



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Daily Report

Thursday, 20 July 2017

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 20 July 2017 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:34 P.M., 20 July 2017). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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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

■ Hate Crime: Prosecutions

Stephen Timms:

[\[5417\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent progress has been made in increasing the prosecution rate for hate crimes.

Robert Buckland:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has taken a number of steps to improve its prosecution of all strands of hate crime.

The CPS is prosecuting and convicting more defendants of hate crime than ever before. In 2015/16, the CPS completed 15,442 hate crime prosecutions, an increase of 704 on the previous year. The conviction rate also improved to 83.2% in 2015/16 an increase from 82.9% the previous year.

The CPS Annual Report and Accounts 2016/17 shows that the proportion of cases where the CPS was successful in achieving uplifted sentences for hate crime perpetrators has increased dramatically. The proportion rose from 33.8% in 2015/16, to 52.2% in 2016/17 – reaching 58.2% in the final quarter.

The CPS has delivered mandatory face to face disability hate crime training and racially and religiously aggravated hate crime training and is in the process of developing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime training to support prosecutors to more effectively deal with hate crime cases.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business: Broadband

Bill Esterson:

[\[5456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 10 July 2017 to Question 3184, how much funding his Department has allocated to the assessment of the broadband connectivity requirements of business.

Margot James:

Understanding business connectivity needs is a priority for Ministers, this Department and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and in an effort to achieve this, the Department and DCMS jointly issued a Call For Evidence in May 2016 to explore business broadband needs and the barriers that prevent a more vibrant infrastructure environment. One of the recommendations arising from the Business Broadband Review, and announced in the Government's published Digital Strategy, was the establishment of a Business Connectivity Forum to develop specific

solutions to address the digital connectivity issues affecting businesses. Details about the forum will be announced in due course.

■ **Construction: Employment**

Jessica Morden: [\[5410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with representatives the Construction Skills Certification Scheme on the effect on workers of withdrawal of the construction related occupation card.

Claire Perry:

The Construction Scheme Card Scheme is an industry-led initiative which aims to ensure workers on construction sites are qualified to undertake the work they are to perform, and have received safety training. The industry decided to replace the previous fragmented system with a standardised one. The Government has supported this, but is not involved in its implementation.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Mass Media**

Deidre Brock: [\[4295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many public engagements for which a media calling notice was issued was attended by a departmental Minister in each of the last 12 months.

Margot James:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy does not hold the information you have asked for. Ministers regularly undertake engagements at which media are present.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Staff**

Hywel Williams: [\[5018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many staff in his Department have responsibilities relating to the UK leaving the EU.

Margot James:

The Department's Europe Directorate and EU Exit and International Trade directorate employ dedicated teams of full-time officials who work on negotiations and the domestic consequences of leaving the EU, as well as our ongoing engagement with the EU whilst we are still members. Officials in other teams in the Department also carry out EU exit-related work as part of their broader responsibilities. The Department will continue to ensure there is an appropriate level of resource to deliver its EU exit work.

■ Directors: Equality**Alan Brown:**[\[5534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has carried out an assessment of how long it will take to achieve 50:50 gender-balanced board representation without affirmative action.

Margot James:

It is important that the boardroom reflects modern Britain. Companies will do better if they make better use of the talent available and ensure their boardrooms reflect their workforces and wider society.

That is why Government fully supports the principle of achieving gender-balanced boards at our largest companies through a business-led, voluntary approach. This approach has worked, we have seen the proportion of women on FTSE 350 boards increase from 9.5% to 27.5% and we are down to only 6 all-male boards from a starting point of 152 in 2011.

We are actively supporting the work of the Hampton-Alexander Review and its business-led target of 33% women on FTSE 350 boards by 2020. I am optimistic that with strong leadership from business we will continue to see real progress in improving diversity and business will meet the new 33% target that they have been set.

Drew Hendry:[\[5578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to encourage gender-balanced representation in boards.

Margot James:

The Government is committed to seeing greater diversity on FTSE boards. The Department has supported and promoted various diversity initiatives to promote gender diversity on boards and across the public sector:

- Since 2010, the Lord Davies business –led voluntary approach which has seen the proportion of women on FTSE 350 boards increase from 9.5% in 2011 to 23.5% in July 2017;
- The subsequent Hampton-Alexander Review and its business-led target of 33% women on FTSE 350 boards by 2020;
- In conjunction with UK Government Investments, actively supporting the Future Boards Scheme, a business-led initiative to help talented, senior women get board-level development opportunities and gain the experience they need to successfully apply for board positions;
- The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Margot James, setting up a Business Diversity and Inclusion Group to improve the coordination of business diversity initiatives and provide a clear and coherent message on what is expected of the business community;

- Wanting to see greater diversity on boards across all sectors including the public and third sectors, and the Government has a further aspiration that 50% of new public appointees should be women.

All of these various initiatives will contribute to our continued efforts to ensure gender-balanced representation and that boardrooms reflect their workforces and wider society.

■ Domestic Appliances: Safety

Andy Slaughter:

[\[5127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with white goods manufacturers on fridge freezer safety since the Grenfell Tower fire.

Margot James:

Shortly after the Grenfell Tower fire I spoke to the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances (AMDEA) to ensure their members were ready to take any actions necessary should investigations into the cause of the fire show that white goods were involved. I also attended the Working Group on Product Recalls and Safety where AMDEA were represented on 22 June.

My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy also spoke directly to the UK Managing Director and the Global CEO of Whirlpool to ensure they are taking all necessary steps to ensure consumer safety.

■ Economic Growth: Environment Protection

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[3814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations he has received from the Centre of Alternative Technology on the contents of his proposed Clean Growth Plan; and if he will make a statement.

Claire Perry:

We are engaging across businesses, industry and other stakeholders on the shared challenge of moving to a low carbon economy and the development of the Clean Growth Plan.

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[3815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the Clean Growth Plan.

Claire Perry:

We want the Clean Growth Plan to be an ambitious, robust and clear blueprint for Britain's low carbon future, and are working with colleagues across Government to ensure it meets these criteria. We intend to publish that plan when Parliament sits again after summer recess.

■ Electrical Safety: Testing

Andy Slaughter:

[\[5128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of free electrical appliance tests in tower blocks in England; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

The UK has one of the highest sets of product safety requirements in the EU, which requires goods to meet strict safety rules before they are put into use.

I have asked the Working Group on Product Recalls and Safety to consider the merits of making safety check on white goods used in tower blocks and will liaise with the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Home Office over their recommendations.

■ Fracking

John McNally:

[\[5116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 11 July 2017 to Question 3330, on natural gas: storage, if he will suspend fracking for as long as the UK continues to have secure gas supplies.

Richard Harrington:

[Holding answer 20 July 2017]: Shale gas could have great potential to be a domestic energy resource that makes us less reliant on imports and opens up a wealth of job opportunities. The economic impact of shale, both locally and nationally will depend on whether shale development is technically and commercially viable and on the level of production. To determine the potential of the industry and how development will proceed, we need exploration to go ahead.

■ Insolvency

Sir David Crausby:

[\[4927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many insolvencies and bankruptcies there were in (a) the UK and (b) Bolton in (i) the current financial year to date and (ii) each of the previous five financial years.

Margot James:

Final answer to PQ 16545

The Insolvency Service does not produce UK-level statistics on insolvencies: statistics are presented separately for England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland because of differences in legislation and policy.

Statistics showing the number of bankruptcies, debt relief orders and individual voluntary arrangements are provided for each area since 2012 and can be found in the tables below. Bankruptcy, debt relief orders and individual voluntary

arrangements apply to individuals only; regional breakdowns for the number of company insolvencies are not currently available.

The Insolvency Service compiles its regional Insolvency numbers statistics on a calendar year basis, therefore financial year totals are not available. Statistics for the calendar year 2016 were published on 13 July 2017, and statistics for 2017 are due to be published in July 2018.

