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Notes:

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

Questions with identification numbers of **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ European Arrest Warrants: Habeas Corpus

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[63780\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of the European Arrest Warrant system with the principle of habeas corpus; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Buckland:

The UK's transposition of the European arrest warrant fully complied with the concept of habeas corpus.

A decision whether to order surrender under an EAW is made by a UK judge who considers all relevant legal issues, including: whether the conduct would amount to a criminal offence in the UK; applicable bars to extradition such as double jeopardy; politically motivated requests and whether the case against the accused is sufficiently advanced. The requesting State must meet human rights standards, which includes adequate living conditions for the accused. If there is doubt, the UK seeks assurances and ultimately the judge may refuse the EAW if they are not satisfied these standards will be met.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Brexit

Paul Blomfield:

[\[64536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Department for Exiting the European Union on the contents of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Mr Nick Hurd:

We, and other Departments, are working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union on all aspects of exiting the European Union.

■ Employment: Environment Protection

Sarah Olney:

[\[64647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the number of jobs in the UK dependent on the green economy.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Office for National Statistics carry out an annual survey to report on economic activity in the low carbon and renewable energy sector in the UK.

The latest release provides first estimates for 2015 and shows that an estimated 233,000 full-time equivalent employees were working directly in low carbon and renewable energy activities.

The ONS has not yet published estimates for 2015 of the additional employees supported in the supply chain to the sector. However, estimates for 2014 indicate that this activity could amount to around a further 200,000 full-time equivalent employees. Further information on the ONS releases can be found at the links below.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/bulletins/finalestimates/2015>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/ukenvironmentalaccounts/lowcarbonandrenewableenergyeconomytotalactivity2014>

■ Energy: Billing

Chi Onwurah: [64507]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the practicability of switching from pre-pay to direct debit energy suppliers.

Margot James:

Existing prepayment meter customers who are not repaying a debt can transfer onto a credit payment method, such as direct debit with their existing or a new supplier – in this case the prepayment meter is then replaced with a standard credit meter.

Chi Onwurah: [64509]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment has he made of the practicability for consumers of switching pre-pay suppliers.

Margot James:

Pre-payment meter customers who are not repaying a debt can transfer onto a new supplier's pre-payment tariff with ease.

The Debt Assignment Protocol (DAP) is an industry agreement monitored by Ofgem that enables prepayment meter customers with a debt of up to £500 for gas and electricity to switch to pre-payment tariff offered by another supplier. In addition, Ofgem published an open letter on 21 February 2017 setting out their actions to further help indebted pre-payment customers to use DAP to switch supplier.

■ Energy: Meters

Chi Onwurah:

[\[64506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment (a) he and (b) Ofgem have made of the extent of the potential barrier to switching energy suppliers of the requirement to change smart meters on switching such suppliers; and if he will make a statement.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[64508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the practicability of switching smart meters for energy (a) supplies and (b) customers.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's aim is that smart meters installed by one supplier can be operated by another so that consumers can switch energy supplier readily and retain the benefits of their smart metering service. That is why we have established the Data and Communications Company (DCC), and the latest version of the smart metering technical specifications (known as SMETS2), has been established.

Smart meters complying with the first version of the technical specifications (SMETS1) are delivering real benefits to consumers and have helped the industry prepare for the main installation stage of the roll-out. Consumers with these meters are still able to switch supplier. If the new supplier is not able to operate the meter in smart mode, the meter will continue to accurately record energy consumption accurately and can be used in traditional mode, with meter readings taken manually. The meter will not normally need to be replaced. Work is underway to make SMETS1 smart meters interoperable between energy suppliers, through enrolment in to the DCC's system.

■ EURATOM: Scotland

Ian Murray:

[\[64290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Scotland and Ministers of the Scottish Government on the effect on Scotland of the UK ceasing to be a member of Euratom.

Jesse Norman:

I have been in contact with the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work to discuss this. Additionally, at official level there has been and will continue to be regular contact with Scottish Government officials throughout the process.

■ Fuel Poverty

Gill Furniss:

[\[64520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he plans to take to ensure that more support is offered to (a) non-gas and (b) other fuel-poor households.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recently confirmed plans for the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) policy for 2017-18. In 2017-18, 70% of the support under the scheme will be directed at low income households. This represents an increase from £310m to £450m of funding per year, under the Affordable Warmth Obligation.

The policy also includes elements designed to incentivise delivery to non-gas homes, such as an uplift of 35% to 45% (depending on the measure) for delivery to such homes under the Affordable Warmth element of ECO, and limiting the deployment of gas replacement boilers to enable a more diverse mix of measures to be delivered.

As a result, the Impact Assessment for the policy estimates that 16% of the delivery under Affordable Warmth will be to homes not heated by mains gas. This represents a significant increase on delivery to this group to date, which is below 2%.

■ Housing: Energy

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[64351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many fuel-poor households require bringing up to the minimum band C energy efficiency standard by 2030; and what steps the Government is taking to bring such households up to that standard.

Jesse Norman:

The latest official fuel poverty statistics show that there are 2.2 million fuel poor households in England living in a home with an energy efficiency rating of Band D or lower.

Government recently confirmed plans to reform the Energy Company Obligation, which is worth £640m per year and requires the large energy suppliers to improve household energy efficiency. In 2017-18, 70% of the support under the scheme will be directed at low income households. This represents an increase from £310m to £450m of funding per year.

Energy companies are also required to provide over 2 million low income and vulnerable households with a £140 rebate off their energy bill each winter, under the Warm Home Discount Scheme, which is worth £320m per year.

These policies combined will see at least £770m of support for low income and vulnerable households in 2017/18.

■ Industry: West Sussex

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[64513]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) communities and (b) businesses in (i) West Sussex and (ii) Mid Sussex contribute to the Government's industrial strategy.

Margot James:

The Government published the Industrial Strategy Green Paper on 23 January 2017.

This document outlines how Government intends to build on the diverse strengths of our cities and regions, including Sussex, using record investment in infrastructure, research and innovation and inward investment to ensure higher growth is seen across the UK.

We welcome responses from all businesses, organisations and individuals from mid and West Sussex who wish to contribute, including the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership.

■ Insulation

Kerry McCarthy:

[64350]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress the Government has made towards meeting its target to insulate over one million homes by 2020.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has committed to “support low-cost measures on energy efficiency, with the goal of insulating a million more homes over the next five years, supporting our commitment to tackle fuel poverty.” Since the start of May 2015 to end October 2016 around 312,000 homes have had at least one insulation measure installed, predominantly under the Energy Company Obligation.

Progress against the target remains on course to be achieved by the end of April 2020.

Source: Table 1.2.1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-energy-efficiency-national-statistics-headline-release-december-2016>

■ Small Businesses: South Thanet

Craig Mackinlay:

[64003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many small businesses have opened in South Thanet in each of the last five years.

Margot James:

The Office for National Statistics publishes statistics on the number of enterprise “births” in Thanet in its publication *Business Demography*. A “birth” occurs when a business appears on the Inter-Departmental Business Register, following registration for either VAT or PAYE.

The following table gives “births” in Thanet for the most recent five years available.

2011 400

2012 390

2013 535

2014 525

2015 545

Data for 2016 is expected to be published later this year.

■ Warm Home Discount Scheme: Payments

Martyn Day:

[\[64224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will review payment dates for the Warm Home Discount Scheme to ensure that discounts are applied at the start of the winter season.

Jesse Norman:

[Holding answer 22 February 2017]: There are approximately 2 million customers benefitting from the Warm Home Discount rebate. Currently, participating energy suppliers administer the discount and cannot guarantee customers their rebate at exactly the same time, especially Broader Group customers who need to apply when supplier schemes open. This group make up approximately 40% of the scheme.

The Department is working closely with Ofgem and delivery partners so that suppliers are able to deliver the maximum number of rebates as speedily as possible. For winter 2017/18, the Department for Work and Pensions will provide the bulk of Core Group customer details to energy suppliers in August 2017. The Digital Economy Bill currently going through Parliament will provide powers that can potentially further improve data matching.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Average Earnings: Coventry South

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[64649\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average income for (a) men and (b) women in Coventry South constituency was in each of the last five years.

Chris Skidmore:

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 - Average Income [PQ64649 v.02.pdf]

■ Digital Economy Bill 2016-17

Frank Field:

[\[64586\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the letter of 14 February 2017 from the Minister of State for Digital and Culture to the hon Member for Birkenhead, which services and benefits he plans to include within the affirmative procedures for public service delivery under the Digital Economy Bill.

Ben Gummer:

The draft Digital Government (Disclosure of Information) Regulations, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/535311/2016-07-05_Digital_Government_Disclosure_of_Information_draft_regs.pdf, give illustrative examples of the public service delivery purposes for which information may be disclosed.

The draft Regulations include:

- i) supporting individuals or households who face multiple disadvantages;
- ii) assisting people living in fuel poverty; and
- iii) providing assistance to people who lose access to television broadcasts as a result of upcoming changes to the use of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Under the provisions of the Digital Economy Bill, information may also be disclosed for the purposes of assisting people living in water poverty. The Digital Economy Bill allows for further regulations to be made that change, including adding further purposes.

■ Households

Mr David Nuttall:

[\[63657\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average household size was for each year since 1997 for (a) Bury North Constituency, (b) the Metropolitan Borough of Bury, (c) the area covered by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and (d) the UK.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. EXCEL Sheet - Household Size [(63657) data v0.2.xls]
2. UKSA Letter to Member - Household Size [(63657) v.03 .pdf]

Mr David Nuttall:

[\[63658\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average household size is projected to be for each year up to 2035 for (a) Bury North constituency, (b) the Metropolitan Borough of Bury, (c) the area covered by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and (d) the UK.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. EXCEL Sheet - Household Size [(63658) data v.02 .xlsx]
2. UKSA Letter to Member - Household Size [(63658) v.03 .pdf]

■ **Population****Mr David Nuttall:**[\[63659\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the population of (a) Bury North constituency, (b) the Metropolitan Borough of Bury, (c) the area covered by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and (d) the UK was in each year since 1997.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Letter - Population [(63659) v.03.pdf]

TREASURY■ **Apprentices: Taxation****Tim Farron:**[\[64684\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his Department's policy is on how the money raised by the Apprenticeship Levy will be spent.

Mr David Gauke:

The apprenticeship levy will apply across the UK and will be collected from employers on a UK wide basis.

In England, levy paying employers will be able to access their levy funds through the Apprenticeship Service to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment.

By 2019-20, based on current forecasts, total spending across the UK will exceed what we expect to raise through the levy. Spending on apprenticeships in England will be £2.45 billion, and the Devolved Administrations will receive £460 million.

■ **Bank Services****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[63665\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the number of adult UK citizens without a UK bank account.

Simon Kirby:

The Treasury has made no such estimate. However, independent estimates, such as those reported in the University of Birmingham's Financial Inclusion Annual

Monitoring Report 2016, indicate that approximately 1.71 million adults in the UK do not have access to a bank account in their own name.

The Government is committed to improving access to financial services. Access to a transactional bank account is key to enabling people to manage their money on a day-to-day basis effectively, securely and confidently.

Since September 2016, the nine largest personal current account providers in the UK are legally required to offer basic bank accounts to customers who do not have a bank account or who are ineligible for a bank's standard current account.

■ **Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation**

Owen Smith: [\[64459\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential costs to the public purse of increasing compensation to members of the Equitable Life Payment Scheme.

Owen Smith: [\[64460\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to reopen the Equitable Life Payment Scheme.

Simon Kirby:

After making payments of over £1.1 billion to more than 900,000 policyholders, the Payment Scheme has now closed. There are no plans to reopen the Payment Scheme.

■ **Landfill Tax**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[64488\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of HM Revenue and Customs budget is allocated to investigate landfill tax fraud.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[64528\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many complaints HM Revenue and Customs has received of non-payment of landfill tax in each of the last five years.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[64529\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many visits to landfill sites in the (a) UK and (b) North East HM Revenue and Customs has conducted to check landfill tax payments in the last 12 months.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[64531\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many criminal prosecutions for non-payment or other breaches of the law related to the landfill tax there have been in each of the last five years in the (a) UK and (b) North East.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[64532]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate HM Revenue and Customs has made of the amount of landfill tax outstanding from landfill operators.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) takes a risk-based approach to tackling all non-compliance, including those relating to Landfill Tax fraud. This means that it does not routinely allocate compliance budgets for individual taxes, but instead responds flexibly with civil and criminal investigations based upon the risks involved.

For Landfill Tax, over the past five years HMRC has issued 51 Landfill Tax assessments totalling £94.3m, including 37 civil penalties totalling £2.2m. In addition, since April 2015, HMRC has commenced 78 compliance interventions targeting landfill site operators, and in the last 12 months visited 28 landfill sites.

This work has also been supported by the waste sector taskforce, which has targeted businesses across the supply chain. In 2015-16, the taskforce investigated 250 business, with a further 179 businesses targeted in 2016-17 to date.

HMRC also undertakes criminal investigations, and in September 2015 14 people were arrested as a result of a multi-agency operation into Landfill Tax fraud. This investigation is ongoing. To avoid jeopardising any investigations and/or sources of intelligence, HMRC does not disclose specific regional details.

In October 2016, in its 'Measuring Tax Gaps' 2016 publication, HMRC estimated the Landfill Tax gap to be £150 million in 2014-15.

HMRC does not hold readily accessible information concerning the number of complaints received for non-payment of Landfill Tax.

■ Lloyds Banking Group

Martyn Day:

[63554]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on small investors of the cancellation of the public offer of shares in Lloyds Banking Group.

Martyn Day:

[63555]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reasons the public offer of shares in Lloyds Banking Group was cancelled.

Simon Kirby:

I refer the Honourable Member to the Written Ministerial Statement made by the Chancellor to the House in October 2016 concerning the Government's shareholding in Lloyds which he may find useful.

(<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-10-10/debates/1610102000012/LloydsBankingGroupGovernmentShares?highlight=lloyds%20bank#contribution-3A623DFD-7653-4A00-B93C-3F8E9A05CAB9>)

I should also clarify that retail investors, like any other investor, remain able to buy shares in Lloyds by purchasing shares via a stockbroker.

■ Personal Savings

Ian Murray:

[\[64232\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on the household savings ratio.

