis: [\[26099\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, pursuant to the Answer of 1 February 2016 to Question 24539, whether the list provided in that answer includes all of the chief executives of FTSE 100 companies she has held meetings with to discuss the issue of increasing the number of women on company boards since May 2015.

Caroline Dineneage:

My answer of 1 February 2015 to Questions 24538 and 24539 detailed all meetings that the Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities and I have had with representatives of the FTSE 100 and other businesses. We have also spoken at a number of conferences and events, with representatives from across the FTSE 350 and other businesses in attendance. We always ensure that we use these opportunities to raise the issue of achieving a better gender balance on boards.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Employment and Support Allowance: Parkinson's Disease

Mr Roger Godsiff: [\[26035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January 2016 to Question 23428, how many claimants of employment and support allowance who had a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease were removed from the work-related activity group because they had died.

Priti Patel:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[[26075](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with Parkinson's disease have been placed in the (a) support group and (b) work-related activity group with a prognosis statement of (i) three months, (ii) six months, (iii) 12 months, (iv) 18 months, (v) two years and (vi) more than two years since the introduction of employment and support allowance in 2008.

Priti Patel:

I refer the Hon. Member to the reply given on the 25 January 2016 to Question [UIN 23428](#).

■ Employment Schemes: Internet

Frank Field:

[[26097](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department has contracted out the maintenance and screening arrangements for Universal Jobmatch.

Priti Patel:

The current Universal Jobmatch service is delivered through a managed service by Monster Worldwide Ltd. Monster have built into the service some screening and monitoring tools which help to detect, deter and remedy inappropriate use of the site. Further to this, the Department carries out its own checks to ensure that Universal Jobmatch continues to deliver a safe and effective service for jobseekers and employers.

■ Employment Schemes: Scotland

Neil Gray:

[[25331](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the number of people the £7 million fund for Employability in Scotland will assist in 2016-17.

Priti Patel:

As funding for the new Work and Health Programme will be devolved in Scotland, by definition it will be for the Scottish Government to decide how many people it chooses to support through their devolved programme.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals

Cat Smith:

[[26022](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the decrease in the number of personal independence payment mandatory reconsideration new decisions in cases in which awards were changed between July 2014 and October 2015.

Justin Tomlinson:

PIP is continuing to roll out in a safe and steady manner and as such there will be a variety of cases, and case volumes, within the system at any one time. Variation in

Mandatory Reconsideration outcomes is to be expected in a live system of this scale as applications are decided on an individual basis.

There are no targets for Mandatory Reconsideration outcomes.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Assessments

Cat Smith: [26023]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will conduct an assessment of the extent to which Atos and Capita use supporting letters when conducting personal independence payment assessments.

Justin Tomlinson:

Healthcare Professionals and DWP Decision Makers give full consideration to all information provided when assessing Personal Independence Payment claimants.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations

Frank Field: [26037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people applying for personal independence payments have passed their medical in each of the most recent 24 months for which data is available.

Justin Tomlinson:

The assessment for Personal Independence Payment considers the impact of conditions and impairments on individuals' everyday lives. The assessment is not a medical one but is focussed on the claimant's functional ability.

DWP decision-makers review the assessment report and the Claimant Questionnaire along with any other available evidence before making a decision about benefit entitlement.

Data on Personal Independence Payment registrations, clearances and award rates are available on Gov.UK and were most recently updated on 16 December:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/personal-independence-payment-statistics>.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Motability

Cat Smith: [25971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the effect on (a) the wellbeing and (b) access to employment and training of people who no longer have access to a motability vehicle due to moving from disability living allowance to personal independence payment.

Justin Tomlinson:

We recognise that the transition from DLA to PIP can be challenging for individuals, which is why the Department worked closely with Motability as we developed our plans for the introduction of PIP. The Motability charity provides a one-off package of transitional support and advice to support customers who no longer meet the eligibility

criteria for the Motability scheme. For most of these customers who entered into their first lease agreement with Motability before January 2013, Motability will provide transitional support of £2,000. This will enable many former Scheme customers to continue to meet their mobility needs by purchasing a used car.

For customers who entered into their first lease agreement with the scheme after January 2013 and up to December 2013, Motability will supply transitional support of £1,000 to assist with mobility costs. Motability is also providing help with the cost of adaptations made to non-scheme vehicles and information on non-scheme motoring and insurance. The Scheme also offers customers an opportunity to purchase their vehicle after the end of the lease.

Support with employment is available through the Access to Work Scheme, which is potentially available on application to anyone with a health condition or disability that affects the way they perform their job and who needs practical support above and beyond the reasonable adjustments that an employer has a duty to make under the Equality Act 2010. The type of support Access to Work provides is tailored to an individual's needs and can include travel to work.

■ Supported Housing: Rents

Alison Thewliss:

[[26073](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make it his policy to exempt supported accommodation from plans to cap social rents at local housing allowance rates.