Table1: Breakdown of total individual insolvencies, Bolton, 2012 to 2016¹

YEAR	TOTAL INDIVIDUAL INSOLVENCIES	BANKRUPTCIES	DEBT RELIEF ORDERS	INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTARY ARRANGEMENTS
2012	555	171	69	315
2013	486	122	64	300
2014	473	101	76	296
2015	388	71	69	248
2016	447	77	80	290

Table 2: Breakdown of total individual insolvencies, England and Wales, 2012 to 2016

YEAR	TOTAL INDIVIDUAL INSOLVENCIES	BANKRUPTCIES	DEBT RELIEF ORDERS	INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTARY ARRANGEMENTS
2012	109,640	31,787	31,179	46,674
2013	100,998	24,571	27,546	48,881
2014	99,223	20,345	26,688	52,190
2015	80,404	15,845	24,175	40,384
2016	90,619	15,006	26,196	49,417

Table 3: Breakdown of total individual insolvencies, Scotland, 2012 to 2016

YEAR	TOTAL INDIVIDUAL INSOLVENCIES	SEQUESTRATIONS (OF WHICH LILA/MAP) ^{1,2}	PROTECTED TRUST DEEDS
2012	18,402	9,630 (3,886)	8,772
2013	14,250	7,189 (2,728)	7,061

YEAR	TOTAL INDIVIDUAL INSOLVENCIES	SEQUESTRATIONS (OF WHICH LILA/MAP) ^{1,2}	PROTECTED TRUST DEEDS
2014	11,622	6,747 (2,533)	4,875
2015	8,785	4,477 (1,509)	4,308
2016	9,708	4,401 (1,824)	5,307

Source: Accountant in Bankruptcy.

¹ On 1 April 2008, Part 1 of the Bankruptcy and Diligence etc. (Scotland) Act 2007 came into force making significant changes to some aspects of sequestration (bankruptcy), debt relief and debt enforcement in Scotland. This included the introduction of the new route into bankruptcy for people with low income and low assets (LILA). Of the number of sequestrations, individuals who meet LILA criteria are shown in brackets.

² On 1 April 2015, part of the Bankruptcy and Debt Advice (Scotland) Act came into force making significant changes to some aspects of sequestration (bankruptcy). This included the introduction of the Minimal Asset Process (MAP), which replaced the LILA route into sequestration; mandatory debt advice for people seeking statutory debt relief; a new online process for applying for sequestration; and an additional year for people to make contributions to repaying their debts (increasing from three years to four, in line with protected trust deeds).

Table 4: Breakdown of total individual insolvencies, Northern Ireland, 2012 to 2016

YEAR	TOTAL INDIVIDUAL INSOLVENCIES	BANKRUPTCIES	DEBT RELIEF ORDERS	INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTARY ARRANGEMENTS
2012	3,189	1,452	506	1,231
2013	3,373	1,347	593	1,433
2014	3,395	1,367	536	1,492
2015	2,690	1,071	472	1,147
2016	2,582	997	366	1,219

Source: Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland.

It should be noted that these figures do not account for any changes in the base population over time. Using the rate of bankruptcies per 10,000 adults allows for a like-for-like comparison across years.

Headline figures for insolvencies in England and Wales can be found in the quarterly *Insolvency Statistics* release, a National Statistics publication. Figures for January-March 2017 were published on 28 April 2017, and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/insolvency-statistics-january-to-march-2017>

Annual numbers and rates of insolvencies by region for 2000-2016 are available in the *Individual Insolvencies by Location, Age and Gender* publication

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/individual-insolvencies-by-location-age-and-gender-england-and-wales-2016>.

■ **Iron and Steel: Procurement**

Gill Furniss:

[5247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government plans to take to ensure the steel industry is supported to ensure a larger proportion of steel procurement comes from the UK.

Claire Perry:

Last December, the Government issued updated guidance to central government departments on how to ensure that they take full account of the value provided by UK steel producers when conducting their procurement activities. This guidance has now been extended to the wider public sector.

Since publication of the guidance, the Government has been working closely with departments to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the guidance.

The Government also published its indicative future steel requirements to 2020 in December, to enable UK steel manufacturers to better plan and bid for government contracts.

Alongside this, we have also commissioned independent research into future market opportunities for UK steel and are actively encouraging the sector to identify the capabilities it will need to act on the findings.

■ **Mergers and Monopolies: Data Protection**

Chi Onwurah:

[5426]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Competitions and Markets Commission (a) assesses and (b) calculates the value and market power of data when considering monopolies and mergers; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) takes account of data and data markets where appropriate when assessing relevant mergers for their potential effects on competition.

■ Nuclear Power: Treaties**Paul Blomfield:**[\[5506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the length of time a single Nuclear Cooperation Agreement will take to agree and ratify when the UK leaves the Euratom treaty.

Richard Harrington:

Each Nuclear Cooperation Agreement is negotiated on a case-by-case basis and different countries have different arrangements for agreeing and ratifying them.

The UK already has bilateral Nuclear Cooperation Agreements in place with several countries and we expect these to continue. We are working to develop new arrangements as necessary to maintain our mutually successful cooperation on civil nuclear with our international partners.

■ Offshore Industry: North Sea**Martyn Day:**[\[5555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent progress has been made on supporting decommissioning in the North Sea oil and gas industry.

Richard Harrington:

The oil and gas industry has decommissioned around 12% of the installations and pipelines in the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS) to date. The volume of decommissioning activity is expected to increase over the coming years. The Government is committed to supporting the development of a world leading oil and gas decommissioning industry to take advantage of this opportunity.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is working with the Oil and Gas Authority to help build capacity in the supply chain by giving greater visibility of forthcoming programmes so they can prepare accordingly for the opportunity that decommissioning activity will present.

The Government supported the establishment of the Oil and Gas Technology Centre (OGTC) as part of the Aberdeen City Region Deal. The OGTC is now working with industry to develop new ways in which technology can help in the decommissioning process.

■ Performing Arts**Kevin Brennan:**[\[5574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues on the potential benefits to the creative industries of extending shared parental leave to freelance workers.

Margot James:

Ministers in this Department and others have regular discussions on a number of issues.

Self-employed people have greater flexibility over their working hours, including when they take time off work.

Retail Trade: Productivity**Chi Onwurah:**[\[5424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to improve productivity in the retail sector; and if he will make a statement.

Claire Perry:

Retail is a vital sector for the UK economy, spreading wealth across the whole of the country, creating jobs, and injecting billions of pounds into our economy. We are working closely with retailers to address productivity issues, and would welcome their proposals as part of Industrial Strategy. Support for retailers is also available from Local Growth Hubs and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

Social Tariffs: Torfaen**Nick Thomas-Symonds:**[\[5121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) proportion of people in Torfaen constituency who are customers on the poorest value energy tariff.

Margot James:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) run a quarterly survey of domestic electricity and gas suppliers. This survey has coverage of around 85 per cent of the market. Data is supplied to BEIS, on numbers of customers by tariff, by region, and by payment type, but as this data is supplied in confidence, individual tariff or company data cannot be made publically available.

Aggregate statistics are produced and published as part of our quarterly energy prices (QEP) publication. In quarter 1 2017, we estimate 66 per cent of standard electricity and 65 per cent of gas customers were on variable tariffs. Our current methodology does not breakdown standard variable tariffs from other variable tariffs or by constituency. Data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/quarterly-domestic-energy-price-statistics>

Taxation: Electronic Government**Bill Esterson:**[\[5457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2017 to Question 2617, how much funding his Department has

allocated to the assessment of HM Revenue and Customs' consultation exercise, Making Tax Digital.

Margot James:

In Government, HMRC is responsible for running its consultation on Making Tax Digital (MTD). This Department and HMRC routinely work together closely on a number of tax issues affecting business and this work is factored in to our business planning. My Rt Hon Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury made a written Ministerial Statement to the House on 13 July (HCWS47), which included further information about the timetable for MTD:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2017-07-13/HCWS47/>

■ **Technology and Innovation Centres**

Chi Onwurah:

[5422]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the contribution of Catapult centres to (a) the economy and (b) innovation since their introduction; and to what extent the level of private sector funding has compared to his Department's projections for such funding.

Joseph Johnson:

[Holding answer 20 July 2017]: Latest figures show that the Catapult network has supported 2,851 SMEs, with 2,473 industry collaborations and has worked across 24 countries. It is too early to fully assess the long-term contribution of the Catapult network as many of the Catapults are still in their early stages. A new Evaluation Framework to provide a structure for measuring Catapult performance will be published later in the year.

■ **UK Consumer Product Recall Review**

Andy Slaughter:

[5294]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress has been made by the Steering Group created as a result of the Government's response to the independent review by Lynn Faulds Wood, UK consumer product recall, published 18 February 2016.