Mr David Gauke:

At Autumn Statement, the independent Office for Budget Responsibility produced their first forecast for the UK economy following the referendum on EU membership in June 2016. The OBR forecast the household saving ratio to fall slightly in 2017, before rising in 2018 and remaining stable over the rest of the forecast.

■ Tax Allowances

Angela Rayner:

[\[64682\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the cost to the public purse will be of the decision to keep salary sacrifice schemes in place for school fees for each year until 2020-21.

Mr David Gauke:

The new rules for salary sacrifice schemes include a longer transitional period for school fees, cars and accommodation than other benefits-in-kind. This reflects the longer contractual arrangements that normally apply to these benefits. If there were no protection for school fees, the Exchequer yield would have been approximately £10m higher in 2017-18, a figure which reduces each year to 2020/21.

■ Taxation: Electronic Government

Stuart C. McDonald:

[\[64200\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the timetable is for making available the Making Tax Digital free software; and whether his Department plans to provide financial support to small businesses to cover the cost of purchasing software in the event that the free software does not enable them to be fully compliant with Making Tax Digital.

Mrs Theresa Villiers:

[\[64652\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to make available the free software from HM Revenue and Customs to enable compliance with quarterly reporting obligations being imposed under the Making Tax Digital programme.

Jane Ellison:

HM Revenue and Customs is working closely with the software industry to ensure that a range of software products (including free software) is available before the commencement of Making Tax Digital in April 2018.

The tax system already provides support via various reliefs and deductions for the purchase of hardware and software as well as other expenditure. As part of the

Making Tax Digital consultations, the Government sought views on further financial assistance and support. Given the views expressed, it announced on 31 January that it will continue to consider options for assistance and support alongside the fiscal impacts.

Mrs Theresa Villiers:

[64587]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2016 to Question 57196, when his Department will publish its response to the consultation on Making Tax Digital.

Jane Ellison:

The Government response to the Making Tax Digital consultations was published on 31 January.

■ **Treasury: Brexit**

Dan Jarvis:

[64645]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a revision of his Department's forecast of the annual impact of leaving the EU on the UK after 15 years which was published in his Department's analysis entitled the long-term economic impact of EU membership and the alternatives Cm 9250, published in April 2016, to reflect proposals published in The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, of February 2017.

Mr David Gauke:

The government is undertaking a range of analyses to inform the UK's position for the upcoming EU exit negotiations. We are seeking the best possible arrangement for the United Kingdom and the work being conducted reflects this. The Office for Budget Responsibility will publish updated economic and fiscal projections alongside the Budget on 8 March.

■ **Treasury: Government Contracts**

Jon Trickett:

[64408]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the total (a) number and (b) value of Government contracts that have been contracted out by his Department was in each year since 2010; what the value of pro bono costs was in each such year; and what estimate he has made of the number of work days contracted out in each such year.

Simon Kirby:

Since 2010, the department has routinely published contract information on Contracts Finder. The requested information is available via:

<https://data.gov.uk/data/contracts-finder-archive> for contracts published between 2010 and February 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder> for contracts published since February 2015.

The information maintained on the value of pro bono engagements and the estimated number of work days contracted out in each year is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Communities and Local Government: Mobile Phones

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[63817]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what record his Department keeps of text messages sent on departmental business by officials of his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Department does not hold information on what text messages are sent.

■ Council Housing: Tyne and Wear

Mr Alan Campbell:

[63840]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many people have been registered as council tenants in (a) Tynemouth constituency and (b) North Tyneside Borough in each year since 2010.

Gavin Barwell:

Figures on local authority lettings including those to new tenants are available at local authority level including North Tyneside are published in the Department's Local Authority Housing Statistics at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data>

The local authority housing statistics returns include lettings data is in Section D. Data on total local authority stock, including occupied dwellings, is provided in Section A. This may be taken as an estimate of the total households in local authority housing.

■ Families: Disadvantaged

Lucy Powell:

[63712]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many families with children aged under five have taken part in the Troubled Families programme; and what proportion of the Troubled Families programme budget has been allocated to support those families in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Following feedback from local authorities, the new Troubled Families programme (2015 – 2020) was designed with a broader set of eligibility criteria than the first programme (2012 – 2015) so that local authorities could work with families with children of all ages, including specifically pre-school age children. Data gathered for the first evaluation showed that around 13 per cent of families taking part in the

programme had at least one child under five. Data from the current evaluation shows that the programme includes a larger proportion of families with at least one child under 5 – around 40 per cent of families.

We do not specify how local authorities should allocate Troubled Families Programme funding. Instead, they have the freedom and flexibility to prioritise the families of the greatest concern and cost locally. Full details of how local authorities are funded can be found in the programme's Financial Framework:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/409682/Financial_Framework_for_the_Expanded_Troubled_Families_Programme_april_2015.pdf

■ Housing: Construction

John Healey:

[63900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, by what process the £25 million of new funding to help ambitious authorities in areas of high housing need to plan for new homes and infrastructure announced in the Housing White Paper, published in February 2017, will be allocated; and what conditions will be set on that funding.

Gavin Barwell:

The Government is considering how best to allocate these funds, and will make an announcement in due course.

■ Housing: Ombudsman

Mary Glendon:

[64456]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a new homes ombudsman.

Gavin Barwell:

A new home is not just the largest monetary purchase most people ever make, it is also the largest emotional commitment as people look to provide a safe, good quality home for them and their families. It is therefore vital that as housing supply increases, the quality of new build homes continues to improve so as to avoid some of the issues highlighted in the APPG for Excellence in the Built Environment report.

I am aware of the report's recommendations, and will consider them, including that for a new homes ombudsman.

■ Judaism: Festivals and Special Occasions

Craig Williams:

[63566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what plans the Government has to mark Hanukkah in 2017.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has been proud to celebrate religious festivities and significant dates with our faith communities for many years. Our usual practice is to issue a celebratory message, alongside the Prime Minister, and attend community events where feasible. Downing Street and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office mark faith events throughout the year by holding receptions for faith leaders, dignitaries, international guests and community representatives, which DCLG Ministers attend. We will, in partnership with Downing Street and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, consider our detailed plans for Hanukkah later in the year.

Local Government: Surrey**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[63810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, on what dates officials of his Department have met representatives from Surrey County Council in the last month; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Officials in my department meet regularly with representatives of local government and individual councils. Since the beginning of January, officials have been present in three meetings with Surrey County Council to discuss local government finance - one meeting was held on 9 January, and two meetings were held on 16 January (though one was with representatives from all over England).

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government made a statement to Parliament on Surrey County Council and local government finance on 9 February (HCWS470).

Non-domestic Rates: Licensed Premises**Gill Furniss:**[\[64462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what support his Department is planning to provide to licensed premises to mitigate any effects of the potential increase in business rates for such premises.

Gill Furniss:[\[64463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on investment in licensed premises of higher business rates on the licensed premises sector.

Mr Marcus Jones:

A £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme will provide support for the minority of properties which face an increase in rates as a result of the 2017 revaluation.

My Department is working closely with the Treasury to determine how best to provide further support to businesses facing the steepest increases. We expect to be in a position to make an announcement on this at the Budget, in just two weeks.

At Budget 2016, the Government announced a £6.7 billion package of business rate cuts. This included the doubling of small business rate relief and an increase in the thresholds for relief. As a result, 600,000 small businesses, including eligible licensed premises, will pay no rates at all.

■ Opportunity and Integration Review

Liam Byrne: [\[63789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether the Government plans to publish its integration policy in response to the Casey Review of December 2016.

Mr Marcus Jones:

As my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government said in the House on December 6, Official Report, Column 131, we will come back to the House in the spring with our plans on how we will take forward a new integration strategy in response to the issues raised in the Casey Review.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2016-12-06/debates/FF91364D-4324-4420-943A-5ABCE8C9ADD1/CaseyReport>

■ Public Sector: National Identity

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: [\[63788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to page 18 of the Casey Review, published in December 2016, what the Government's policy is on introducing an oath of allegiance to British values for public office holders.

Mr Marcus Jones:

My Rt Hon Friend, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has made clear he will be studying Dame Louise Casey's Review of integration and opportunity closely.

As part of those considerations, we will consider carefully Dame Louise's recommendation that British values be included in a new oath for those in public office.

The Government will bring forward a new Integration Strategy in the Spring.

■ Repossession Orders: Tyne and Wear

Mr Alan Campbell: [\[63841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many houses have been repossessed in (a) Tynemouth constituency and (b) North Tyneside Borough in each year since 2010.

Gavin Barwell:

Mortgage and landlord repossession statistics are published by the Ministry of Justice.

Figures at local authority level are published in the Mortgage and landlord possession statistical data:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics-january-to-march-2016>

Figures are not available at constituency level.

■ Right to Acquire Scheme

John Healey:

[63909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to introduce a cost floor for homes sold through the right to acquire scheme.

Gavin Barwell:

The Cost Floor for the Right to Buy is designed to safeguard a landlord who has spent money on the acquisition and repair and maintenance of a property.

A provision to provide a similar safeguard for the Right to Acquire is set out in existing legislation.

■ Social Rented Housing: Tyne and Wear

Mr Alan Campbell:

[63842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many families were on social housing waiting lists in (a) Tynemouth constituency and (b) North Tyneside Borough in each year since 2010.

Gavin Barwell:

The numbers of households on local authority waiting lists are available in the Department statistics live table 600, that is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-rents-lettings-and-tenancies>

Figures are not available at constituency level.

■ Starter Home Initiative

John Healey:

[63713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Answer of 20 January 2016 to Question 21620, what assessment he has made of the implications for (a) the number of Starter Homes to be delivered over the course of this Parliament, (b) the proportion of such homes reserved for first-time buyers and (c) the cost of such homes relative to the market price of the publication of *Fixing our broken housing market*, on 7 February 2017.

Gavin Barwell:

Our White Paper *Fixing Our Broken Housing Market* is clear that we are changing our focus to deliver a wider range of affordable housing. We are committed to ensuring there is a range of affordable homes to support people's aspiration to buy a home,

including starter homes. Through our range of Government programmes, we expect to help over 200,000 people become homeowners by the end of the Parliament.

Starter homes will still be exclusively sold to young first-time buyers at a minimum 20 per cent discount on market value.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Arts

Jim Shannon:

[\[64566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to promote the sharing of facilities between different areas of the arts.

Matt Hancock:

The importance of partnerships was one of the key themes of the Government's Culture White Paper which was published in March 2016 and we were clear that better collaboration between cultural sectors and partners at a local, regional and national level will help support communities and their access to culture.

■ Broadband: Infrastructure

Chi Onwurah:

[\[64348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how much information her Department holds on the number of metres of last-mile copper line laid or refurbished over the last five years which was funded from the public purse.

Matt Hancock:

The Department does not hold this information.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[64364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate she has made of the number of metres of copper line laid by British Telecom in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Matt Hancock:

None.

■ Cricket: North West

Conor McGinn:

[\[64598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to promote and develop cricket in (a) St Helens, (b) Merseyside and (c) the North West.

Tracey Crouch:

Since 2010, Sport England has invested £39,097 in cricket projects in St Helens, £305,466 in Merseyside and £3,035,554 in the North West. In addition, Sport

England have recently agreed funding of £7.6m for the ECB to deliver cricket nationally between 2017 and 2021.

■ **Employment: Exercise**

Christina Rees:

[\[64237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she has taken to establish a network of employers to encourage their staff to be more physically active.

Tracey Crouch:

On 9 February this year we published Sporting Future - First Annual Report which confirms that Government is considering how best to take forward work on employers promoting physical activity in the light of publication of the Green Paper on Health and Work in October 2016. The government plans to announce proposals in March 2017.

■ **Foundation for Social Improvement: Contracts**

Mr Steve Reed:

[\[64231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Office for Civil Society engaged in an open tendering process when awarding grants or contracts to the Foundation for Social Improvement.

Mr Rob Wilson:

The Office for Civil Society (OCS) awarded a grant to the Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI) through a competitive grant process to deliver the Small Charities Fundraising Training Programme, and a direct grant to deliver follow-on fundraising training for Local Charities Day 2016. OCS awarded a contract to the FSI through an open tendering process.

■ **Horse Racing**

Conor McGinn:

[\[64595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent estimate her Department has made of the contribution of the horse-racing industry to the economy in the (a) North West and (b) UK.

Tracey Crouch:

Horseracing is enjoyed by many and makes a significant contribution to Britain's economy. A 2013 report from Deloitte for the British Horseracing Authority estimated that British racing has a Great Britain-wide economic impact of £3.45 billion. We do not hold specific figures on the contribution of the horse racing industry to the economy in the North West.

Conor McGinn:

[\[64597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions her Department has had with relevant stakeholders on the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on horse-racing and bloodstock industries in the UK and Ireland.

Tracey Crouch:

The UK's negotiations for exiting the EU will be complex and the Government is focused on securing the best deal for Britain. We continue to engage with businesses and key stakeholders in the horseracing and bloodstock industries. We will listen to their concerns and ensure our new relationship with the EU works for business and consumers.

■ Mobile Phones: Radio Frequencies

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[63992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the (a) effectiveness and (b) competitiveness of the division of usable mobile spectrum between telephone operators in the UK.

Matt Hancock:

The Secretary of State noted the assessment that was published as part of Ofcom's recent consultation on rules for the 2.3 & 3.4 GHz spectrum auction.

Dan Jarvis: [\[64457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what her plans are to ensure that there is sufficient competition in the mobile phone industry after the sale of mobile phone spectrum.

Matt Hancock:

The UK has a competitive mobile communications market and the independent regulator Ofcom is responsible for promoting competition to further the interests of consumers, both before and after the forthcoming spectrum auction.

■ Public Libraries: Voluntary Organisations

Mr David Nuttall: [\[64455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what government funding is available to community groups who wish to take over the running of libraries from local authorities.

Mr Rob Wilson:

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service and are responsible for funding the public library service. Some local authorities do also provide short term funding to assist community groups with running costs or one off grants to take over the running of the library.

The Government is providing support for library services and other public sector organisations to consider alternative funding and delivery models, including public service mutuals which can involve local communities as well as library staff having a stake in the public services.

DEFENCE**■ Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[64491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions his Department has had with NATO on the UK contribution to Operation Resolute Support and the number of UK personnel supporting that operation.