Justin Tomlinson:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave the Hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood on 3 February 2016 to Question UIN [24910](#)

■ Universal Credit: Poverty

Frank Field:

[[26038](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will estimate the likely change in the number of (a) children and (b) working-age adults who will be in households with net equivalised income below 60 per cent of the median (i) before and (ii) after housing costs, not including the effect of transitional protection for claimants migrated onto universal credit, in 2020-21 as a result of changes to universal credit work allowance announced in the Summer Budget 2015.

Priti Patel:

The impact of the work allowance change cannot be considered in isolation – it is part of a broader package of measures announced at the Summer Budget which were updated for the Autumn Statement. This included the increase to the personal tax allowance and introduction of the national living wage. Taken together, these reforms are designed to support people into employment and then enable them to progress in work and generate more income for themselves.

Universal Credit is a key element of these reforms. It is designed to ensure that work always pays. The single taper rate means people have a clear incentive to work, and to work more.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

SCOTLAND

■ Asylum

Ian Murray:

[[24000](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2016 to Question 22198, on asylum, what the (a) dates, (b) minutes and (c) outcomes were of the discussions referred to in that answer.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 28 January 2016. The correct answer should have been:

David Mundell:

The West Coast main line was closed between Glasgow and Carlisle on 31 December 2015. Since then, Ministers in the Scotland Office and the Department for Transport have sought to assure themselves that all appropriate steps are being taken to repair Lamington Viaduct and to mitigate the impact of the closure of the line for rail users.

I refer the honourable Gentleman to my answer of 20 January 2016 and to my Written Ministerial Statement of 11 January 2016, which sets out the progress on this issue.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Review of the Homes and Communities Agency

Minister of State for Housing and Planning (Brandon Lewis): [\[HCWS520\]](#)

I am today announcing the launch of a Review of the Homes and Communities Agency in line with the requirement on all government departments to regularly review non-departmental public bodies. Established in 2008, the Agency is the national housing, land and regeneration agency and the regulator of registered social housing providers in England.

The Spending Review underlined the priority this Government attaches to our ambition to build a million homes this Parliament and to double the number of new homeowners. Building on the successful contribution the Homes and Communities Agency made in the last Parliament, this Review will ensure that we are well-placed to deliver the Government's objectives and will:

- i) Examine the continuing need for a non-departmental public body, covering:
 - o how each of the Agency's functions contributes to government objectives;
 - o whether each function and the body is still required; and
 - o the best future delivery options.
- ii) Examine the capacity of the Homes and Communities Agency to deliver more efficiently and effectively.
- iii) Examine whether corporate governance and management arrangements are sufficiently robust and transparent and ensure that Agency is operating in line with recognised principles of good corporate governance.

We will be seeking evidence from a wide range of sources, including the Agency itself, and there will be an opportunity for interested stakeholders to feed in views. I will inform the House once the Review is complete and copies of its report will be placed in the Library of the House.

DEFENCE

■ Ministry of Defence Votes A Annual Estimate 2016-17

Secretary of State for Defence (Michael Fallon): [\[HCWS522\]](#)

The Ministry of Defence Votes A Estimate 2016-17, has been laid before the House today as HC715. This outlines the maximum numbers of personnel to be maintained for each Service in the Armed Forces during Financial Year 2016-17.

■ Ministry of Defence Votes A Supplementary Estimate 2015-16

Secretary of State for Defence (Michael Fallon):

[\[HCWS523\]](#)

The Ministry of Defence Votes A Supplementary Votes 2015-16, has been laid before the House today as HC716. This outlines the increased maximum numbers of personnel to be maintained for Service in the Reserve Marines Force during Financial Year 2015-16.

HOME OFFICE

■ Launch of the Joint Fraud Taskforce

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mrs Theresa May):

[\[HCWS521\]](#)

Today I announced the launch of the Joint Fraud Taskforce.

Fraud is a serious crime which shames our financial system. Fraudsters not only prey on vulnerable members of our society, but use the proceeds of their crime to fund terrorism, and other heinous acts. Fraud damages the lives of individuals, the bottom line of businesses and negatively impacts on the UK's economy.

The Home Office has worked with the financial sector and law enforcement to develop a Joint Fraud Taskforce to strengthen our collective response on fraud. The Taskforce will make it much more difficult for fraudsters to operate by improving intelligence sharing and close the loopholes which they exploit. It will help protect individuals and businesses from becoming victims of fraud by increasing public awareness and put in place interventions to support those who have been a victim. It will develop a much richer understanding of how fraud happens, and what can be done to stop it.

The only way we can effectively tackle fraud is for much closer and effective collaboration between industry, government and law enforcement. Senior representatives from the financial sector and law enforcement have given their commitment to fully support the objectives and the work of the Taskforce.

The Taskforce will report progress under Home Office governance. Public updates will also be provided.