Margot James:

In October 2016 the Steering Group was replaced by a new Working Group on Product Recalls and Safety with a permanent Chair, wider representation, and a broader remit. It was also asked to report to a much tighter timeframe than the Steering Group it replaced.

I received the Working Group's initial recommendations to further improve the safety of white goods and the recall system in December 2016 and work started immediately to take these forward. In June this year, I asked the Working Group to review their report in light of the Grenfell Tower fire and their final report was published on 19th July.

Significant progress has already been made by the Working Group to develop a code of practice on corrective action and product recalls together with the British Standards Institution (BSI), and a public consultation will be published in the autumn. The Report also sets out the further work that is underway to strengthen the product safety framework including promoting the registration of appliances and better understanding consumer responses to safety information and recall communications.

■ Voluntary Work: Leave

Mr Steve Reed:

[\[4709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to introduce a new workplace entitlement to volunteering leave for three days a year.

Margot James:

[Holding answer 17 July 2017]: The Government is keen to see greater corporate responsibility on the part of employers and to encourage the public sector, charities and businesses to consider their impact on society. Employer-supported volunteering can help to build stronger communities and a stronger economy, by helping charities and community groups to do more and by creating a more motivated and productive workforce. Many public sector organisations and businesses already run impressive volunteering programmes.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Brexit

Deidre Brock:

[\[4871\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the format will be for the intensive discussions with devolved administrations on common frameworks referred to in his letter to hon. Members.

Chris Skidmore:

The government is committed to intensive engagement with the devolved administrations on all areas of EU exit, including common frameworks. The First Secretary of State has written to the First Minister of Wales, Deputy First Minister of Scotland and senior officials have written to the interim Head of the Civil Service in the Northern Ireland Executive Office, to instigate this process. Discussions will seek to build an understanding of areas that will and will not require a common framework. Both Ministerial and official meetings will take place during the summer.

■ Elections: Subversion

Mr David Lammy:

[\[5264\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of whether foreign nationals attempted to interfere in the (a) 2016 EU referendum and (b) 2017 General Election.

Chris Skidmore:

I will not comment on operational or intelligence matters, however I can assure you that there has been no successful interference in any UK electoral process to date.

Our system of paper balloting and hand counting means UK voting mechanisms do not lend themselves to direct electronic manipulation. A series of protective measures were put in place ahead of the 2015 General Election, designed to be sufficiently enduring to mitigate future threats, including the EU referendum and future polls.

The NCSC continues to offer political parties access to the best cyber security guidance and support. The NCSC sent refreshed cyber security guidance to the range of bodies involved in the 2017 General Election.

Electoral Register**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[5400\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of changes to the number of people registered to vote in the last three 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 Response to PQ5400 [PQ5400 v0.6.pdf]

Government Departments: Procurement**Catherine West:**[\[3444\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government is committed to awarding at least 33 per cent of government procurement to small and medium-sized enterprises by 2020.

Caroline Nokes:

In 2014-15, Central Government spent over £12 billion (27.1%) with small and medium sized businesses, which shows a continued year on year increase in SMEs winning public procurements. The Manifesto committed to ensuring of 33% of spend with SMEs by the end of this Parliament.

Intimidation of Parliamentary Candidates Review**John Mann:**[\[5351\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the announced review of electoral abuse by the Committee for Standards in Public Life will supersede implementation of the recommendations of the Law Commission's review of electoral law.

John Mann:

[5813]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government plans to bring forward legislation to implement the recommendations of the Law Commission's 2016 review of electoral law.

Chris Skidmore:

The Government looks forward to the review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and will wish to consider in due course how to respond to its findings. The Government will continue to work with the Law Commission on how best to implement their recommendations from their review of electoral law in collaboration with other stakeholders.

■ **Living Wage: Jarrow**

Mr Stephen Hepburn:

[5339]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people working in Jarrow constituency earn less than the national living wage.

Chris Skidmore:

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

■ **New Businesses: Newham**

Stephen Timms:

[5415]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many new businesses have been set up in the London Borough of Newham in each year since 2010.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ5415 [PQ5415 v.02.pdf]

■ **Personal Income**

Kirsty Blackman:

[5611]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the change in the median income of non-retired households since 2007-08.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ5611 [PQ5611 v.02.pdf]

■ Public Sector: Blaenau Gwent**Nick Smith:** [\[5016\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what information his Department holds on the number and proportion of constituents in Blaenau Gwent who worked in the public sector in each year for which data is available.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ5016 [PQ5016 v.02.pdf]

■ Public Sector: Cardiff Central**Jo Stevens:** [\[5292\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of constituents in Cardiff Central constituency worked in the public sector in each year for which data is available.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ5292 [PQ5291 v.02.pdf]

■ Public Sector: Ogmore**Chris Elmore:** [\[5179\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of constituents in Ogmore constituency worked in the public sector in each year for which data is available.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ5179 [PQ 5179 v.02.pdf]

■ Public Sector: Swansea East**Carolyn Harris:** [\[5164\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of constituents in Swansea East constituency worked in the public sector in each year for which data is available.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ5164 [PQ5164 v.02.pdf]

Public Sector: Torfaen**Nick Thomas-Symonds:**[\[5120\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, (a) how many and (b) what proportion of people in Torfaen constituency worked in the public sector in each year for which data is available.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ5210 [PQ5120 v.02.pdf]

Public Sector: Wrexham**Ian C. Lucas:**[\[5273\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of people in Wrexham constituency worked in the public sector in each of the last five years for which data is available.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ5273 [PQ5273 v.02.pdf]

Young People: Cardiff Central**Jo Stevens:**[\[5291\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many 18 to 25-year olds in Cardiff Central constituency were recorded (a) in the latest census estimate and (b) on the electoral register.

Chris Skidmore:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response to PQ5291 [PQ5291 v.02.pdf]

TREASURY■ **Bank Services**

Justin Tomlinson: [4829]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with banks on dedicated support for customers who are disabled or have a long-term health condition, a mental health condition or cancer.

Stephen Barclay:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery. Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

UK banks' and building societies' treatment of their customers is governed by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in its Principles for Businesses and includes a general requirement for firms to provide a prompt, efficient and fair service to all of their customers.

The House of Lords Select Committee on Financial Exclusion raised a number of issues affecting vulnerable customers in their recent report: *Tackling financial exclusion: a country that works for everyone?* The Government will respond to that report in due course.

■ **Children: Day Care**

Tracy Brabin: [5088]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people who applied for an eligibility childcare code for 30 hours free childcare via the gov.uk website have been unsuccessful; and how many of those unsuccessful applicants (a) are in employment but not contracted to work 16 hours per week and (b) became employed within the last three months.

Tracy Brabin: [5598]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to Question 4504 on children: day care, how many calls the dedicated helpline has received so far.

Elizabeth Truss:

As of 19 July, 13,218 parents with a 3 or 4 year old child have been unsuccessful in their application for 30 hours free childcare since the start of the childcare service trial in November 2016.

Parents must meet the minimum income criteria to qualify for 30 hours free childcare. Parents can also apply for 30 hours free childcare up to 14 days before returning to work.

As of 19 July, there have been approximately 169,000 calls from parents and 49,000 calls from childcare providers to the dedicated childcare service helpline since the start of the childcare service trial in November 2016.

■ Climate Change Levy

Peter Dowd: [\[5388\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many businesses received a reduced rate of climate change levy for participating in climate change agreements in (a) 2014-15, (b) 2015-16 and (c) 2016-17.

Peter Dowd: [\[5389\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many businesses received a climate change levy exemption for electricity generated from renewable resources in (a) 2014-15, (b) 2015-16 and (c) 2016-17.

Andrew Jones:

Climate change agreements cover businesses within 53 energy intensive sectors, ranging from farming to aerospace. HMRC do not have detailed information on the number of businesses benefiting from the renewable sourced electricity exemption.

■ Crossrail 2 Line

Catherine West: [\[5099\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the economic benefits of Crossrail 2 to Haringey; and what role this assessment will play in his decision on allocating funding to the project.

Catherine West: [\[5331\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Transport, (b) Ministers at the Department for Transport and (c) officials from the Department for Transport on Crossrail 2; and when he plans to make a decision on that project's business case.

Catherine West: [\[5332\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the business case for Crossrail 2 meets the recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission on costs, funding and housing.