Mike Penning:

The UK has a long term commitment to Afghanistan, with 500 troops deployed as part of NATO's Resolute Support Mission. Our core outputs are improving the capability of the Afghan security institutions, developing the Afghan National Army Officer Academy, mentoring the Afghan Air Force and providing vital support for NATO in Kabul through command of the Kabul Security Force.

We maintain regular dialogue with NATO on the future of the mission in Afghanistan, including through the UK Delegation to NATO, our team working in Resolute Support Headquarters in Kabul, and at meetings of NATO Chief of Defence Staffs, the last of which was held in January. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State also had the opportunity to discuss Afghanistan with fellow NATO Defence Ministers at the NATO Defence Ministerial Meeting, held on 15-16 February.

■ Defence Equipment: Procurement**Mrs Madeleine Moon:**[\[64054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will take steps to correct the totalled data in figure 7 on page 11 of the Financial Summary of the Defence Equipment Plan 2016; and if he will make a statement.

Harriett Baldwin:

There was a formula error in Fig. 7 of the published version of the Equipment Plan. As a result of a formatting change to the table, the total line was incorrect. However, the five lines of numbers above were correct. The issue had already been identified and corrected internally, with a revised version of the Equipment Plan published online on 17 February 2017.

■ Military Bases: Security**Tim Farron:**[\[64613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2017 to Question 59060, what sort of activities his Department defines as physical security breaches.

Mark Lancaster:

The Ministry of Defence defines physical security breaches as incidents relating to the loss, theft, or compromise, or the potential loss, theft, or compromise of classified

physical assets; for example weapons, explosives, ammunition, and other items which are attractive to criminal or terrorist organisations.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Government Contracts**

Jon Trickett:

[\[64405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total (a) number and (b) value of Government contracts that have been contracted out by his Department was in each year since 2010; what the value of pro bono costs was in each such year; and what estimate he has made of the number of work days contracted out in each such year.

Harriett Baldwin:

This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Recruitment**

Andrew Selous:

[\[64468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department operates a ban the box employment policy in respect of ex-offender job applicants with unspent convictions; and how many employees of his Department have unspent convictions.

Mark Lancaster:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is committed to improving diversity of opportunity and creating an inclusive working environment that attracts the best talent, and makes the most of potential skills and productivity.

The MOD is working with the Cabinet Office to implement the principles of the Ban the Box campaign.

The information requested relating to how many Ministry of Defence Service and civilian employees have unspent convictions could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Uber**

Mr Iain Wright:

[\[64371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has spent on (a) Uber for Business and (b) other Uber transactions since 28 October 2016.

Harriett Baldwin:

It is not possible to provide the amount the Ministry of Defence has spent on Uber taxis as individuals are not required to record the companies used when booking travel.

■ NATO

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[64514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the Government's policy is on NATO Transformation.

Mike Penning:

A key commitment from the Wales Summit in 2014 is NATO Adaptation, which builds on the work of Allied Command (Transformation).

Government Ministers regularly discuss the need to reform NATO with their counterparts, and did so again at the NATO Defence Ministerial Meeting on 15/16 February 2017.

The UK continues to push NATO to become a genuinely adaptable Alliance that is less bureaucratic, faster and better at making decisions, and is able to respond more effectively to a wide range of threats, including cyber, hybrid, and international terrorism.

■ NATO: Armed Forces

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[64515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many officers in the armed forces, at what rank and position, are attached to NATO Transformation Command.

Mike Penning:

As at 22 February 2017, there are 61 UK Officers attached to NATO's Supreme Allied Command (Transformation). The information requested can be found in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. UK Officers attached to NATO's Transformation Cmd [64515 - Armed Forces Officers by rank and position attached to NATO Transformation Command.docx]

EDUCATION

■ Adult Education

Mr David Lammy:

[\[63698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 7 February 2017 to Question 61138, on adult education, whether her Department has decided not to publish its approach to lifetime learning for adults.

Robert Halfon:

The Government set out the next steps of its approach to lifelong learning in the Industrial Strategy Green Paper. The Government is committed to encouraging lifelong learning by: testing ambitious new approaches; trialling the use of 'contact moments' people have with Government to promote opportunities to retrain; and to reach out to workers whose industries are rapidly changing or in decline.

■ Department for Education: Brexit**Paul Blomfield:**[\[64542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions she has had with the Department for Exiting the European Union on the contents of the White Paper entitled The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm 9417, published in February 2017.

Joseph Johnson:

The Department for Education is working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union on all aspects of exiting the European Union.

■ Exercise: Pupils**Stephen Timms:**[\[64690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps her Department has taken to promote physical activity among school pupils.

Edward Timpson:

We want all pupils to be healthy and active. That is why PE remains a compulsory subject at all four key stages in the national curriculum, and why since 2013 the government has provided over £600m of ring-fenced funding through the Primary PE and Sport Premium to help improve the quality of PE provision.

This funding is making a big impact. In independent research, schools reported almost universally that the PE and Sport Premium had had a positive impact on pupils' physical fitness, with 84 per cent of schools reporting an increase in pupil engagement in PE and in the levels of participation in extra-curricular activities.

We know however, that there is more to do to, which is why we are using revenue from the soft drinks industry levy to double the primary PE and Sport Premium to £320 million a year from September 2017. This is part of wider government work, including the recent Sports Strategy and Childhood Obesity Plan, to help cut obesity levels and increase rates of physical activity.

■ Nurseries: Teachers**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[64147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to increase the number of early years teachers in nurseries.

Caroline Dinanage:

The Department will be publishing a workforce strategy in due course, which will seek to remove the barriers to attracting, retaining and developing staff.

The strategy will include a focus on what Government can do to help grow the graduate workforce.

■ Pre-school Education

Lucy Powell:

[64680]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate she has made of how much has been allocated from the public purse on average to local authorities for each early years place for a two-year-old eligible for a free early education place.

Caroline Dinanage:

In 2016-17, the national average funding rate that local authorities receive from central government for delivering the two-year-old entitlement is £5.09 per hour per child. From April 2017, the national average funding rate will increase to £5.39 per hour.

Lucy Powell:

[64681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what number and proportion of eligible two-year-olds who benefit from early years education are among the lowest quintile of disadvantaged two-year-olds.

Caroline Dinanage:

The Department does not hold the data requested. The number and proportion of two-year-olds benefitting from funded early education are available in tables 1LA and 5LA in the main tables at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/education-provision-children-under-5-years-of-age-january-2016>

■ Public Sector: Assets

John McDonnell:

[63960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Written Statement of 6 February 2017, HCWS458, who will be overseeing the final value for money assessment in accordance with her Department's Green Book framework during the sale process of public assets.

Joseph Johnson:

The framework for assessing the value for money of the sale of part of the student loan book has been set by HM Treasury, in accordance with Green Book principles. The final assessment will be overseen by the Accounting Officer of the Department for Education.

■ Schools: Haringey

Catherine West:

[64612]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 14 February 2017 to Question 63434, whether she plans to visit any schools in Haringey in the next six months.

Caroline Dinenage:

My Rt. Hon Friend the Secretary of State regularly visits a wide range of schools across the country. She does not currently have plans to visit a school in Haringey in the next six months.

■ Social Services: Children**Tim Loughton:****[64674]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Minister of State for Vulnerable Children and Families' reference to local authorities seeking exemptions during the committee stage of the Children and Social Work Bill on 10 January 2017, if she will publish a list of those local authorities and which exemptions they sought.

Edward Timpson:

No formal requests for use of the power can be made while the Children and Social Work Bill is still being considered by parliament, but we have set out some initial examples of ideas by some of our Partner in Practice local authorities. However, there is no automatic presumption they would be granted. Before any exemption would be allowed, applications would need to go through a rigorous scrutiny process as set out in the Bill.

All of the examples can be found in the published policy statement or Hansard:

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/search/Debates?searchTerm=children%20and%20social%20work%20bill&house=Commons>

http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/files/DEP2016-0760/Power_to_innovate_-_policy_statement.pdf

Tim Loughton:**[64675]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what meetings her Ministers have had with (a) G4S, (b) Serco and (c) Virgin Care on children's social care in the last two years.

Caroline Dinenage:

We do not hold records of any meetings about children's social care between Ministers at the Department for Education and G4S, Serco or Virgin Care in the last two years.

Tim Loughton:**[64676]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will publish the (a) letter sent from the chief social worker to local authorities in October 2016 on the Children and Social Work Bill and (b) responses received.

Edward Timpson:

The letter sent from the Chief Social Worker to local authorities, regarding the Children and Social Work Bill has been placed in the House library, where it is accessible to members of both Houses.

The intent of this letter was to provide local authorities with additional information on the Bill and received no direct responses.

■ Students: Loans

John McDonnell:

[\[63961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Written Statement of 6 February 2017, HCWS458, how the Government plans to securitise the remaining future repayments on student loans as a part of their planned sale process.

Joseph Johnson:

The sale of the rights to the remaining future repayments on the loans in scope of the sale of part of the student loan book, as set out in a Written Statement on 6 February, would be structured as a securitisation. In this structure, the loans are sold to a new independent English-domiciled company ("the Issuer") which issues the notes to investors and makes payments of interest and principal on them.

This structure will enable the Government to maximise value from the sale for the taxpayer by creating separate tranches of securities attractive to a range of potential investors.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture

Jim Shannon:

[\[64584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for the farming sector of the UK leaving the EU; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

Leaving the EU provides us with an opportunity to redesign our agricultural policy so that it works for the UK, making farming more profitable, competitive and environmentally sustainable.

Defra officials are currently undertaking analysis on future implications for farming. To support this, we will be holding a series of events in the coming months to hear as many views as possible across the country.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Recruitment

Andrew Selous:

[\[64470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department operates a ban the box employment policy in respect of ex-offender job applicants with unspent convictions; and how many employees of her Department have unspent convictions.

George Eustice:

Defra is committed to offering job applicants who are ex-offenders equal and fair opportunities. This commitment is supported through membership and operation of the Business in the Community 'Ban the Box' scheme. Following the principles in this

scheme, appropriate pre-appointment checks, including a basic criminal record check, are not made until later in the recruitment process.

However, Defra does not retain details centrally that would allow us to identify employees with unspent convictions so the information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Staff**

Philip Davies:

[\[62955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many former prisoners have been employed by her Department in each of the last five years.

George Eustice:

Defra is committed to offering job applicants who are former offenders equal and fair opportunities. This commitment is supported through membership and operation of the Business in the Community 'Ban the Box' scheme. Following the principles in this scheme, appropriate pre-appointment checks, including a basic criminal record check, are not made until later in the recruitment process.

However, Defra does not retain details centrally that would allow us to identify former-prisoners so the information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Fisheries: Crime**

Tom Watson:

[\[63577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what penalties there are for (a) supplying and (b) serving illegally caught sea bass.

George Eustice:

Any commercial buyers that source fish directly from the fishing industry must be registered, comply with the obligation to submit to the UK authorities a sales note, identifying the specific vessel that caught the fish, and must comply with ongoing requirements on traceability. Failure to comply with these obligations constitutes as a criminal offence that includes an unlimited fine.

■ **Flood Control: South Thanet**

Craig Mackinlay:

[\[63996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much has been spent on flood defences in South Thanet in each of the last five years.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Between April 2011 and March 2016, £31.2 million have been spent in the South Thanet constituency to deliver flood and coastal risk management schemes, better protecting 1,918 properties. The table below summarises spending for each of the last five years.

2015/16	£3,444,630
2014/15	£9,673,122
2013/14	£8,258,145
2012/13	£9,282,870
2011/12	£590,203

■ **Food: Waste**

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[64349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the potential cost to the public purse of introducing mandatory food waste collections by local authorities.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

My Department has not carried out estimates of the cost to the public purse of introducing mandatory food waste collections by local authorities in each of the last five years.

■ **Heating: Solid Fuels**

Jim Shannon:

[\[64585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effect on the environment of wood-burning stoves.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Our National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory estimates that domestic combustion contributes 38% to our PM emissions. Our assessment finds the majority of this is from wood burning, either on an open fire or closed stove.

■ **Landfill: Enforcement Notices**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[64530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many enforcement notices have been taken out against landfill operators in the (a) UK and (b) North East in the last 12 months.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

This is a devolved matter. In England, between 31/1/16 to 31/1/17 the Environment Agency served a total of 5 notices upon landfill operators in England, of which 2 notices were served in the North East

■ Protection of Badgers Act 1992: Criminal Proceedings and Convictions**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[64591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many people were (a) proceeded against and (b) convicted of an offence under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 in each police force area in (i) 2015 and (ii) 2016.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[64592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many people were (a) proceeded against and (b) convicted of an offence under the Deer Act 1991 in each police force area in (i) 2015 and (ii) 2016.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[64648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many people were (a) proceeded against and (b) convicted of an offence under the Wild Animals (Protection) Act 1996 in each police force area in (i) 2015 and (ii) 2016.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The following information was provided by the Ministry of Justice.

The number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts and found guilty at all courts for offences under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, the Deer Act 1991 and the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, in England and Wales, in 2015, can be viewed in the attached table. Publication of 2016 data is planned for May 2017.

Attachments:

1. Defendants proceeded against at Magistrates Court [PQ 64591 64592 64648 - table.pdf]

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**■ Michel Barnier****Andrew Gwynne:** [\[64535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, if his Department will publish correspondence it had with the European Commissioner's chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, on 6 February 2017 on the UK's financial commitments to the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK Government and the European Commission have been clear that there can be no negotiation before notification, and the UK Government does not intend to provide a running commentary.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE■ **State Visits: USA****Catherine West:**[\[64697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the US administration on a State visit to the UK by President Trump since the Prime Minister issued the official invitation.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Prime Minister spoke to President Trump on 14 February, as part of their regular engagement. They discussed a range of issues, including the President's State Visit to the UK. Neither the precise timing nor the content have been agreed.

■ **Syria: Armed Conflict****Mr Roger Godsiff:**[\[64590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if the Government will take steps to ensure that alleged crimes perpetrated by the Syrian Government at Saydnaya detention facility are investigated.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria has a mandate to investigate alleged violations and abuses of human rights in Syria, including at detention facilities such as Saydnaya. Its report of February 2016, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Deaths in Detention in the Syrian Arab Republic" detailed its concerns and it continues to monitor and report on the situation. The Government strongly supports the work of the Commission of Inquiry and has repeatedly called for it to be given access to Syria so it can fully investigate allegations.