Elizabeth Truss:

As with all transport scheme proposals, a thorough analysis of the Crossrail 2 strategic outline business case is being carried out by the Department for Transport, to ensure it is a robust scheme and to assess its potential economic effects. This includes examining whether the National Infrastructure Commission's detailed recommendations on the scheme — including those on costs, funding and housing — have been met.

These considerations are part of a normal ongoing process, and the next steps and timescales for the project will be decided as part of this analysis.

Regular discussions between government departments continue in the usual way.

■ Customs

Tom Brake: [\[5525\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the potential effect on (a) the flow of goods and people at UK ports and (b) the number of additional revenue and customs officials required to carry out customs declarations of the UK leaving the EU customs union.

Mel Stride:

The Government is committed to securing the most frictionless trading relationship possible with the EU. HMRC is working with other government departments which share the responsibility for maintaining the flow of trade and passengers through our borders.

The resources and staffing levels required by HMRC after the UK leaves the European Union will be dependent on the outcome of negotiations.

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [\[5547\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment the Government has made of the effect on the flow of goods and people at UK ports of the UK leaving the EU customs union.

Mel Stride:

The Government is committed to securing the most frictionless trading relationship possible with the EU. HMRC is working with other government departments which share the responsibility for maintaining the flow of trade and passengers through our borders to help achieve this.

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [\[5548\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the number of additional revenue and customs officials potentially required to carry out additional customs declarations after the UK leaves the EU customs union.

Mel Stride:

The resources and staffing levels required by HMRC after the UK leaves the European Union will be dependent on the outcome of negotiations.

■ Debts

Jonathan Reynolds: [\[4458\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the level of personal debt is; and if he will make a statement.

Stephen Barclay:

Based on data from the Office of National Statistics, household debt-to-income ratio was 145% in Q1 2017. This is notably below the pre-crisis high of 160% in Q1 2008.

The independent Financial Policy Committee (FPC) was set up by the government to assess and mitigate financial stability risks, including from household debt. The FPC has taken action to ensure against a significant rise in highly indebted households.

Economic Growth**Kirsty Blackman:**[\[5608\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps to increase economic growth across the UK his Department has taken as a direct result of the UK's decision to leave the EU.

Stephen Barclay:

We are confident that we will be able to deliver a good deal for the UK via the Brexit negotiations.

The government is committed to driving growth in the economy and raising long run living standards, and is always looking at ways to achieve this. For example, we have established a National Productivity Investment Fund targeted at the productivity-critical areas of transport, R&D, housing and digital communications; the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to support research and innovation in universities and businesses, and committed £400 million through the British Business Bank to invest in growing innovative firms with potential for growth, providing the finance that they need to expand. The Government is also making sure that young people have the skills that British businesses need through the reform of the technical education system and the introduction of T-levels.

Economic Growth: Equality**Kirsty Blackman:**[\[5612\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has commissioned research on projected levels of inequality and economic growth since the date of the EU referendum.

Stephen Barclay:

The independent Office for Budget Responsibility is tasked with creating the forecasts for economic growth on which the government sets fiscal policy. These are published in the 'Economic and fiscal outlook', most recently at the Spring Budget 2017. At Spring Budget 2017, the OBR revised up growth in 2017 to 2.0%.

There are no official projections of inequality. The latest data from the ONS show that inequality reached a 30-yr low last year.

Economic Growth: Scotland

Kirsty Blackman: [5609]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the relative economic growth of the UK compared to that of Scotland in the first quarter of 2017.

Stephen Barclay:

Estimated growth of Gross Domestic Product in Scotland for the first quarter of 2017 is published by the Scottish Government here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Economy/PubGDP/GDP2017Q1>

Estimated growth of Gross Domestic Product for the whole UK for the first quarter of 2017 is published by the Office for National Statistics here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/quarterlynationalaccounts/jantomar2017>

Financial Services

Ronnie Cowan: [4474]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if the Government will introduce a requirement on the Financial Conduct Authority to set out a reasonable duty of care for financial services providers to exercise towards their customers.

Stephen Barclay:

The government recognises that there are different views on the merits of introducing a duty of care for financial services providers. The government welcomes the Financial Conduct Authority's commitment to publish a discussion paper to explore the issue of duty of care, as part of the planned review of their Handbook described in their Mission document published in April.

Ian Blackford: [5064]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made on the effect on the financial stability of the UK of the Financial Policy Committee's decision of 21 June 2017 to bring forward the assessment of stressed losses on consumer credit lending in the Bank of England's 2017 annual stress test.

Ian Blackford: [5065]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made on the effect on the financial stability of the UK of the Financial Policy Committee's decision of 21 June 2017 to raise the UK's Countercyclical Capital Buffer rates from 0 per cent to 0.5 per cent.

Ian Blackford: [5066]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made on the effect on the financial stability of the UK of the Financial Policy Committee's decision of 21 June 2017 to set the minimum leverage requirements at 3.25 per cent of non-reserve exposures.

Ian Blackford:

[5067]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made on the effect on the financial stability of the UK of the Financial Policy Committee's decision of 21 June 2017 to oversee contingency planning to mitigate risk as the UK leaves the EU.

Stephen Barclay:

The assessment of the effect of the decisions made by the Financial Policy Committee (FPC) on the financial stability of the UK is a matter for the FPC. The government established the independent FPC in 2013, giving the FPC a primary objective to identify, monitor and take action to remove or reduce systemic risks with a view to protecting and enhancing the resilience of the UK financial system. The FPC comprises thirteen members including the Governor and a non-voting member from HM Treasury (currently the Second Permanent Secretary).

Following its recent policy meeting on 21 June, the FPC published the Financial Stability Report (FSR) on 27 June. The FSR set out the FPC's latest assessment of the outlook for financial stability in the UK, as well as the actions that the FPC has deemed necessary to meet its objectives.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer is legally required to meet the Governor to discuss the FSR and other matters relating to UK financial stability as appropriate, as soon as possible after the publication of the FSR. HM Treasury will publish a record of this meeting within 6 weeks of the meeting taking place.

■ Foreign Exchange

Martyn Day:

[4869]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2017 to Question 2292, from the hon. Member for Edinburgh South, whether he plans to publish the results of the research on foreign exchange (a) separately from the Government's response to the consultation, (b) in conjunction with the Government's response to the consultation or (c) not at all; if he will bring forward amendments to the draft Payment Services Regulations as a direct result of those findings; and if he will make a statement.

Stephen Barclay:

In my answer of 5 July I stated that the Government was conducting research on the effects of transparency in overseas money transfers (involving foreign exchange) on consumer decisions. This research helped to inform the Government's response to the consultation on the implementation of the second Payment Services Directive (PSDII), which was published on 19 July 2017.

The Government's response to the consultation explains that, as the second Payment Services Directive is a maximum harmonising Directive, the Government has limited flexibility as to how far we can go beyond its explicit requirements. Although the Government could see some benefit in requiring firms to display the difference between the exchange rate they offer and the interbank exchange rate, it is clear that including such a requirement in PSDII would be gold-plating, and the Government has therefore decided not to do so.

The Government does not intend to publish the research at this point in time as it relates to the formulation and development of ongoing Government policy.

■ **Insurance Premium Tax**

David Linden: [5529]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect of increasing insurance premium tax on the uptake of household insurance.

Mel Stride:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given on 17 July [UIN 4505].

■ **Minimum Wage: Home Care Services**

Paul Blomfield: [5490]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what information HM Revenue and Customs requests from local authorities to support minimum wage compliance checks on domiciliary care companies commissioned by those local authorities.

Paul Blomfield: [5507]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many care providers have been prosecuted by HM Revenue and Customs for failing to maintain sufficient minimum wage records.

Mel Stride:

The Government is determined that everyone who is entitled to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) receives it. Anyone who feels they have been underpaid NMW or NLW should contact the Acas helpline on 0300 123 1100. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) reviews all complaints that are referred to them.

HMRC do not routinely request information from local authorities. HMRC do however act on information from a range of sources including workers, third parties (which can include local authorities) and unions. HMRC also has a range of tools to obtain the necessary information from employers to assess NMW non-compliance.

I refer the honourable member to the answer provided at UIN [HL4264](#) for details of NMW prosecutions. There have been no prosecutions against any care providers to date.

■ **Non-domestic Rates: Appeals**

John Spellar: [4956]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what complaints he has received on the new system for contesting Business Rate Appeals; and what steps he has taken in response to those complaints.

John Spellar:

[4957]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) effectiveness and (b) value-for-money of the operation of the Valuation Office Agency website.

Mel Stride:

The new business rates appeals system, Check, Challenge, Appeal came into effect on 1 April 2017. A new system was required because the previous system was broken. Appeals were made with little or no evidence and more than 70% of appeals resulted in no change.

The Check and Challenge service has been delivered by the Valuation Office Agency as a public beta service, meaning that the system is still being improved. The Valuation Office Agency is actively monitoring the service to identify and address any technical issues in the digital system which affect the customer experience. There have been some complaints about technical faults and lack of functionality in relation to the new service, which are being addressed.

The service is now working normally and work delayed through these issues is being cleared. Thousands of people have used the system and both Checks and Challenges are being made. I have been assured by the Valuation Office Agency that enhanced functionality and additional features for the service will be released throughout this financial year.

Regarding the effectiveness and value for money of the online service, it is expected that the new way of working will provide longer-term value for money as issues are dealt with earlier in the process and there is reduced incentive for speculative appeals.

Tim Farron:

[5080]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many appeals against business rates valuation the Valuation Office has received since the check, challenge, appeal system was established; and how many of those appeals were successful.

Mel Stride

There are three stages to the new Check, Challenge, Appeal system:

- The Check stage allows the business or agent to understand exactly how a valuation has been calculated. It shows all the underlying facts about a property, and allows the business or agent to update the facts about the property if anything has changed. This gives individuals the opportunity to understand and agree the set of facts underlying any valuation, and to resolve any factual issues early.
- The Challenge stage allows people to challenge the valuation calculated on the basis of the facts agreed at the Check stage, if they feel that the valuation is incorrect. The Challenge stages gives the VOA the opportunity to address and resolve the issue without the need for an appeal. The VOA will present the evidence to support their decision.

- If ratepayers are still unhappy, having understood all the evidence and basis for the decision made at Challenge, they can Appeal to the independent Valuation Tribunal for England. This appeal will be undertaken on the basis of all the evidence and arguments put forward from both sides at the Challenge stage.

While thousands of people have started using the service to question their valuation, the Valuation Tribunal Service has confirmed that, as at 18 July 2017, no appeals have been made.

■ **Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust: Octagon Healthcare**

Clive Lewis: [\[5613\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the recommendation of the National Audit Office in its report of 28 April 2011, Lessons from PFI and other projects, on his Department collecting data better to understand the relationship between the investors' returns and the risks they have borne and the value which PFI equity investors contribute, what estimate his Department has made of the value which Octagon Healthcare contributes to the Norwich and Norfolk NHS Trust.

Stephen Barclay:

The Treasury response to the National Audit Office report partially accepted the recommendation and made clear that we would take the recommendation into account for new projects. This has been done and we are in the process of collecting the information, which we will publish in due course. The Norfolk and Norwich Hospital is not included as it was already subject to a signed contract that did not contain the necessary clauses to enable the data to be collected.

■ **Patient Capital Advisory Panel**

Ian Murray: [\[5411\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, when patient capital review consultation will commence; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Jones:

The government intends to publish a consultation as part of the patient capital review shortly. The government will then publish a summary of responses to the consultation in the usual way.

■ **Pay**

Neil Gray: [\[4472\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has commissioned research into the effect of wage stagnation on household incomes throughout the UK.

Stephen Barclay:

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimate that total pay increased by 1.8% on the year in the three months to May. In their Spring Budget Forecast, the Office for

Budget Responsibility (OBR) also expected wages to increase in each year of their forecast.

The Government is taking action to support incomes. This includes increasing the National Living Wage, raising the personal allowance and freezing fuel duty.

Kirsty Blackman:

[5610]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2017 to Question 3810, on pay, whether real earnings are expected to reduce between July 2017 and 2019.

Stephen Barclay:

The Office for Budget Responsibility do not produce their forecast on a monthly basis, but do publish some variables on a quarterly basis in their supplementary economy tables. Using their forecast for consumer price inflation and average earnings, the level of real earnings is expected to rise by 1.6% from 2017 Q2 to 2019 Q4.

The Government is taking action to support incomes. This includes increasing the National Living Wage, raising the personal allowance and freezing fuel duty.

■ Personal Injury

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[5554]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to review the workings of the Personal Injury Discount Scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Elizabeth Truss:

The Government is considering how to respond to the consultation. It would not be appropriate to comment until a decision has been made on the way ahead.

■ Public Finance

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[5102]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on the public finances in 2016-17 of (a) raising the personal tax allowance to £15,000 per annum and (b) increasing the basic rate of income tax to 25 per cent.

Mel Stride:

The cost of raising the income tax personal allowance and basic rate of income tax in 2018-19 may be approximated using the "Direct effects of illustrative tax changes" table as published at the following address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/direct-effects-of-illustrative-tax-changes>

The table shows the cost of a £100 increase and a 10% increase in the personal allowance.

The table also shows the revenue generated by a 1% increase in the basic rate of income tax. This can be used to scale the proportionate cost to raise the basic rate of Income tax to 25%.

■ Raw Materials: Imports**Drew Hendry:** [\[5579\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to take steps to assist businesses with any increased costs on importing raw materials which result from changes in the value of the pound after the UK leaves the EU.

Mel Stride:

The Government is committed to ensuring the minimum possible disruption for business. The British economy is fundamentally strong because of the decisions this Government has taken.

To help support business, the government has announced over £23bn of additional investment in economic infrastructure, research and development, and housing, while corporation tax will be cut to 17 per cent – the lowest rate in the G20.

■ Revenue and Customs: Staff**Chris Law:** [\[4611\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support HM Revenue and Customs' Surge and Rapid Response Team provides to Border Force.

Mel Stride:

The cross government Surge and Rapid Response Team (SRRT) is available to all government departments to provide assistance with unexpected demands for access to their services and provide operational support in a crisis situation. The team is hosted by HMRC. During 2016/17, SRRT provided support to Border Force at Heathrow Airport between July and October, with resource ranging from 9 to 44 FTE per week during that period. Staff provided assistance with a range of border control operations after receiving full training from Border Force.

■ Stamp Duty Land Tax**James Gray:** [\[4669\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the stamp duty levy on investment in new homes to rent out.

Mel Stride:

The Government introduced the higher rates of stamp duty on additional properties to support home ownership and first-time buyers. It is right that people should be free to purchase a second home or invest in a buy-to-let property, but the Government is aware that this can impact on other people's ability to get on to the property ladder.

The latest estimate for this measure's receipts for 2016-17 is £1.6 billion, compared to an initial forecast of £0.7 billion.

James Gray: [\[4670\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the total income from the additional stamp duty levy on additional homes was for 2016-17; and what the total amount refunded was

on the grounds of a purchaser having sold their main residence within three years of buying a new one.

Mel Stride:

Estimated receipts from the higher rate of SDLT on 'additional properties' from 1 April 2016, is published in 'Quarterly Stamp Duty Statistics' Table 6.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/quarterly-stamp-duty-statistics>

Statistics on repayments from the higher rate of SDLT on additional properties for 2016-17 are due to be published in July 2017.

James Gray:

[4671]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assumptions he made in forecasting expected revenue from the three percentage point stamp duty levy on the purchase of additional homes and homes to rent out.

Mel Stride:

The key assumptions behind the forecast for expected revenue from the SDLT higher rates for additional properties are set out in the Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 policy costings:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/480565/SRAS2015_policy_costings_amended_page_25.pdf

These assumptions were updated in the Budget 2016 policy costings:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508147/PU1912_Policy_Costings_FINAL3.pdf

■ **Tax Allowances: Landlords**

Wayne David:

[5104]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of section 24 of the Finance (No. 2) Act 2015 on private landlords.

Wayne David:

[5105]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of private landlords on the effect on private sector landlords of section 24 of the Finance (No. 2) Act 2015.

Mel Stride:

HMRC estimate that only 1 in 5 landlords will pay more tax as a result of this measure. Landlords can still claim income tax relief on their finance costs at the basic rate, and receive relief at their marginal rate of tax on the day-to-day running costs incurred in letting out a property.

Ministers hold regular meetings with external stakeholders to discuss a wide variety of issues, including property tax.

■ Tax Avoidance: Sports and Entertainments

Peter Dowd: [\[5390\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much the HM Revenue and Customs dedicated team on tax avoidance in sports and the entertainment industries raised in (a) 2017, (b) 2016 and (c) 2015.