Mr Roger Godsiff:[\[64651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Government plans to raise with the (a) Government of Syria and (b) UN the need for unhindered access by independent international monitors to all places of detention in Syria.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

During the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of Syria in October 2016, the UK urged the Syrian regime to grant unhindered access to independent human rights monitors, including the UN Commission of Inquiry. We have also discussed the plight of detainees with UN officials. UN Human Rights Council resolutions on Syria, which the UK co-sponsored, call for the appropriate international monitoring bodies to be granted immediate access without undue restriction to all detainees and for the Syrian authorities to publish a list of all detention facilities.

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[\[64688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if the Government will prioritise the issue of extrajudicial executions and torture in detention in its discussions with (a) the Syrian authorities and (b) states that support the Syrian Government, in its role as a member of the International Syria Support Group.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

At the UN Human Rights Council, the UK asked the Syrian regime about unlawful detentions during the Universal Periodic Review of Syria in October 2016. Within the Review, we also questioned the regime about torture and disappearances of detainees from formal and informal detention centres in areas under state control and called for the release of those unlawfully detained. The UK as a member of the International Syria Support Group raised its concerns about detainees, and the Group called for any party holding detainees to protect their health and safety in its statement of 17 May 2016.

■ **USA: Judiciary**

Catherine West:

[\[64610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has received recent representation from (a) parliamentarians and (b) members of the public on the independence of the judiciary in the US.

Sir Alan Duncan:

We have not received recent representations on this issue.

HEALTH

■ **Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs: Misuse****Stephen Timms:**[\[64691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many patients in (a) England, (b) Greater London and (c) the London Borough of Newham have been treated by the NHS for (i) drug and (ii) alcohol abuse in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

The following tables show the number of individuals in contact with specialist treatment services citing problematic drug or alcohol use in England, London and Newham in each year since 2010.

National	Opiate		Non-opiate		Non-opiate and alcohol		Alcohol only		Total	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
2009-10	170,032	55%	24,557	8%	28,992	9%	88,086	28%	311,667	100%
2010-11	169,144	55%	23,613	8%	28,223	9%	88,020	28%	309,000	100%
2011-12	162,435	54%	22,982	8%	27,732	9%	86,416	29%	299,565	100%
2012-13	157,959	53%	23,975	8%	27,627	9%	87,544	29%	297,105	100%
2013-14	155,852	52%	25,570	8%	28,871	10%	91,651	30%	301,944	100%
2014-15	152,964	52%	25,025	8%	28,128	10%	89,107	30%	295,224	100%
2015-16	149,807	52%	25,814	9%	28,187	10%	85,035	29%	288,843	100%
London	Opiate		Non-opiate		Non-opiate and alcohol		Alcohol only		Total	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
2009-10	25,032	50%	5,839	12%	7,412	15%	11,542	23%	49,825	100%
2010-11	24,846	51%	5,295	11%	7,278	15%	11,421	23%	48,840	100%
2011-12	23,371	51%	4,990	11%	6,601	14%	10,683	23%	45,645	100%
2012-13	22,270	49%	5,082	11%	6,590	15%	11,191	25%	45,133	100%

2013-14	21,892	47%	5,315	11%	6,893	15%	12,503	27%	46,603	100%
2014-15	21,456	47%	5,305	12%	6,401	14%	12,716	28%	45,878	100%
2015-16	20,441	46%	5,277	12%	6,117	14%	12,289	28%	44,124	100%

Newham	Opiate		Non-opiate		Non-opiate and alcohol		Alcohol only		Total	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
2009-10	1,031	58%	166	9%	163	9%	425	24%	1,785	100%
2010-11	1,080	56%	194	10%	208	11%	456	24%	1,938	100%
2011-12	1,048	62%	134	8%	173	10%	343	20%	1,698	100%
2012-13	1,003	59%	111	7%	186	11%	390	23%	1,690	100%
2013-14	1,000	63%	127	8%	133	8%	323	20%	1,583	100%
2014-15	923	63%	141	10%	104	7%	290	20%	1,458	100%
2015-16	867	52%	220	13%	194	12%	390	23%	1,671	100%

The commissioning of drug and alcohol treatment services in England is undertaken by local authorities and the services are provided by a combination of National Health Service or third sector providers.

The National Drug Treatment Monitoring System collects data from drug and alcohol treatment services across England and divides people in treatment into the four substance groups described above.

■ Ambulance Services: Standards

Stephen Timms:

[\[64694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the average NHS ambulance response times in (a) England, (b) Greater London and (c) the London Borough of Newham were in each year since 2010.

Mr Philip Dunne:

This information is not available in the format requested. NHS England publishes data on the performance of ambulance trusts in respect of the number of Category A Red One and Red Two calls responded to within eight minutes and the number of Category A calls resulting in an ambulance arriving at the scene of the incident against the 19 minute standard.

This data is published on a monthly basis at both an England national level and at individual ambulance trust level. Latest data for December 2016 for England and London Ambulance Service NHS Trust is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/ambulance-quality-indicators/>

Data are not available at regional or London Borough level.

■ Antidepressants

Tim Loughton:

[64672]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many prescriptions for anti-depressant medication were issued in England in each of the last 10 years to (a) adults and (b) children.

David Mowat:

The data available has no patient level information; therefore the breakdown of prescriptions for adults and children is not available.

Antidepressant drugs are classified in the British National Formulary (BNF) section 4.3 antidepressant drugs using the classification system prior to edition 70.

Data on the number of prescription items for antidepressants is provided below.

Total number of antidepressant prescription items written in the United Kingdom and dispensed in the community in England, 2006 to 2015, for BNF Section 4.3 antidepressants.

YEAR	PRESCRIPTION ITEMS (000s)
2006	31,038.0
2007	33,839.6
2008	35,960.5
2009	39,140.5
2010	42,788.0
2011	46,677.8
2012	50,167.2
2013	53,326.6
2014	57,147.9
2015	61,021.6

Source: Prescription Cost Analysis provided by NHS Digital.

Tim Loughton: [\[64673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the side effects of long-term use of anti-depressants.

Nicola Blackwood:

Antidepressants are an important group of medicines which help patients who suffer depressive illness and anxiety disorders. As with all medicines, antidepressants may cause side effects in some individuals and information on side effects is included in the product information for prescribers (the Summary of Product Characteristics) and patients (the Patient Information Leaflet).

The safety of the use of antidepressants in routine clinical practice, including in long term use, is continually monitored by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The MHRA monitors all data including reports of suspected adverse drug reactions submitted by health professionals, patients and carers through the Yellow Card scheme as well as published and unpublished data. As new data emerges it is carefully evaluated and, where appropriate, product information for prescribers and patients is updated and advice issued. There have been no recent changes to product information in relation to the long term safety of antidepressants.

■ Cancer

Mr Stewart Jackson: [\[64458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment has been made of the potential effect on the four-week diagnostic standard for cancer of any increase in the demand for endoscopy services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Stewart Jackson: [\[64596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to recommendation 24 of the Independent Cancer Taskforce's report, Achieving World-Class Outcomes, published in May 2016, what progress has been made on implementing the new four-week diagnostic standard for cancer in (a) Peterborough and (b) England since the publication of that report; and if he will make a statement.

David Mowat:

Health Education England has pledged to fund the training of 200 non-medical endoscopists (NMEs) to significantly increase endoscopy capacity in England. The first cohort began training at the end of January 2016 and the second in April 2016 to deliver 40 NMEs. Following a successful evaluation, a further 40 NMEs began training in January 2017.

The potential impact of the 28 day standard is being tested in five sites; Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust. Each site is working closely with

their clinical commissioning group and NHS England is committed to full implementation of the standard by 2020.

NHS England recognises the current pressures on endoscopy services and the results of the pilots will inform how the new standard is designed and implemented. NHS England will evaluate the first phase of the project in spring 2017. Alongside this they are developing a new system to collect data to monitor the new standard which they expect to be available from April 2018.

■ Carers

Mims Davies:

[\[64230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the steps taken by organisations to support carers to increase agile working practices.

David Mowat:

In 2016, the Department carried out an extensive call for evidence, including a roundtable event with employers, to inform the development of a new Carers Strategy. As part of this exercise, the Department reviewed many examples of employers which have implemented workplace policies to support employees with caring responsibilities, and the growing evidence base on the benefits to businesses and carers of flexible working arrangements.

Earlier this month, the Department for Work and Pensions published Fuller Working Lives: A Partnership Approach, which sets out a range of ongoing partnership work with employers to support working carers aged over 50 and to continue to grow the evidence base in this area.

■ Clinical Commissioning Groups: Pay

Rosie Cooper:

[\[64355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, who is responsible for agreeing salary increases for executive, GP and lay members of a clinical commissioning group's governing body; and whether NHS England or his Department is required to sign off salary increases above a specified amount or proportion of existing salary.

Mr Philip Dunne:

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are independent statutory employing organisations, which operate their own remuneration committee arrangements and are responsible for the determination of remuneration levels for the majority of their employees.

For the most senior appointments made by CCGs, including Accountable Officer appointments, there are additional processes to be observed, introduced in June 2015, which require that for any senior employee where remuneration is proposed or anticipated to exceed £142,500 per annum, pro-rata, CCGs are required to consult Department of Health Ministers. This requires the CCG Remuneration Committee concerned to submit a formal business case for scrutiny, review and a

recommendation to be made by NHS England, before submission to the Department for Ministerial consideration.

If the appointment does not exceed £142,500 per annum, pro-rata, then no further approvals are required and the CCG Remuneration Committee can determine the remuneration for the senior appointment concerned in accordance with published remuneration guidance which has been in operation since 2012/13. Whilst recognising that CCGs are independent statutory employing organisations, guidance for CCGs in this regard strongly encourages compliance with these arrangements and the need to ensure value for taxpayers in making any senior appointment.

Guidance is published on the remuneration of officers in the CCG:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Remuneration-guidance-final.pdf>

■ Colorectal Cancer: Screening

Mr Stewart Jackson:

[64518]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the target uptake rate is for the bowel cancer screening programme in England; how many clinical commissioning groups are meeting that target uptake rate; and if he will make a statement.

David Mowat:

The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening programme is a biennial programme, in which eligible men and women are invited every two years to be screened.

The baseline performance for the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme, defined as the percentage of people aged 60-74 in a population eligible for bowel screening at a given point in time who were screened adequately within the previous 2.5 years, was set at 57.1% in the 2016/17. Published data from 2016 shows that providers in 75 out of 152 local authority areas are meeting or exceeding the baseline of 57.1%.

■ Eltham Community Hospital: X-rays

Clive Efford:

[64357]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many X-rays have been carried out at Eltham Community Hospital since that hospital opened; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Philip Dunne:

NHS England publishes monthly information about diagnostic imaging tests carried out on National Health Service patients, including plain radiography. This information is at the level of NHS trust, not individual hospital sites within trusts.

However, NHS England advises that the diagnostic suite at Eltham Community Hospital has not been brought into commission and no procedures have been undertaken since it was opened in 2015. Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group is working with local partners to ensure that best use is made of the facilities at Eltham Community Hospital.

■ Family Nurse Partnership Programme

Lucy Powell:

[64679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with how many families the family nurse partnership has worked (a) nationally and (b) in each local authority area that it has been in place in each year since that partnership scheme was established.

Nicola Blackwood:

Figures for the number of families assisted by the Family Nurse Partnership are only held centrally for the past three years. They are as follows:

	2014/15	2015/16
Number of families	13,212	15,789

The above is national data. Figures by local authority are not held centrally, but can be obtained from the Family Nurse Partnership National Unit at:

<http://fnp.nhs.uk/commission-fnp/national-unit-leadership>

■ Fast Food: Packaging

Jim Shannon:

[64583]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fast food wrappers do not contain substances which are harmful to human health.

Nicola Blackwood:

Legislation requires that all packaging in contact with food must not transfer harmful chemicals into that food. The onus is on food businesses to ensure that the fast food packaging they use is compliant with the legislation. Local enforcement authorities carry out checks to ensure compliance and any products that do not comply are withdrawn from sale.

■ Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group: Hospital Beds

Clive Efford:

[64358]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the cost to Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group is of commissioning 17 beds for patients preparing to return home from St Mary's Hospital, Sidcup; and if he will make a statement.

David Mowat:

The Department does not hold this information centrally.

Clive Efford:

[64359]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many beds Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group has commissioned for respite or rehabilitation of patients returning home from hospital stays; and what the costs are of that activity at (a) Eltham Community Hospital and (b) each other location within that Group's area; and if he will make a statement.

David Mowat:

The Department does not hold this information centrally.

■ **Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group: Pay**

Rosie Cooper:

[64356]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what salary increases have been awarded to (a) executive, (b) GP and (c) lay members of Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group's governing body in (i) 2013-14, (ii) 2014-15, (iii) 2015-16 and (iv) 2016-17.

Mr Philip Dunne:

In accordance with NHS England guidance and accounting rules, details of the salaries of Executive, general practitioner and Lay Members of Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Governing Body are published annually in the nationally prescribed format in the Remuneration Report that forms part of the Annual Report of the CCG which is publicly available from the CCG website at:

<http://www.liverpoolccg.nhs.uk/>

and by request. The annual report and remuneration report for 2016/17 is expected to be published in June 2017, following external audit and in accordance with the 2016/17 national audit timetable.

For 2016/17, the Remuneration Committee determined that a 1% pay increase for the Chief Officer and Chief Finance Officer would apply from 1 April 2016 and a 1% pay increase for the Chief Nurse would apply from 1 October 2016. No increases to other Governing Body Members were approved for 2016/17.

■ **Mental Health Services**

Luciana Berger:

[64641]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2017 to Question 63032, and with reference to the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health of February 2016, what the reason is for the time taken for the publication of the Mental Health Workforce Strategy.

Nicola Blackwood:

It is important to ensure this strategy is right and Health Education England has made significant progress, working with partners across the mental health system, to develop a costed multi-disciplinary workforce strategy.

■ **NHS Property Services**

Dr Poulter:

[R] [64600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 9 February 2017 to Question 63167, what the (a) maintenance and (b) other associated costs of the 217 vacant properties held by NHS Property Services are.