Mel Stride:

HMRC does not have a dedicated team dealing with tax avoidance in the sports and entertainment industries. HMRC has a project looking at all compliance risks in football to ensure that Football Clubs, players, managers and agents pay the correct amount of tax. Since 2014/15 HMRC has brought in over £260m from tackling non-compliance in the football industry.

Peter Dowd: [\[5391\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) individuals, (b) agents and (c) sports clubs are being investigated by the HM Revenue and Customs dedicated team on tax avoidance in the sports and entertainment industries.

Mel Stride:

HMRC does not have a dedicated team dealing with tax avoidance in the sports and entertainment industries. HMRC has a project looking at all compliance risks in football to ensure that Football Clubs, players, managers and agents pay the correct amount of tax. HMRC is currently investigating 67 footballers, 39 football clubs and 13 agents for a range of issues including image rights abuse and are looking into more than 100 footballers in relation to the use of tax avoidance schemes.

■ Tax Havens

Chi Onwurah: [\[5423\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the (a) rate of progress of the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting Project and (b) potential effect that project will have on (i) the UK banking sector and (ii) UK tax receipts.

Mel Stride:

The UK has been at the forefront of the OECD's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting to address the gaps and mismatches in the global tax system, used to artificially shift profits to low or no tax locations where there is little or no economic activity. This initiative has provided governments with recommendations for domestic and international instruments to address tax avoidance and to help ensure that companies pay their fair share.

This government has already implemented many of the OECD's recommendations. The independent Office for Budget Responsibility has certified that these measures are set to raise over £5 billion by the end of 2020-21, from businesses across industries and sectors.

■ Taxation

David Linden:

[5527]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to take further steps to tackle the UK's widening tax gap.

Mel Stride:

This Government is committed to continuing to tackle tax avoidance, evasion and non-compliance. The Government has secured almost £160 billion in additional tax revenues since 2010, and the UK's tax gap is one of the lowest in the world at 6.5% in 2014-15, down from 7.2% in 2009-10.

■ Taxation: Electronic Government

Neil Gray:

[4473]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assistance will be provided to businesses transitioning to Making Tax Digital.

Mel Stride:

Information on the Making Tax Digital (MTD) rollout was given in my written statement to the House on 13 July which is available here.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statements/?page=1&max=20&questiontype=AllQuestions&house=commons%2c lords&use-dates=True&answered-from=2017-07-13&answered-to=2017-07-13&dept=14&uin=HCWS47>

Businesses who require help to transition to MTD will be able to access the full range of support that HMRC provides to its customers to help them engage digitally.

David Linden:

[5528]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of phasing in digital taxation rollout.

Mel Stride:

Information on the Making Tax Digital (MTD) rollout was given in my written statement to the House on 13 July which is available here.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2017-07-13/HCWS47/>

The Government's changes to the MTD timetable which will now see MTD phased in over a longer period will ensure that businesses have plenty of time to adapt to the reforms.

HM Revenue & Customs' impact assessment, published on 8 March, will be updated at Autumn Budget when the impacts of these changes have been fully assessed and certified.

■ Taxation: USA

Stephen Hammond: [\[4634\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on (a) that country repealing its Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act and (b) exempting non-life insurance services from the remit of that Act.

Stephen Hammond: [\[4702\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the US on repealing the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act and exempting non-life insurance services from the remit of that Act as part of ongoing trade discussions between the UK and US.

Stephen Hammond: [\[4703\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has made to his counterpart in the US on the effect on UK financial services businesses of complying with the US Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act.

Stephen Barclay:

As part of the process of reviewing the Inter-Governmental Agreement between the UK and the US that implements FATCA in the UK, my officials have raised a wide range of issues with the US Treasury and the IRS, including the obligations placed by the US on the non-life insurance industry.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Housing

Mr David Lammy: [\[5265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the affordability of affordable homes available at up to 80 per cent of market rent for people on low and middle incomes.

Alok Sharma:

The Affordable Rent model was introduced to maximise the delivery of new affordable housing, making the best possible use of constrained public subsidy. It allows us to deliver more homes for every pound of Government investment, so more people in housing need can have access to a good quality home at a sub-market rent. This has allowed us to build nearly 333,000 new affordable homes since 2010, including 240,000 affordable homes for rent.

Rent must be set at or below 80 per cent of market rents, so tenants will still benefit from sub-market rent. When setting rent, landlords must consider the local market conditions to ensure fit with local circumstances. Actual levels of rents vary. For example, in London, Affordable rent is around 60 per cent of the market rates.

The vast majority of social housing (94 per cent) is still provided at social rent.

■ Building Regulations: Fires

Chris Williamson:

[\[4446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2017 to Question 750, on building regulations: fires, what progress his Department has made on simplifying the fire safety guidance relating to Building Regulations (Approved Document B).

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 17 July 2017]: Work to simplify the guidance was being progressed. Following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, we will need to consider the position on guidance further alongside the Prime Minister's commitment to look at wider issues.

Chris Williamson:

[\[4447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2017 to Question 750, on building regulations: fires, when his Department plans to publish new fire safety guidance.

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 17 July 2017]: Work to simplify the guidance was being progressed. Following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, we will need to consider the position on guidance further alongside the Prime Minister's commitment to look at wider issues.

Chris Williamson:

[\[4448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2017 to Question 750, on building regulations: fires, whether his Department plans to call for written submissions when reviewing fire safety guidance relating to Building Regulations (Approved Document B).

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 17 July 2017]: Work to simplify the guidance was being progressed. Following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, we will need to consider the position on guidance further alongside the Prime Minister's commitment to look at wider issues.

Chris Williamson:

[\[4449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2017 to Question 750, on building regulations: fires, if the Government will make an assessment of the merits of bringing forward legislative proposals on installing automatic fire suppression systems in all new build residential premises.

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 17 July 2017]: It is already a requirement in the Building Regulations guidance for new buildings (dwellings and offices) over 30 metres to have a sprinkler system since. Following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower the Prime Minister has committed to look at wider issues, and in the light of the terms of reference for the public inquiry.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Andrew Gwynne: [\[5405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in (a) France, (b) Australia and (c) Dubai on incidents of fire in high-rise buildings where cladding has been used.

Alok Sharma:

Ministers are overseeing the Department's work comparing international fire safety approaches in various regions including Europe, Australasia and the Middle East.

■ Carbon Dioxide: Alarms

John McNally: [\[5115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make the use of professional equipment mandatory for the testing of carbon dioxide alarms.

Alok Sharma:

There are no requirements for carbon dioxide alarms in England and so there are no plans to make the use of professional equipment mandatory for the testing of them.

On carbon monoxide alarms, building regulations in England require that an alarm be provided when a solid fuel appliance is installed, and sets standards for the quality of that alarm. The Building Regulations set requirements when building work is carried out and do not set on-going requirements for testing.

■ Council Housing: Construction

Gloria De Piero: [\[3707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what incentives are available to local authorities to build council housing on (a) brownfield and (b) greenfield sites.

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 12 July 2017]: The Housing White Paper reflects our ambition to support local authorities in building more affordable homes. My officials are working with local authorities to understand all the options for increasing the supply of affordable housing, considering innovative ideas and bespoke deals with local authorities to support delivery.

We have made £7.1 billion available through the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016-2021. Local authorities can bid for this to fund a range of schemes. Local authorities can also work with the Homes and Communities Agency to access the Starter Homes Land Fund, to prepare brownfield sites that will include a high proportion of starter homes and other affordable homeownership tenures. We have also provided £32 million of Estates Regeneration grant funding, to assist with the early stages of regeneration schemes that offer the potential to deliver new homes.

Planning policy already makes it clear that local authorities should plan to meet the market and affordable housing needs in their area, insofar as possible. In doing so we expect them to work with their local communities to decide how much housing is necessary, of what type and where it should go.

■ Council Housing: Fire Prevention

Neil Coyle:

[2002]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if the Government will cover the costs incurred by leaseholders of council-owned property for any necessary fire safety improvements.

Alok Sharma:

We are aware of the potential impact on leaseholders in council owned properties and are currently working to understand them.

■ Council Housing: Repairs and Maintenance

Andrew Gwynne:

[4988]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what criteria will be used to assess whether local authorities are able to afford the refurbishment costs associated with ensuring that their properties are safe.

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 18 July 2017]: It is the landlord's responsibility to ensure that people are safe, and cost considerations should not get in the way of this. Where work is necessary to ensure the fire safety of social housing, we will ensure that lack of financial resources will not prevent it going ahead.

■ Department for Communities and Local Government: Public Expenditure

Andrew Gwynne:

[4881]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the levels of funding allocated to his Department in each of the next three years.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The information requested is available at the following link, (DCLG budget details are on pages 73 and 74):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dclg-annual-report-and-accounts-2016-to-2017>

■ Empty Property

Andrew Gwynne:

[4879]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number empty dwellings in (a) Bath, (b) Birmingham, (c) Bradford, (d) Brighton and Hove, (e) Bristol, (f) Cambridge, (g) Canterbury, (h) Carlisle, (i) Chester, (j) Chichester, (k) the City of London, (l) Coventry, (m) Derby, (n) Durham, (o) Ely, (p)

Exeter, (q) Gloucester, (r) Hereford, (s) Kingston upon Hull, (t) Lancaster, (u) Leeds, (v) Leicester, (w) Lichfield, (x) Lincoln, (y) Liverpool, (z) Manchester, (aa) Newcastle upon Tyne, (bb) Norwich, (cc) Nottingham, (dd) Oxford, (ee) Peterborough, (ff) Plymouth, (gg) Portsmouth, (hh) Preston, (ii) Ripon, (jj) Salford, (kk) Salisbury, (ll) Sheffield, (mm) Southampton, (nn) St Albans, (oo) Stoke-on-Trent, (pp) Sunderland, (qq) Truro, (rr) Wakefield, (ss) Wells, (tt) Westminster, (uu) Winchester (vv) Wolverhampton, (ww) Worcester and (xx) York.

Alok Sharma:

Statistics on vacant dwellings in England and in each local authority district are published in the Department's live table 615 which is available at the following link. This table shows the annual total numbers of empty homes and those vacant longer than six months and also vacant dwellings in the local authority, housing association and other public sector tenures.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

The number of homes vacant for more than six months is now at its lowest level since records began, with over 116,000 long term empty properties brought back in to use since 2009.

■ **Fire Prevention**

Chris Elmore:

[3031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of re-cladding on the effectiveness of fire breaks.

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 10 July 2017]: The Independent Expert Panel will provide advice to the government on any immediate measures needed to make buildings safe following the Grenfell Tower fire. It is a landlord's responsibility to ensure that people are kept safe. If building owners decide that they need to re-clad their buildings, this building work will need to be compliant with the requirements of the Building Regulations, including the requirements relating to the prevention of spread of fire over the external walls.

Guidance on the provision of fire breaks (cavity barriers) is provided in section 9 of Approved Document B.

John Healey:

[3489]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to conduct combustibility tests on exterior cladding other than aluminium composite material cladding.

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 11 July 2017]: The immediate priority was to identify the scale of use of Aluminium Composite Material ACM type cladding on buildings over 18 metres. On the advice of the Independent Expert Panel, the Government has now

commissioned the Building Research Establishment to test different wall cladding systems using three common types of Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) panelling with two commonly used types of insulation. The results will provide further evidence of how some commonly used wall systems using ACM perform in a fire. This evidence will be used to produce further advice to inform building owners' decisions on whether they need to take any additional action to make their buildings safe.

Advice was provided on 14 July in a note to all building control bodies, which highlighted the key Building Regulation requirements when cladding work on high rise buildings over 18 metres tall is undertaken. That note can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ensure-that-recladding-work-meets-building-regulations-advises-expert-panel>

■ Grenfell Tower Inquiry

Caroline Lucas:

[5062]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will continue to answer questions from hon. Members on fire safety in high-rise towers during the public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire incident.

Alok Sharma:

We wrote on 22 June and 11 July to update all Members of Parliament on the Grenfell Tower disaster, and will continue to provide regular updates at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/grenfell-tower>

We, as well as Home Office colleagues, will continue to provide what information we can to hon. Members during the public inquiry.

■ Grenfell Tower: Fires

John Healey:

[2713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, by what date everyone who lost their home as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire will be permanently rehoused.

Alok Sharma:

The Government has not set a date for the permanent rehousing of those who lost their homes, but we are working rapidly to find permanent housing as soon as possible. We have already announced a new block of social housing in Kensington Row that will provide 68 permanent new homes, and we are urgently working with a number of developers to secure similar properties in the area. The Prime Minister said clearly in her statement on 22 June that families who lost their homes as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire will be guaranteed a new home on the same terms as the one they lost. We are working closely with the families to ensure the properties made available will match what they want.

John Healey:**[2715]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will guarantee that no resident who lost their home as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire will be rehoused in a property where they (a) pay a higher rent or (b) have less security of tenure.

Alok Sharma:

The Prime Minister said clearly in her statement on 22 June that families who lost their homes as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire will be guaranteed a new home on the same terms as the one they lost. We are working closely with the families to ensure the properties made available will match what they want.

Rachel Reeves:**[2995]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the possibility of local asbestos contamination as a result of the fire at Grenfell Tower.

Alok Sharma:

Safety officers working with the emergency services currently on site have tested the air within Grenfell Tower for asbestos and have not detected any levels of concern. When work commences to clear the site there will be a system of engineering work that will prevent any asbestos being released from the site and a programme of regular environmental air monitoring conducted to minimise the risk to local residents and contractors. Public Health England is monitoring air quality around the site and to date has not detected any asbestos in the environment. The results of the monitoring tests are available on the PHE website along with a health explanation at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/628925/Environmental_monitoring_following_the_Grenfell_Tower_fire.pdf

Sir Desmond Swayne:**[3813]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the adequacy of insurance cover held by Kensington and Chelsea Council to meet the costs of the consequences of the Grenfell Tower fire; and if he will make a statement.

Alok Sharma:

My officials are working with the council to understand the policy and ensure that the insurers honour their obligations. It would not be appropriate to make any further statement at this time as discussions with the insurer are on going.

Dawn Butler:**[4765]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to ensure that the site of Grenfell Tower becomes a memorial garden in perpetuity commemorating the people who lost their life in the Grenfell Tower fire, the survivors and those who saved them.

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 18 July 2017]: It is too early to make long-term decisions about what should happen with the site, which is a matter for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea local authority to determine having consulted with survivors, relatives of those who lost their lives and the wider community. We understand the sensitivity and strong emotions, and will work with Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea local authority to ensure that their discussions are open and inclusive.

Andrew Gwynne:**[4915]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, for what reasons whole-system tests of cladding were not undertaken alongside testing samples of cladding material after the Grenfell Tower fire.

Alok Sharma:

The immediate priority following the Grenfell Tower fire was to identify what type of Aluminium Composite Material cladding was being used, and on how many buildings. Based on that evidence, the decision to undertake whole-system tests of cladding has been taken in response to advice from the expert panel advising the Government on fire safety.

On 6 July we published details of further tests to be carried out as the next step in helping landlords to ensure the safety of their buildings. These large scale tests will help establish how different types of ACM panels in combination with different types of insulation behave in a fire. Further detail about the next testing stage can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/expert-panel-recommends-further-tests-on-cladding-and-insulation>

Caroline Lucas:**[4992]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that all those homes affected by the Grenfell Tower fire have access to appropriate translation services and that all information provided by the Government and Kensington and Chelsea Council is translated into the 21 languages spoken by the residents of that building.

Alok Sharma:

Translation services are provided by the local authorities that manage the Westway Assistance Centre using existing contracted providers, with additional support available from voluntary sector organisations.

■ High Rise Flats: Construction**Tulip Siddiq:****[3905]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of recommending a moratorium on the construction of new residential tower blocks until the recommendations of the inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire have been published.

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 13 July 2017]: We do not intend to put a moratorium on new development of tower blocks. Where new tower blocks are being built, they must meet the requirements of the Building Regulations.

■ **High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention**

Helen Hayes:

[4091]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, for what reasons non-ACM housing cladding samples received by his Department have not yet been tested.

Alok Sharma:

The immediate priority was to identify the scale of use of Aluminium Composite Material ACM type cladding on buildings over 18 metres. On the advice of the Independent Expert panel, the Government has now commissioned the Building Research Establishment to test different wall cladding systems using three common types of ACM panelling with two commonly used types of insulation. The results will provide further evidence of how some commonly used wall systems using ACM perform in a fire. This evidence will be used to produce further advice to inform building owners' decisions on whether they need to take any additional action to make their buildings safe.