Mr Philip Dunne:

For the 217 vacant properties held by NHS Property Services (NHSPS):

- The budgeted total cost of maintenance for 2016/17 is £1.5 million; and
- The budgeted total for other associated costs for 2016/17 is £7.9 million.

This is based on the following assumptions:

- Full-year budgeted expenditure, excluding non-cash items such as depreciation and management fees; and
- The full-year budgeted figures do not include the savings achieved by disposing of a vacant property part of the way through the year.

The 217 properties constitute 6.9% of the total NHSPS portfolio.

NHS Property Services is working closely with NHS England and the Department to finalise a 'Vacant Space Hand Back Scheme', which is designed to promote efficient use of the health estate and enable commissioners and tenants to save money on their estate costs.

■ NHS: Pay

Dr Poulter:

[R] [\[64685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 6 February 2017 to Question 62814, on NHS Pay, what estimate he has made of what the real-terms change in the salary has been for a member of NHS staff who was at the top of their pay band between 2009-10 and 2015-16, who remained in the same job, worked as a full-time employee and was not in receipt of unsocial hours pay (a) on average across all Agenda for Change staff groups and (b) by Agenda for Change pay band.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The following table shows:

Annual increase in Agenda for Change (AfC) band maxima - adjusted for the Consumer Price Index

AfC BAND	2009/10 TO 2015/16	ANNUAL AVERAGE
1	-4.4%	-0.7%
2	-5.4%	-0.9%
3	-7.0%	-1.2%
4	-9.5%	-1.6%
5	-8.9%	-1.5%
6	-9.5%	-1.6%
7	-9.5%	-1.6%
8a	-9.5%	-1.6%

AFC BAND	2009/10 TO 2015/16	ANNUAL AVERAGE
8b	-9.5%	-1.8%
8c	-10.4%	-1.8%
8d	-10.4%	-1.8%
9	-10.4%	-1.8%
All bands	-8.2%	-1.4%

This change in the value of earnings is not representative of the great majority of National Health Service staff who were in post over this period. In 2009/10 only around 40% of Agenda for Change staff were at the top of their pay band. Many of these would have either left the NHS or been promoted by 2016.

Agenda for Change staff employed in both 2010 and 2015 benefited from median earnings growth of 2.2% to 2.9% annually, depending on staff group. Adjusting for the Consumer Price Index gives an average increase of -0.2% to 0.5% per year.

In 2015/16 48% of Agenda for Change staff were at the top of their pay band. Most Agenda for Change staff are therefore still eligible to receive incremental pay of around 3% on average on top of annual pay awards.

■ NHS: Procurement

Norman Lamb: [\[64361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of changes in the value of supplier costs in the NHS as a result of the change in the value of sterling against the (a) euro and (b) dollar since 23 June 2016

Norman Lamb: [\[64362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the change in the value of sterling against the (a) euro and (b) dollar since 23 June 2016 on the ability of the NHS to achieve the efficiency target set out in the Carter review of NHS efficiency.

Mr Philip Dunne:

It is not possible to assess meaningfully changes in the value of supplier costs in the National Health Service as a result of the change in the value of sterling as we do not collect data that would show from whom trusts are buying products and, more importantly, where their suppliers' supply chains are and thus the extent to which they are exposed to such changes.

Currency rates constantly fluctuate, and this is one of many commercial risks we would expect suppliers to manage when bidding to join an NHS framework. The Department is working with the NHS Business Services Authority to make sure

suppliers keep to the prices set out in contracts for the full length of those contracts in order to help mitigate the impact of fluctuation.

The Operational Productivity Directorate in NHS Improvement is working to support NHS trusts to deliver the £5 billion of efficiencies by 2020-21 as identified in Lord Carter's final report. The Directorate has ten major clinically and professionally led projects to help trusts deliver this ambition. Where relevant, projects have identified currency fluctuation as a risk and have mitigating actions in place to ensure they can continue to deliver efficiencies.

The price of branded medicines is controlled through the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme and statutory medicines pricing scheme, and so we do not anticipate any increase in prices as a result of currency fluctuations. For generic medicines not supplied through an NHS framework, we expect competitive forces in the market to continue to ensure prices are kept low.

■ **Nurses: Pay**

Steve McCabe:

[\[63725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 7 February 2017 to Question 62427, on nurses: pay, what other recommendations or advice his Department takes into account when determining pay awards.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Government make its determinations on pay awards informed by recommendations from the independent NHS Pay Review Body. The Government takes into account all the evidence submitted to the NHS Pay Review Body by a range of stakeholders including the Agenda for Change trades unions, NHS Employers and NHS Providers on behalf of National Health Service employing organisations, and HM Treasury.

■ **Obesity: Surgery**

Justin Madders:

[\[64503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many patients waited more than 18 weeks for bariatric surgery in (a) 2015-16, (b) 2014-15, (c) 2013-14 and (d) 2012-13.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ **Palbociclib**

Sir Simon Burns:

[\[64599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what meetings representatives from NICE (a) have had and (b) plan to have with Pfizer during the consultation period for palbociclib (Ibrance) since the publication of the draft guidance on that drug on 3 February 2017.

Nicola Blackwood:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has advised that a meeting with Pfizer to discuss the appraisal of palbociclib took place on 22 February 2017.

■ **Prisons: Rehabilitation****Luciana Berger:**[\[64642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much has been spent from the public purse on drug rehabilitation services in prisons in each year since 2010.

Nicola Blackwood:

Due to the integrated approach to prison healthcare services commissioning by NHS England, this information is not available.

■ **Schizophrenia: Medical Treatments****Jim Shannon:**[\[64582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions he has had with the Royal College of Nursing and other health bodies on a virtual reality game to detect and treat schizophrenia.

Nicola Blackwood:

No such discussions have taken place.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has not issued any guidance on this precise type of treatment. In the absence of guidance from NICE, commissioners should make decisions on the availability of individual treatments based on the evidence available to them. Existing NICE guidance on 'Psychosis and schizophrenia in adults: prevention and management' will be reviewed in 2018.

■ **Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme****Tracy Brabin:**[\[64594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to amend the Vaccine Damage Payment Act 1979 to make people who have had adverse reactions to the Pandemrix vaccination eligible for the Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme.

Nicola Blackwood:

The Vaccine Damage Payment Act 1979 is based on diseases not specific vaccines.

A Vaccine Damage Payment can be considered for those who are severely disabled as a result of a vaccination against those diseases listed in the 1979 Act and those diseases that have been specified since 1979 by statutory instrument. There are no plans to change this.

The list of specified diseases covered by the Act includes Pandemic influenza A (H1N1) swine flu, where vaccination was administered from 10 October 2009 to 31 August 2010.

Tracy Brabin:

[\[64695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of compensation available to people who have become disabled as a result of taking the Pandemrix vaccination; and if he will make a statement.

Nicola Blackwood:

There are on-going personal injury claims against the vaccine manufacturer of Pandemrix. We cannot comment whilst these proceedings are on-going.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Detainees

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[64416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum applicants were detained in each year between 2013 and 2017 whilst appealing a rejection of their application; and how many of those applicants were successful in appealing that decision.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[64461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average time spent in detention by an asylum applicant was in each year from 2013 to 2017.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[64636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children have been detained by UKVI after submitting an asylum application in each year since 2013.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[64668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum applicants have been detained in each year since 2013, and how many of those applicants were detained in (a) a short-term facility, and (b) an Immigration Removal Centre.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The information requested is not recorded on Home Office systems. We do report on the number of decisions made on asylum claims, and, separately, on the number of persons detained for immigration purposes.

However, we do not have a combined set of data which would allow the question to be answered, and to cross-match these data sets over the period requested (since January 2014) would require a manual data matching exercise.

■ City of London Police: Standards

Lyn Brown:

[\[64074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 4 February 2016 to Question 2383, whether the City of London Police remains subject to a ministerially approved improvement plan.

Brandon Lewis:

The City of London Police (CoLP) is subject to ongoing scrutiny, in terms of both performance and financial management of the Action Fraud and the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau capabilities; this is an explicit condition of the funding arrangements.

CoLP was also subject to a Ministerially approved improvement plan, which was overseen by officials, who meet CoLP on a regular basis to monitor progress and to ensure delivery. The plan was closed on 9 June 2016.

■ **Cybercrime**

Lyn Brown: [\[63910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many cyber specials there are in police forces in England Wales; and how many of those officers have been recruited since January 2015.

Lyn Brown: [\[63928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many National Crime Agency Special Officers there are whose area of expertise is cybercrime; and how many such officers were recruited since January 2015.

Brandon Lewis:

Cyber Specials can be either Special Constables or volunteers.

Based on the latest information provided by police forces, there are at least 40 Cyber Specials in police forces across England and Wales. At least 21 have been recruited since January 2015.

The NCA currently have 22 Specials whose area of expertise is cyber crime. 19 of those were recruited since January 2015.

■ **Drugs: South Thanet**

Craig Mackinlay: [\[63998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many drug-related (a) convictions and (b) arrests have been made in South Thanet constituency in each year since 2010.

Brandon Lewis:

(a) Data on convictions are the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice. They have informed us they do not hold information on the location of offences at parliamentary constituency level that led to convictions at court centrally.

(b) The Home Office does not hold the requested information on arrests centrally.

The Home Office collect and publish data on the number of arrests for drug offences broken down by police force area only, and cannot separately identify those arrests that took place in the South Thanet constituency.

The number of arrests for drug offences, by police force area, can be found in the statistical publication 'Police Powers and Procedures':

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2016

Craig Mackinlay:

[63999]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the value was of drugs seized in South Thanet constituency in each year since 2010.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Home Office does not hold the requested information centrally.

The Home Office collect and publish data on the number and quantity of drugs seized by police force area. Information on the value of each seizure is not collected centrally.

The number and quantity of drugs seized, broken down by police force area, can be found in the statistical publication 'Drug seizures in England and Wales':

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seizures-of-drugs-in-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2016

■ European Arrest Warrants

Dr Julian Lewis:

[63776]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications have been made for the extradition of residents in the UK under the provisions of the European Arrest Warrant in each of the last five years; which countries made those applications; and how many of those applications (a) were granted, (b) were rejected and (c) are still under consideration by UK courts.

Brandon Lewis:

Each year the National Crime Agency publishes statistics on the number of European Arrest Warrants (EAW) received by the UK. These figures include a breakdown of the number of surrenders and arrests, number of EAWs received from each country by nationality of the person requested and offence. The figures are published at:

www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/european-arrest-warrant-statistics

Dr Julian Lewis:

[63777]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what standards of evidence are required in UK courts for an application for extradition under a European Arrest Warrant to be granted; and what the safeguards are to prevent UK residents being extradited to another EU country, without evidence being produced against them in UK courts.

Dr Julian Lewis:

[63778]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what standards of prison (a) conditions and (b) accommodation must be met by a country applying under the European Arrest Warrant system for a UK resident to be extradited, before a UK court will agree to such an application; and if she will make a statement.

Dr Julian Lewis:

[63779]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what criteria a resident of the UK would have to meet to resist the application of a European Arrest Warrant for extradition to another EU country.

Brandon Lewis:

A decision whether to order surrender under a European Arrest Warrant (EAW) is made by a UK judge who considers all relevant legal issues, including whether the conduct would amount to a criminal offence in the UK, applicable bars to extradition such as double jeopardy, politically motivated requests and whether the case against the accused is sufficiently advanced. The requesting State must meet human rights standards, which includes adequate living conditions for the accused. If there is doubt, the UK seeks assurances and ultimately the judge may refuse the EAW if not satisfied these standards will be met.

■ Fire Stations

Ian C. Lucas:

[64686]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish a list of all three pump fire stations in England, by name and local authority.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office does not collect information on pump stations. Official statistics on the total number of fire stations in England are available in Table 1403 here

www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables#other

■ Home Office: Senior Civil Servants

Jon Trickett:

[62887]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) ethnicity, (b) gender, (c) disability status, (d) educational background and (e) socio-economic status is of the three most senior officials of her Department.

Sarah Newton:

Diversity data is personal information, disclosure which could identify an individuals' personal data would be in breach of our obligations under the Data Protection Act, 1998. Information in respect of ethnicity, gender and disability is confidentially collated and is strictly regulated.

Diversity data is reported on an anonymised basis so that it is impossible to link the details to individuals, identifying this information for the three most senior officials would make it easy to link the details to individuals therefore we are unable to provide the information requested.

■ Offences against Children

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[64055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average length of time was for people arrested by Operation Pallial to be kept on uncharged bail; and what the average length of time was from charging people under the operation to the start of their trial.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[64056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many former care staff (a) have been interviewed under Operation Pallial and (b) are under caution or arrest who have been accused of child abuse or child cruelty.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[64057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost of Operation Pallial has been to the public purse; and what the proportion of such costs are (a) police costs, (b) CPS costs and (c) court costs.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[64059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many women have been (a) arrested, (b) charged and (c) prosecuted under Operation Pallial.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[64305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost to the public purse has been of (a) Operation Pallial's investigations into Peter Steen, Dafydd Vevar, Alan Challenor, Keith Evans, Kelvin Horrobin, Denis Jones and Aideen Jones, formerly residential care staff of Bryn Alyn Community, and subsequent (b) police, (c) CPS and (d) court costs.

Brandon Lewis:

Operation Pallial is an independent investigation by the National Crime Agency. The policing costs of the investigation were £3.7 million covering the financial years 2012/13 until 2015/16. The estimated costs for 2016/17 are £730,000. The Home Office does not hold information on the costs in respect of individual strands of this operation or the costs relating to the Crown Prosecution Service or the courts.

Under Operation Pallial one woman has been arrested, charged and prosecuted. A total of 47 former care staff have been interviewed under caution, either post arrest, or as a consequence of Voluntary Attendance in relation to child abuse or child cruelty.

On average the length of time between arrest and charge has been 11 months, with a further 11 months between charge and trial at Crown Court.

■ Passports

Tim Farron:

[\[63861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passports have been lost in the post in each of the last six years.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The table below shows the number of passports lost by Her Majesty's Passport Office (HM Passport Office) delivery partner DX from January 2011 until September 2016. The data for the period from September 2016 onwards is currently being verified and therefore is unavailable.

HM Passport Office records and cancels any passport lost through delivery, and the customer is issued with a new passport at no extra cost.

This is Management Information and subject to change. These statistics have been taken from a live operational database. As such, the numbers may change as information on that system is updated.

YEAR	LOSSES	PASSPORTS PRINTED	% PASSPORT LOSSES AGAINST PASSPORTS PRINTED
2011	173	4,971,659	0.003
2012	214	5,315,465	0.004
2013	186	5,609,530	0.003
2014	234	6,228,867	0.004
2015	298	6,762,898	0.004
2016 Jan – Sept 16	186	5,898,335	0.003

John Spellar:

[\[64593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether UK citizens will require new passports after the UK leaves the EU; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 7 December 2016 to the question from my hon. Member for Romford, UIN 55575.

■ Police: Training

Lyn Brown:

[\[63937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many officers have completed the College of Policing (a) Digital Communications, Social Media, Cybercrime and Policing, (b) Cybercrime and digital policing - an introduction, (c) Cybercrime and

digital policing - First responder Training, (d) Cybercrime and digital policing - Investigation, (e) Communications Data in Investigations, (f) Introduction to Communications Data and Cybercrime, (g) Communications Data - Introduction to the Internet and (h) Communications Data and Cybercrime - Introduction to Law and Procedure e-learning packages.

Brandon Lewis:

The College of Policing was established in 2012 as the professional body for everyone who works for the police service in England and Wales. The College collects information on course attendance and has provided the data for this response. The number of officers and police staff who have undertaken each training course since 2013 is set out in the table below.

COURSE	NUMBER OF OFFICERS AND STAFF COMPLETING THE COURSE SINCE 2013
(a) Digital Communications, Social Media, Cybercrime and Policing	79,719
(b) Cybercrime and digital policing - an introduction	116,096
(c) Cybercrime and digital policing - First responder Training	105,747
(d) Cybercrime and digital policing – Investigation	88,178
(e) Communications Data in Investigations	7,713
(f) Introduction to Communications Data and Cybercrime	11,825
(g) Communications Data - Introduction to the Internet	9,428
(h) Communications Data and Cybercrime - Introduction to Law and Procedure e-learning packages.	5,970

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Department for International Development: Government Contracts

Jon Trickett:

[\[64407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the total (a) number and (b) value of Government contracts that have been contracted out by her Department

was in each year since 2010; what the value of pro bono costs was in each such year; and what estimate she has made of the number of work days contracted out in each such year.

Rory Stewart:

Spend via contracts is approximately 13% of DFID's annual spend with all partners. The total number and value of centrally awarded Government contracts contracted out by DFID in each year since 2010 is shown below:

YEAR	NUMBER OF CONTRACTS	TOTAL VALUE AWARDED
2010/11	92	£277,462,339
2011/12	121	£435,308,168
2012/13	107	£772,914,731
2013/14	182	£814,115,219
2014/15	160	£1,002,033,206
2015/16	136	£1,018,095,774

The information on pro bono costs and work days is not held in the form requested and can only be collated at disproportionate cost.

■ **Palestinian Authority**

Ian Austin:

[\[64352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, when her Department will make its next assessment of the Palestinian Authority's compliance with the Partnership Principles set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and the Palestinian Authority.

Rory Stewart:

The UK is currently undertaking its assessment of the Palestinian Authority's commitment to the Partnership Principles. These assessments provide robust analysis of countries' commitments to these principles and are used to inform dialogue between DFID and partner governments.

■ **Palestinians: EU Aid**

Ian Austin:

[\[64353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which body audits the PEGASE scheme; and which regulatory authority supervises those auditors.

Rory Stewart:

The PEGASE scheme is audited by two firms. Ernst & Young are providing the ex-ante audits. The firm is authorised and regulated by the UK Solicitors Regulation

Authority (SRA). Mazars, Paris (with their local partner El Wafa) are conducting ex-post audits. Mazars are regulated by Ordre des Experts Comptables – Région Paris Ile de France.

Ian Austin:

[\[64354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether PEGASE uses a dedicated bank account to pay salaries to West Bank civil servants.

Rory Stewart:

The PEGASE system uses a dedicated sub-account within the PA's Single Treasury Account. The UK has a further sub-account to pay the salaries of West Bank health and education public servants. The PA payroll is checked by independent auditors, and UK payments made to all eligible beneficiaries are traced through the verification process.

■ **Palestinians: Overseas Aid**

Ian Austin:

[\[64614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the findings of the Overseas Development Institute report entitled Evaluative review of the Statebuilding Grant and the Palestinian Government Facility - DFID Palestinian programme, published by her Department in November 2015, that increased employment by the Palestinian Authority combined with its policies of paying salaries to convicted terrorists while they are in prison, and holding public sector jobs open for them until they are released from prison, appear to have promoted terrorism in the period from 1998 to 2011.

Rory Stewart:

The ODI report identified important progress that has been made in supporting the fiscal stability of the Palestinian Authority, and made clear that DFID support was instrumental in reducing the chances of economic collapse of the Palestinian economy and violent escalation. The ODI report did not find, conclude or suggest that “paying salaries to convicted terrorists while they are in prison, and holding public sector jobs open for them until they are released from prison, appear[s] to have promoted terrorism in the period from 1998 to 2011” – this is misrepresentation of the research, its analysis and findings. The report made practical suggestions about how DFID could further improve its impact, which were taken into account in the design of the new programme of support to the PA.

Ian Austin:

[\[64650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her announcement of 16 December 2017 on future UK support to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, whether the Government plans no longer to provide funds to the Palestinian Authority to pay salaries of (a) any Gaza public servants or (b) such servants who are unable to work.

Rory Stewart:

UK aid to the Palestinian Authority now only goes to the salaries of Palestinian Authority health and education public servants in the West Bank all of whom are able to work. No payments are made to Gaza public servants. These changes provide better value for money, with British taxpayers' money able to deliver more essential services and have a bigger impact on the ground for Palestinians.

■ **Refugees: Children****Stephen Timms:**[\[64692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to protect child refugees from exploitation, human trafficking and sexual violence.

Rory Stewart:

Through our support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, we protect children from violence, abuse, and exploitation. DFID also has specific programming targeting displaced children. For example, UK Aid in Syria and the region has provided over 920,000 children with psychosocial support, such as mental health care or psychosocial counselling.

■ **Sierra Leone: Non-governmental Organisations****Ann Clwyd:**[\[64072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2017 to Question 54679, whether her Department has made representations to the Government of Sierra Leone on the provisions in the draft revised NGO Policy Regulations which may contravene constitutional and international standards on freedom of association.

James Wharton:

DFID continues to engage in discussions with NGOs and the government on the NGO policy.

JUSTICE■ **Administration of Justice****Tim Farron:**[\[64696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases were dropped by courts in England and Wales due to the (a) ill-health, (b) old age and (c) youth of the defendants in each of the last five years.

Sir Oliver Heald:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012

Anne McLaughlin: [\[64633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whom her Department plans to consult during the development of the review into the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

Anne McLaughlin: [\[64634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if she will publish the scope of the review into the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

Anne McLaughlin: [\[64689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the review into the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 will include an open call for evidence.

Sir Oliver Heald:

To begin the process of reviewing the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO), the Government plans to submit a Post Legislative Memorandum to the Justice Select Committee in a few months' time. We will outline our plans for the post-implementation review (PIR) of LASPO in more detail when we submit the memorandum to Parliament. The PIR will cover the reforms to legal aid made by LASPO. We intend to work closely with key parties across the sector to inform the review's conclusions.

■ Young Offenders: Rehabilitation

Stephen Timms: [\[64693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the National Grid Young Offenders Programme in reducing reoffending rates.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Ministry of Justice has not assessed the effectiveness of the National Grid Young Offenders Programme in reducing reoffending rates.

In our Employment Strategy, which will be published later this year, we will outline our plans to support prisoners in gaining the skills and experience they need to prepare them for employment in modern jobs on release. As part of this, we will be engaging with a wide variety of stakeholders, including the National Grid Young Offenders Programme.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Electoral Register: Northern Ireland****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[63957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) cost, (b) take up and (c) effectiveness in reducing fraud of the electoral identity card. in Northern Ireland.

Kris Hopkins:

The requirement to produce photographic identification before voting in Northern Ireland is well established and has enhanced confidence in the integrity of the electoral system. There were 82,812 new additions to the register in the 2015/16 financial year and 24,232 electoral identity cards issued, covering new applications and replacements. The cost of the electoral identity card in Northern Ireland in 2015/2016 was £25,500. Northern Ireland does not hold an annual canvass and its electorate, at 1.2 million, is less than 3% of that of the United Kingdom as a whole.

■ North South Implementation Bodies**Lady Hermon:**[\[63724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps he plans to take to safeguard the implementation bodies set up under the Belfast Agreement 1998 after the UK leaves the EU; and if he will make a statement.

James Brokenshire:

The implementation bodies set up under the auspices of the North South Ministerial Council provided for in the Belfast Agreement are a matter for the Northern Ireland Executive and the Government of Ireland, in line with the traditional three-stranded approach.

As I said to the House on 10 January, the Government remains committed to the Belfast Agreement and want to see a return to strong and stable devolved government in Northern Ireland, to continue to implement that Agreement and its successors. The UK's departure from the EU does not change this commitment.

■ Northern Ireland Office : Pay**Philip Davies:**[\[64174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the (a) mean and (b) median pay was for staff in his Department who were (i) male, (ii) female, (iii) white, (iv) from an ethnic minority background, (v) disabled and (vi) non-disabled in the most recent year for which information is available, broken down by (A) full-time and (B) part-time workers.

Kris Hopkins:

The information requested is detailed below.

	MEAN		MEDIAN	
	Full-Time (£)	Part-Time (£)	Full-Time (£)	Part-Time (£)
Male	43,231.36	0.00	35,540.00	0.00
Female	34,949.42	30,871.43	27,801.50	28,280.00
White	38,491.61	27,252.00	29,860.50	26,769.00
Ethnic Minority Background	34,604.67	0.00	29,790.00	0.00
Disabled	36,110.75	30,600.00	33,620.00	30,600.00
Non-Disabled	39,241.35	26,582.40	31,627.50	25,258.00

■ Northern Ireland Office: Recruitment

Andrew Selous:

[\[64478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether his Department operates a ban the box employment policy in respect of ex-offender job applicants with unspent convictions; and how many employees of his Department have unspent convictions.

Kris Hopkins:

The Northern Ireland Office operates in line with Ministry of Justice recruitment policies and we are supportive of the Ban the Box initiative.

No employees in the Department currently have unspent convictions.

■ Political Parties: Northern Ireland

Caroline Lucas:

[\[64363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will publish the breakdown of spending by registered parties in Northern Ireland during the EU referendum campaign recorded by the Northern Ireland Electoral Commission.

James Brokenshire:

Under the provisions of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, the Electoral Commission are responsible for publishing details of spending by registered campaigners, including in relation to the recent EU referendum. I have no role in publishing information relating to campaign expenditure.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[64521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to make public donation information recorded in the Northern Ireland Electoral Commission's donor register from 2014 onwards required under the Northern Ireland Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2014; and if he will make a statement.

James Brokenshire:

I am keen to see progress on this issue and have written to the NI political parties seeking their views on moving to full transparency. I am currently considering responses from the parties before deciding on next steps. In line with usual pre-election protocols I will not be making any announcements until after the forthcoming Assembly election.

PRIME MINISTER■ **Children: Poverty****Dan Jarvis:**[\[64687\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what steps the Social Reform Cabinet Committee has taken to reduce child poverty.

Mrs Theresa May:

The Social Reform Cabinet Committee oversees and agrees social policy reforms and leads the Government's work to increase social mobility, deliver social justice and make the UK a country that works for everyone.

SCOTLAND■ **Scotland Office: Recruitment****Andrew Selous:**[\[64479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, whether his Department operates a ban the box employment policy in respect of ex-offender job applicants with unspent convictions; and how many employees of his Department have unspent convictions.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office does not employ staff directly. These matters would be for the employing departments.

TRANSPORT■ **Aviation****Drew Hendry:**[\[64517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the next High Level Output Specification will include specific projects targeted at increasing access to airports with spare capacity in the period before Heathrow expansion is complete.

Paul Maynard:

The rail industry has recently provided its initial advice to Ministers for Control Period 6 (2019-2024), which we are carefully considering. In due course we will make

announcements on the outcomes we want to see from the railway during CP6, as well as engage with stakeholders.

Scottish Ministers, under the provision of the Railways Act 2005, are required to set out their own High Level Output Statement and Statement of Funds Available (SoFA) in respect of railways in Scotland, through which they will set their own priorities.

■ Bypasses

Mr Peter Bone:

[\[64589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the Government's policy is on the construction of bypasses in (a) Northamptonshire and (b) England.

Mr John Hayes:

It is for the relevant transport authority (e.g. Northamptonshire County Council) to determine whether or not there is a case for a new bypass on the local road network and to seek the necessary funding, which could be from the council's own resources, private developer contributions or central government funding.

For England's motorways and major trunk roads, our vision is set out in the Road Investment Strategy (RIS). This recognises the importance of being a considerate neighbour to adjacent communities and that this can be achieved by bypassing towns and villages where appropriate.

■ Declaration on the Construction of Main International Traffic Arteries

Richard Arkless:

[\[63794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has for the UK to ratify the UN Declaration on the Construction of Main International Traffic Arteries 1950.

Mr John Hayes:

The Department for Transport has no current plans to ratify this Declaration.

■ Stansted Airport: Railways

Richard Burden:

[\[64510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 7 February 2017 to Question 62706, if he will make it his policy to reduce the required journey time on the West Anglia Main Line to Stansted Airport during Network Rail's next Control Period; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Maynard:

The rail industry has recently provided its initial advice to Ministers for Control Period 6 (2019-2024), which we are carefully considering. In due course we will make announcements on the outcomes we want to see from the railway during CP6, as well as engage with stakeholders.

■ Taxis: Guide Dogs**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[63756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's news story of 7 February 2017 on fines for taxi drivers who refuse to transport wheelchair users, whether those fines will be applied to taxi drivers refusing to transport guide dog users.

Andrew Jones:

Sections 168 and 170 of the Equality Act 2010 are already in force, and require drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles to carry assistance dogs and not make any extra charge for doing so. Drivers who are not exempt, and do not comply with these requirements can face a fine of up to £1000.

■ Thameslink Railway Line**Henry Smith:** [\[908851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the infrastructure for the Thameslink Programme has the capacity to run 24 trains an hour.

Paul Maynard:

Network Rail is delivering a package of infrastructure enhancements including new signalling and automatic train operation that will enable 24 trains an hour to operate between Blackfriars and St Pancras International from late 2018.

It is envisaged that this frequency would operate for approximately 2 hours in the morning and evening peaks.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Children: Poverty****Dan Jarvis:** [\[64519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans his Department has to publish a Child Poverty Strategy (a) every three years and (b) in 2017.

Damian Hinds:

We will set out our approach to tackling child poverty and disadvantage in our green paper on social justice which will be published in due course. The statutory requirement to publish a Child Poverty Strategy as set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010 has been repealed.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Government Contracts**Jon Trickett:** [\[64409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the total (a) number and (b) value of Government contracts that have been contracted out by his Department was in

each year since 2010; what the value of pro bono costs was in each such year; and what estimate he has made of the number of work days contracted out in each such year.

Caroline Nokes:

The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

However, all Government contracts awarded with a value of over £10,000 can be found online at Contracts Finder <https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>.

■ **Funerals: Low Incomes**

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[64628]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Government plans to take steps to tackle funeral poverty among bereaved parents.

Caroline Nokes:

The Government recognises that the period following a death will have emotional, social and financial impacts for the bereaved and people may need to draw on a wide range of support at that difficult time.

It is for that reason that the Department for Work and Pensions operates the Social Fund Funeral Expenses Payments scheme, which makes a significant contribution towards a funeral, for families claiming eligible benefits.

■ **Jobcentres: Liverpool**

Luciana Berger:

[64225]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his Department's paper entitled Proposal for the future of Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree jobcentres, of January 2017, how many visits are made to the jobcentres in (a) Toxteth, (b) Edge Hill, (c) Wavertree and (d) Huyton each (i) day, (ii) week and (iii) month by claimants who are required to report every two weeks.

Damian Hinds:

Information on the numbers of claimants that attend on a daily, weekly or monthly basis is not available. The number of claimants for each office is as follows:

The JSA claimant count for Toxteth JCP is 851 and UC is 1389

The JSA claimant count for Edge Hill JCP is 647 and UC is 1083

The JSA claimant count for Wavertree JCP is 438 and UC is 742

The JSA claimant count for Huyton JCP is 882 and UC is 2434

This information refers to January 2017, and is available from the following link:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk>.

Luciana Berger:

[64226]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his Department's paper entitled Proposal for the future of Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree

jobcentres, of January 2017, how the travelling times by public transport between jobcentre offices that are proposed for closure and the new offices have been calculated; and on what (a) time of day and (b) traffic conditions those calculations are based.

Damian Hinds:

Distances and journey times have been calculated using variety of methods to improve accuracy, including Google Maps and AA route mapping, and information collected about local public transport routes with input from local DWP colleagues.

Regardless of the proposed changes, it is important for claimants to allow sufficient time to attend appointments, taking into consideration the time of day and any local traffic conditions, as they do now.

Luciana Berger:

[\[64227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his Department's paper entitled Proposal for the future of Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree jobcentres, of January 2017, how many miles to the decimal point the jobcentres in (a) Wavertree and (b) Edge Hill are from the Jobcentre in Huyton (i) in a straight line and (ii) by road.

Damian Hinds:

No assessment has been made of the distances between Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree Jobcentres and Huyton Jobcentre. This is because the proposals are to relocate Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree Jobcentres to High Park House. We have not calculated any distances based on claimants travelling in a straight line as it would be unreasonable to expect them to be able to do so.

According to the information from Google Maps and other sources, the Jobcentre at High Park House, is 1.8 miles away and approximately 8 minutes by car from Liverpool Edge Hill Jobcentre; and 2.9 miles away, approximately 14 minutes by car from Liverpool Wavertree Jobcentre.

Luciana Berger:

[\[64228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his Department's paper entitled Proposal for the future of Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree jobcentres, of January 2017, what the evidential basis is for the statement that it is a reasonable expectation that claimants travel to an office within three miles or 20 minutes by public transport of their existing jobcentre and whether this applies to claimants who have already had to move to visiting one of those two jobcentres as a result.

Damian Hinds:

Within the context of claimant journeys, we believe that it is a reasonable expectation that a claimant travels an additional distance of up to 3 miles, or 20 minutes by public transport, to the new Jobcentre. This may mean slightly longer and slightly shorter journeys for some individual claimants and we have taken this into account when setting the criteria.

There are large areas of the country where claimants have always travelled further than this. A proportion of claimants may also live closer to the proposed new Jobcentre location, so this will remain a convenient location for those people. We therefore view these criteria to be within reasonable expectations.

Luciana Berger:

[64229]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his Department's paper entitled Proposal for the future of Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree jobcentres, of January 2017, how the travelling distances between the jobcentre offices that are proposed for closure and the new offices have been measured.

Damian Hinds:

Distances and journey times have been calculated using a number of sources including AA route mapping, Google Maps, local public transport routes and local information provided by DWP colleagues.

Luciana Berger:

[64643]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his Department's paper entitled Proposal for the future of Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree jobcentres of January 2017, based on the addresses of claimants registered at the (a) Wavertree and (b) Edge Hill jobcentre, what the (i) minimum and (ii) maximum number of buses such claimants would have to take to get to the jobcentre in (A) Toxteth and (B) Huyton.

Damian Hinds:

The Department has not undertaken an assessment of the number of buses to Toxteth and Huyton Jobcentres based on claimants residential addresses. This is because the proposals are to relocate Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree Jobcentres to High Park House Jobcentre. Furthermore, it would not be possible to compare all claimants' residential addresses with all potential bus timetables and routes.

It is also important to remember that not all claimants will start their journey to the Jobcentre from their home.

As Liverpool Wavertree and Liverpool Edge Hill Jobcentres have higher travel times by public transport to High Park House than to Toxteth Jobcentre, we have opened this proposal up to public consultation. We are seeking views on this proposal, including the impact on travel for individuals.

Luciana Berger:

[64644]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to his Department's paper entitled Proposal for the future of Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree jobcentres of January 2017, based on the addresses of claimants registered at the (a) Wavertree and (b) Edge Hill jobcentre, what the (i) minimum and (ii) maximum public transport costs of a claimant who has to report to a jobcentre every two weeks would be in each month in the event that they were moved to the jobcentre in (A) Toxteth and (B) Huyton.

Damian Hinds:

The Department has not undertaken an assessment of the public transport costs for journeys to Toxteth and Huyton Jobcentres based on claimants residential addresses. This is because the proposals are to relocate Liverpool Edge Hill and Liverpool Wavertree Jobcentres to High Park House Jobcentre. Furthermore, it would not be possible to compare all claimants' residential addresses with all potential bus timetables and routes. It is also important to remember that not all claimants will start their journey to the Jobcentre from their home.

As Liverpool Wavertree and Liverpool Edge Hill Jobcentres have higher travel times by public transport to High Park House than to Toxteth Jobcentre, we have opened this proposal up to public consultation. We are seeking views on this proposal, including the impact on travel costs for individuals.

Local Housing Allowance**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[64522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent representations he has received on the effect of the Local Housing Allowance cap in (a) Coventry South constituency and (b) the UK.

Caroline Nokes:

There is no record of any representations being received from Coventry South constituency on the effect of Local Housing Allowance Caps in the past twelve months.

Ministers have however received a variety of correspondence from different organisations and constituents regarding the effect of the Local Housing Allowance caps from different parts of the United Kingdom.

Long Term Unemployed People: Wolverhampton**Emma Reynolds:**[\[64511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much his Department has spent on tackling long-term unemployment in Wolverhampton North East constituency in each of the last five years.

Damian Hinds:

The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Emma Reynolds:[\[64512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the reasons for long-term unemployment in Wolverhampton North East constituency.

Damian Hinds:

According to the Office for National Statistics, long-term unemployment has fallen nationally by 384,000 since 2010. Equivalent figures are not available for Wolverhampton North East due to the limitations of the sample size of the ONS

survey. As such it is difficult to make an assessment of the specific reasons for long-term unemployment within the constituency.

■ Occupational Pensions

Rachel Reeves:

[64197]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will set out a timetable for the automatic enrolment review.

Richard Harrington:

On 12 December 2016, I set out the scope of the 2017 review of automatic enrolment. On 8 February 2017 I set out further detail on the review, including its terms of reference and the membership of the external advisory group. We will publish a report to Parliament towards the end of 2017.

■ Retirement

Jim Shannon:

[64581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assistance his Department provides to people over 55 to help them prepare for retirement.

Richard Harrington:

The government provides free, impartial guidance, for people aged 50 and over, through Pension Wise, to help them make informed and confident decisions about how they use their defined contribution pension savings in retirement. It is available online, via the telephone and face to face.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Local Growth

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Sajid Javid):

[\[HCWS491\]](#)

Further to my statements of 23 January 2017 and 2 February 2017 regarding the Growth Deal awards to the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in the Northern Powerhouse, East of England, South East and London, I am today announcing the six individual awards to LEPs in the South West of England.

Between them they will benefit from £191 million of Government support from the Local Growth Fund, on top of the £780 million committed in previous Growth Deals.

Table A: Growth Deal 3 Funding Awards for LEPs in the South West of England

LEP	FUNDING AWARD (£M)
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	18.03
Dorset	19.46
Gloucestershire	29.13
Heart of the South West	43.57
Swindon and Wiltshire	28.09
West of England	52.80

We have now awarded over £9 billion to LEPs from the Local Growth Fund. With the Home Building Fund and Local Transport Majors launched in 2016 we have fulfilled our manifesto commitment to a £12 billion Local Growth Fund. It is a crucial part of the Government's agenda to drive growth and devolve power to local areas, with decisions being made by those who know their local area best, and supporting the Government's commitment to build an economy that works for everyone.

This was the most competitive round yet, and awards were made based on a bidding round that took place last year.

The expanded deals will provide LEPs in the South West with the power and funding to support local businesses, unlock housing where it is most needed and develop vital infrastructure to allow places to thrive. The funding will also be used to create jobs, equip a new generation with the skills they need for the future and attract billions of pounds of

private sector investment. This investment is Government stepping up, not stepping back, building on our strengths to boost national productivity and growth.

I will announce the awards in the Midlands shortly.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ National Heritage Memorial Fund tailored review

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage (Tracey Crouch):

[\[HCWS492\]](#)

I am today announcing the start of a tailored review of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF). As a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), the NHMF, including its activities operating as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), is required to undergo a tailored review at least once in each parliament.

The review will consist of two stages. The first stage will provide a robust challenge for the continuing need for the functions performed by the NHMF and the HLF, and, if there is, whether some or all of these functions should be delivered by alternative delivery models or continued to be delivered by a NDPB.

If it is agreed that the functions should continue to be delivered as a NDPB, the second stage will review the organisational control and governance arrangements in place to ensure that they are compliant with the recognised principles of good corporate governance and delivering good value for money. The structure, efficiency and effectiveness of both the NHMF and the HLF will be considered as part of both stages.

The findings at both stages of the review will be examined by a Challenge Group, chaired by DCMS Non-Executive Director Charles Alexander. A separate steering group will consist of representatives from the Welsh Government, Scottish Government, Northern Ireland Executive and UK Government.

In conducting the review, officials will engage with a broad range of stakeholders across the UK from heritage, culture and natural environment sectors. The review will follow guidance published in 2016 by the Cabinet Office: 'Tailored reviews: guidance on reviews of public bodies'. The Terms of Reference for the review and a survey seeking evidence about NHMF and HLF can be found on the DCMS website.

I will inform the House of the outcome of the review when it is completed and copies of the report of the review will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ Amendments to the UK's Optional Clause Declaration to the International Court of Justice**

The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Alan Duncan):
[[HCWS489](#)]

The Government has informed the UN Secretary-General of an amendment to the United Kingdom's Optional Clause Declaration (Declaration) accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (Court / ICJ). The Declaration accepts the jurisdiction of the Court in contentious cases that come within its scope.

The Government keeps its Declaration under review. The ICJ case on nuclear disarmament filed by the Marshall Islands against the United Kingdom in 2014 concluded with a judgment of 5 October 2016 that upheld the United Kingdom's preliminary objections to jurisdiction. We have now decided to build into our Declaration two key elements that underpinned the principal arguments that the Government made in those preliminary objections.

The revised Declaration requires other States to give six months notice of a claim or dispute against the UK that they propose to submit to the ICJ. This would provide an opportunity for diplomatic engagement with the State concerned. The prior notification of a claim is an established part of domestic dispute resolution in the United Kingdom, as well as being a feature of the dispute settlement provisions in many international treaties. The judgment of the ICJ in the nuclear disarmament case accepted that a State must be made aware that litigants have opposing views, otherwise a respondent State does not have the opportunity to react to those opposing views before the institution of proceedings against it. The revised Declaration incorporates the UK position that was advanced in the proceedings that prior notification of the kind described is an appropriate step before an application instituting proceedings, seising the Court, can be submitted.

The United Kingdom would be held to the terms of the new Declaration in respect of any proceedings that it may wish to institute. The Government is content to be held to this standard.

In addition, the revised Declaration also includes a reservation excluding from the Court's jurisdiction any cases related to nuclear weapons and/or nuclear disarmament unless the other four Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) nuclear-weapons States also accept the Court's jurisdiction with respect to the case. The Government does not believe the United Kingdom's actions in respect of such weapons and nuclear disarmament can meaningfully be judged in isolation. This amendment to our Declaration provides that the ICJ will only have jurisdiction over nuclear weapons or nuclear disarmament disputes when the proceedings involve all five of the NPT nuclear-weapons States.

We have also made changes to advance the cut-off date for historical cases to 1987, keeping it at thirty years, and to make clear that a repeated claim, as well as a dispute, is also excluded.

The Government is firm in our commitment to a rules based international order. We continue to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ and believe that the Court has a valuable role to play in resolving international disputes peacefully.

HOME OFFICE

■ **Annual Report of the National DNA Database Strategy Board**

The Minister of State for Fire and Policing (Brandon Lewis):

[\[HCWS488\]](#)

I am pleased to announce that I am, today, publishing the Annual Report of the National DNA Database (NDNAD) Strategy Board for 2015/16.

Gary Pugh OBE, Chair of the National DNA Strategy Board, has presented the Annual Report of the National DNA Strategy Board to the Home Secretary. Publication of the Report is a statutory requirement under section 63AB(7) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 as inserted by 24 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The Report demonstrates the important contribution of the NDNAD to the investigation of crimes. I am grateful to the Strategy Board for their commitment to fulfilling their statutory functions.

Copies of the Report will be available from the Vote Office.

■ **Consultation on draft codes of practice under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016**

The Minister of State for Security (Mr Ben Wallace):

[\[HCWS487\]](#)

I am today announcing the publication of the Government's consultation on five new codes of practice under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016.

The Investigatory Powers Act does three key things:

1. It brings together powers already available to law enforcement and the security and intelligence agencies to obtain communications and data about communications. It makes these powers – and the safeguards that apply to them – clear and understandable.
1. It radically overhauls the way these powers are authorised and overseen. It introduces a 'double-lock' for the most intrusive powers, including interception and all of the bulk capabilities, so that these warrants cannot be issued until the decision to do so has been approved by a Judicial Commissioner. And it creates a powerful new Investigatory Powers Commissioner to oversee how these powers are used.
1. It ensures powers are fit for the digital age. The Act makes a new provision for the retention of internet connection records in order for law enforcement to identify the communications service to which a device has connected. This will restore capabilities that have been lost as a result of changes in the way people communicate.

This Act provides world-leading transparency and privacy protection. It received unprecedented and exceptional scrutiny in Parliament and was passed with cross-party support. There should be no doubt about the necessity of the powers that it contains or the strength of the safeguards that it includes.

All of these draft Codes of Practice set out the processes and safeguards governing the use of investigatory powers. They give detail on how the relevant powers should be used, including examples of best practice. They are intended to provide additional clarity and to ensure the highest standards of professionalism and compliance with this important legislation.

The consultation will last six weeks. Copies of the consultation document and draft codes will be placed in the House Library. Online versions will be available on the www.gov.uk website.

■ **European Union opt in decision: EU proposal for a Regulation establishing a common European Union Resettlement Framework**

The Minister of State for Immigration (Mr Robert Goodwill): [\[HCWS486\]](#)

The Government has decided not to opt in to the EU proposal for a Regulation establishing a common European Union Resettlement Framework.

Under the proposed EU Resettlement Framework, the total number of people to be resettled to the EU in a given year and the countries to be resettled from would be decided by the Council following a proposal from the Commission and set out in annual Union Resettlement Plans. The Framework would also establish certain common elements for the resettlement process, including: rules on admission, including eligibility criteria and exclusion grounds; the standard procedures governing all stages of the resettlement process; the status to be accorded to resettled people; and, the decision-making procedures for implementing the Framework.

The UK is of the view that resettlement schemes are best operated at the national level. This allows for greater control and flexibility over both the source countries to be resettled from and the resettlement process. The Government is of the view that the stated reasons for action at EU-level, such as alleviating pressures on countries hosting a disproportionate number of displaced individuals, gaining influence in policy dialogues with third countries, and improving the resettlement process, can equally be achieved through close cooperation between international partners operating national resettlement schemes. National schemes also allow resettlement efforts to be aligned with the domestic and international priorities of individual Member States, including maintaining full control over the numbers to be resettled.

The UK has committed to resettling 20,000 Syrians to the UK under our Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), and 3,000 vulnerable children and their families to the UK under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme, by the end of this Parliament. In the year ending September 2016, 4,162 people were resettled under the Syrian VPRS, across 175 different local authorities. These commitments are in

addition to our longstanding Gateway Protection Programme and Mandate resettlement scheme.

Until the UK leaves the EU, it remains a full member, and the Government will continue to consider the application of the UK's right to opt in to forthcoming EU legislation in the area of justice and home affairs on a case by case basis, with a view to maximising our country's security, protecting our civil liberties and enhancing our ability to control immigration.

■ Government Transparency Report

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd): [\[HCWS490\]](#)

I have today laid before the House the second iteration of the Government Transparency Report on the use of disruptive and investigatory powers (CM 9420). Copies of the Report will be made available in the Vote Office.

In view of the ongoing threat from terrorism, which remains at SEVERE, meaning an attack is highly likely, and the persistent threats from organised crime and hostile state activity, it is vital that our law enforcement, and security and intelligence agencies can use disruptive and investigatory powers to counter those threats and to keep the public safe. This Report sets out the way in which those powers are used by the agencies and the independent oversight which governs their use.

This Government remains committed to increasing the transparency of the work of our security and intelligence and law enforcement agencies, and this next iteration of the Transparency Report is a key part of that commitment. Since the last Report was published, the Government has published extensive material on the use of investigatory powers. And the passage through Parliament of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 saw more information about the work of the agencies put in to the public domain than ever before. The Transparency Report builds on that.

It is split into two main sections. The first includes statistics on the use of disruptive and investigatory powers, explains their utility, and outlines the legal frameworks that ensure they can only be used when necessary and proportionate.

The second section explains the roles of the Commissioners, and other bodies, that provide independent oversight and scrutiny of the use of the powers. The Report also provides an overview of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 and points to changes which will occur once the Act is implemented.

Publishing this Report ensures that the public are able to access, in one place, a guide to the range of powers used to combat threats to the security of the United Kingdom, the extent of their use and the safeguards and oversight in place to ensure they are used properly. It is designed to be read in conjunction with the Annual Reports on the counter-terrorism (CONTEST) and serious and organised crime strategies.

Of course, there remain limits to what can be said publically about the use of certain sensitive techniques, because to go too far could aid criminals and terrorists, encouraging them to change their behaviour in order to evade detection. However, it is vital the public

are confident that the security and intelligence, and law enforcement agencies have the powers they need to protect the public, and the knowledge that those powers are used proportionately.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Supply Process

The Secretary of State for International Development (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS494\]](#)

Like other Departments, the Department for International Development will meet a number of pre-existing and routine commitments from the Contingencies Fund due to the timing of the Royal Assent for the Supply and Appropriation (Anticipation and Adjustments) Bill.

Parliamentary approval for additional net cash of £512,182,000 (five hundred and twelve million, one hundred and eighty two thousand pounds), was sought in the 2016-17 Supplementary Estimate for the Department for International Development, which was published on 9th February 2017. To meet cash requirements ahead of that approval, expenditure estimated at £345,855,000 (three hundred and forty five million, eight hundred and fifty five thousand pounds) will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund. The advance will be repaid upon Royal Assent of the Supply and Appropriation (Anticipation and Adjustments) Bill.

The total Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocation agreed with HM Treasury has not changed and the transaction will be returned upon Royal Assent of the Supply and Appropriation (Anticipation and Adjustments) Bill. This is a routine part of the normal intra-government accounting process.

JUSTICE

■ Prison governor empowerment and accountability

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Elizabeth Truss):
[\[HCWS493\]](#)

I have today introduced the Prisons and Courts Bill, which will create a new statutory framework to support the Government's plans to make prisons places of safety and reform. The measures in the Bill are a vital part of the wider structural reforms announced in the Prison Safety and Reform white paper published on 3 November 2016.

The right framework and standards for improvement

In the white paper we committed to reforming how the prison system is structured in order to make lines of accountability clear and create sharper and more transparent scrutiny.

To deliver this, the Prisons and Courts Bill will enshrine in statute the purpose of prison, setting out for the first time that reform of offenders is a key aim for prisons. The Bill makes clear how the Secretary of State for Justice will account to Parliament for progress in reforming offenders.

The Bill also provides strengthened powers to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, including enabling the Chief Inspector to trigger an urgent response from the Secretary of State where they have significant concerns about a particular prison that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. It puts the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman on a statutory footing, giving them greater permanence and powers.

The white paper set out how this new framework will be underpinned by new standards, a new commissioning structure and new powers for governors. This will create a more focused prison system where governors are clear what they need to deliver and are empowered to do so.

To deliver this, we will create new, 3 year performance agreements signed by the Secretary of State and the governor of each prison. The agreements will be phased in over the next two years: the first third of prisons will sign the new agreements on 1 April, with the other two thirds moving to this approach by 1 April 2019. The agreements will include the following standards, based on the aims for prisons set out in the Bill, which governors will be held to account for:

- Protecting the public. We will do this by measuring, from April 2017:
 - o The number of escapes from closed prisons;
 - o The number of absconds from open prisons; and
 - o Compliance with key security processes such as searching.
- Reforming offenders. We will do this by measuring:
 - o Time spent out of cell, starting from April 2017 in the prisons where the technology to track this has been introduced;
 - o Progress made in getting offenders off drugs. Prisoners will be tested on entry and exit with a phased roll out beginning in 2017;
 - o Progress made in health, starting with a measure of medical appointments attended by prisoners starting in England from April 2017;
 - o Progress made in maths and English, starting with qualifications gained from April 2017 and introducing testing on entry and exit in the longer term; and
 - o Progress in maintaining or developing family relationships. This will be a new measure which we are currently developing.
- Preparing prisoners for life on release. We will do this by measuring, from April 2017:
 - o Rate of prisoners being released to suitable accommodation;
 - o Rates of sustainable employment, including apprenticeships, and education in the period following release.
- Improving safety. We will do this by measuring, from April 2017:
 - o Assaults on prison staff and prisoners;
 - o Disorder and self-harm; and

o Staff and prisoner perceptions of safety.

We want the public to understand what progress is being made in our prisons, so we will publish data setting out how prisons are performing. We will collect the data from April 2017 and begin publishing official statistics regularly from October 2017.

To support delivery of these reforms on the ground, on 1 April we are creating a new, operationally-focused executive agency, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, which will be responsible for all operations across prison and probation and will refocus headquarters on supporting, not micro-managing, governors. The Secretary of State will set standards, commission services, and hold them to account.

Empowering governors to deliver

If we are to hold governors to account for meeting this new standards, they must be given the power to deliver change. We are devolving key operational policies to give governors greater flexibility, and have already cancelled 101 policies to help reduce bureaucracy for prisons. We will also remove current restrictions so that from 1 April 2017, governors have the freedom to:

- Design their regime to meet local delivery needs and target training and work in prisons to match the local labour market. Prisoners could, for example, work shift patterns to deliver new commercial contracts. This would help them to meet the standards to reform offenders and prepare prisoners for life on release.
- Decide their workforce strategy, including their staffing structure, to support meeting the standards. They could bring in specialists to work with particular types of prisoners, and tailor their staffing to support the prison regime they have designed.
- Control how they spend their resource budget. They could choose, for example, to pay for increased dedicated police officer time to reduce criminal activity in prison to improve safety and protect the public.
- Plan and take decisions about health services jointly with local health commissioners, through a co-commissioning framework.

Over the coming months, we will build on these essential freedoms even further by giving governors additional scope to:

- Decide what education opportunities they offer. Over 2017 and 2018, we will give governors control of the education budget, so that they can overhaul education and training to match the skills and qualifications prisoners need in the local labour market.
- Control how family support services work. From autumn 2017, governors will control budgets for family services, like visitors' centres and parenting skills classes, so they can choose the right way to support family relationships.
- Have more say on the goods and services in their prison. As each national contract ends, for example on food or equipment, we will determine how to devolve responsibility to governors.

This process of devolution and deregulation is being supported by learning from the work of the six reform prisons. These prisons will continue to explore and identify options for devolution across the estate as wider reforms are implemented. We have commissioned a formal evaluation to support this with regular feedback being provided to inform policy development ahead of the final report in early 2018.

These reforms are major changes that will result in sustained improvement over a decade. By the end of this Parliament this strategy will have delivered much needed new facilities, empowered governors and introduced modern technology to improve regimes, support reform and combat security threats.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Social Security

Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work (Penny Mordaunt):
[\[HCWS495\]](#)

Today I am laying before Parliament amendments to the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Regulations to restore the original aim of the benefit, making sure we are giving support to those who need it most.

PIP is a modern and dynamic benefit which contributes to the extra costs faced by people with disabilities and health conditions. It replaces Disability Living Allowance (DLA), which no longer properly took into account the needs of disabled people. Since PIP's introduction, greater support is going to the most vulnerable; over a quarter of those on PIP receive the highest level of support compared to just 15% of DLA's working-age claimants.

At the core of PIP's design is the principle that non-physical conditions should be given the same recognition as physical ones. That is why we developed the assessment criteria in collaboration with disabled people and independent specialists in health, social care and disability. Now, over two thirds of PIP claimants with mental health conditions get the higher Daily Living award, worth £82.30 per week, compared to 22% under DLA.

The Government continually monitors the effectiveness of PIP to ensure it is delivering its original policy intent and supporting those who face the greatest barriers to leading independent lives. Two recent Upper Tribunal judgments have broadened the way the PIP assessment criteria should be interpreted, going beyond the original intention. In order to make sure the initial purpose of PIP is maintained, we are making drafting amendments to the criteria which provide greater clarity. This will not result in any claimants seeing a reduction in the amount of PIP previously awarded by DWP.

The first judgment held that needing support to take medication and monitor a health condition should be scored in the same way as needing support to manage therapy, like dialysis, undertaken at home. Until this ruling, the assessment made a distinction between these two groups, on the basis that people who need support to manage therapy of this kind are likely to have a higher level of need, and therefore face higher costs.

The second held that someone who cannot make a journey without assistance due to psychological distress should be scored in the same way as a person who needs assistance because they have difficulties navigating. By way of example, the first group might include some people with isolated social phobia or anxiety, whereas the second group might include some people who are blind. Until this ruling, the assessment made a distinction between these two groups, on the basis that people who cannot navigate, due to a visual or cognitive impairment, are likely to have a higher level of need, and therefore face higher costs.

If not urgently addressed, the operational complexities could undermine the consistency of assessments, leading to confusion for all those using the legislation, including claimants, assessors, and the courts. It is because of the urgency caused by these challenges, and the implications on public expenditure, that proposals for these amendments have not been referred to the Social Security Advisory Committee before making the regulations.

PIP is being devolved to the Scottish Government and I will continue to work closely with Scottish Ministers on the transfer of responsibilities.

The Social Security (Personal Independence Payment) (Amendment) Regulations 2017, Explanatory Memorandum and Equality Analysis will be available on legislation.gov.uk.