Advice was provided on 14 July in a note to all building control bodies, which highlighted the key Building Regulation requirements when cladding work on high rise buildings over 18 metres tall is undertaken. That note can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ensure-that-recladding-work-meets-building-regulations-advises-expert-panel>

Lucy Powell:

[4750]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 11 July 2017 to Question 2992, whether he plans that the resources to ensure the fire safety of social housing will be made available based on new fire safety regulations arising out of the Grenfell Tower fire or on existing fire regulations.

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 17 July 2017]: It is the landlord's responsibility to ensure that people are safe, and cost considerations should not get in the way of this. Where work is necessary to ensure the fire safety of social housing, we will ensure that lack of financial resources will not prevent it going ahead.

Caroline Lucas:

[4952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to bring forward legislative proposals to reinstate section 20 of the London Building Act 1939.

Alok Sharma:

Following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, the Prime Minister has committed to look at wider issues. This work will need to be progressed after the publication of the terms of reference for the public inquiry.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation**Mike Kane:****[2261]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will issue urgent guidance on what are acceptable replacement materials for the multi-storey blocks that have had cladding removed.

Alok Sharma:

The Building Regulations and supporting guidance set out the requirements for external walls in relation to fire safety. Advice to all building control bodies was published on 14 July, which highlighted the key Building Regulations' guidance requirements when cladding work on high rise buildings over 18 metres tall is undertaken. That note can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ensure-that-recladding-work-meets-building-regulations-advises-expert-panel>

Emma Hardy:**[2262]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to require formal planning for all proposals involving cladding.

Alok Sharma:

Generally the installation of cladding will be development that requires planning permission. There may be circumstances where the external appearance of the building is not materially altered where planning permission is not required, depending on the scale of the operation, but this is a matter for each local planning authority to determine in the first instance.

■ High Rise Flats: Sheffield**Chris Ruane:****[3913]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the unit costs of retrofitting sprinkler fire protection in Callow Towers high rise flats in Sheffield.

Alok Sharma:

The decision to retrospectively install sprinklers in Callow Towers in Sheffield in 2011 was taken by the local authority. The Department did not make an estimate of the costs.

■ High Rise Flats: Wolverhampton**Emma Reynolds:** [875]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what information his Department holds on tower blocks in Wolverhampton which are clad in flammable substances.

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 27 June 2017]: We have not been informed of any high rise residential buildings in Wolverhampton where combustible material has been identified by the Building Research Establishment's (BRE) testing programme. However, NHS Improvement did confirm on Tuesday 18 July that a cladding sample from an in-patient unit at New Cross Hospital, part of the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, had been screened as not being of limited combustibility in the test being carried out at BRE.

■ Homelessness**Mr Stephen Hepburn:** [4845]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of homeless people in (a) Jarrow constituency, (b) South Tyneside, (c) the North East and (d) the UK in each year since 2010.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Live table 784, published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness#homelessness-summary-local-authority-level-tables>, shows the number of statutory homelessness acceptances and numbers of households in temporary accommodation for each local authority in England since 2004/05. These totals are for England, not the UK. Statistics on homelessness are not collected at the level of parliamentary constituencies.

Andrew Gwynne: [4880]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many people were classified by local authorities as intentionally homeless in each of the last 10 years.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The numbers of households found to be intentionally homeless and in priority need by local authorities in England since 1998 can be found in live table 770 published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness#statutory-homelessness-and-prevention-and-relief-live-tables>

Sir David Crausby: [4923]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what recent representations he has received on the (a) size and (b) condition of the homeless population.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The department publishes regular statistics on rough sleeping, statutory homelessness and homelessness prevention and relief. The latest statistics can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>.

Homelessness charities regularly publish research and information on the homeless population. Ministers in the department visit a variety of projects and regularly meet with key partners to discuss homelessness issues.

■ Homelessness: Coastal Areas**James Duddridge:****[4969]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what progress the Government is making on reducing homelessness in (a) coastal towns and (b) Southend-on-Sea.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 18 July 2017]: Statutory homelessness acceptances are less than half the 2003-04 peak, and successful homelessness prevention and relief has risen by 29 per cent between 2009/10 and 2015/16.

But the Government remains clear that one person without a home is one too many. That is why we are embarking on an ambitious programme to fundamentally reform the response to homelessness – putting prevention at the heart of this approach.

Part of this is our £50 million Homelessness Prevention Programme which will deliver an end-to-end approach to prevention across 84 projects working in 205 district and unitary local authorities in England.

Coastal areas – such as Cornwall, Middlesbrough, Brighton, Blackpool, Kent and others – will benefit from funding to ensure that more people have tailored support to avoid becoming homeless in the first place, and receive the rapid support they need to make a sustainable recovery from homelessness.

In addition, we will be ensuring all areas, including Southend-on-Sea and other coastal towns, have access to best practice, and the learning that is being gathered from the projects in successful areas. We will also be providing support through a network of specialist advisors, to work in-depth with areas on the challenges they face.

■ Homes and Communities Agency: Complaints**Tulip Siddiq:****[3258]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many complaints were received by the Homes and Communities Agency's regulatory committee in each year since 2012, and how many such complaints were investigated within a year of being received.

Alok Sharma:

The Regulator of Social Housing, part of the Homes and Communities Agency, sets consumer standards covering a range of issues, including the quality of accommodation and tenancy arrangements. They publish an annual Consumer Regulation Review which sets out their approach to consumer regulation, how many cases they have considered and case summaries of their findings.

The process they use to consider complaints which fall under the consumer standards and the number of such complaints is set out in the Consumer Regulation Review for each year, which is published on the Homes and Communities Agency website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/consumer-regulation-review>

The Regulator of Social Housing will publish the Consumer Regulation Review for 2016-17 in the autumn.

Housing: Construction**Justin Tomlinson:****[3393]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he has taken to increase housebuilding.

Alok Sharma:

The Government is providing support to housebuilders through the £3 billion Home Building Fund. This will provide £1 billion of loans for small and medium builders, custom builders and offsite construction, with an aim to deliver 25,000 homes by 2020, as well as a further £2 billion loan funding for infrastructure and large sites throughout England, unlocking a pipe line of up to 200,000 homes over the longer term. Furthermore, the £2.3 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund, which is now open for bids, will unlock up to 100,000 new homes.

The Government is also taking direct action to increase housebuilding. Since 2015 departments have released land with capacity for 21,217 homes and identified land to be released by 2020 for a further 120,394 homes. We are investing £7.1 billion in more affordable housing and have helped over 400,000 households into home ownership through Government schemes including Help to Buy and Right to Buy.

The Housing White Paper, *Fixing Our Broken Housing Market*, published in February 2017, set out a long term, comprehensive strategy to build more homes, through encouraging better, more realistic plan making which recognises housing need; consulting on a new standardised way of assessing housing need; boosting the capacity and capability of planning authorities and giving them stronger tools to ensure sites with permission are built on; and supporting custom build homes and the use of modern methods of construction.

Jonathan Reynolds:**[4455]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, when his Department plans to provide further details of the proposed new standardised formula to calculate the number of new homes required in any local area.

Alok Sharma:

A consultation will commence in due course.

■ **Housing: Fire Prevention**

Lyn Brown:

[3598]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 3 July 2017 to Question 612, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of fire safety inspections in residential buildings where property ownership is divided among a large number of private sector landlords and owner-occupiers.

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 11 July 2017]: Local authorities have strong powers to deal with poor quality, unsafe accommodation and we expect them to use those powers. Under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), local authorities can issue an Improvement Notice or a Hazard Awareness Notice if they find a defect in the property. Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice is a criminal offence for which local authorities can impose a financial penalty of up to £30,000 or prosecute in the courts which have the power to impose an unlimited fine. In extreme circumstances, the local authority may decide to make repairs themselves, or to prohibit that property from being rented out. The HHSRS applies to all residential properties, regardless of who owns them.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places a duty on housing providers to undertake a fire risk assessment of the common parts of their properties and to put in place and maintain adequate fire precautions to manage the risk that lives could be lost in a fire. The Order is enforced by fire and rescue authorities. Failure to comply with the provisions of the Fire Safety Order may lead to prosecution and potentially a significant fine or custodial sentence.

■ **Housing: Greater London**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[4917]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing measures to ensure homes in new London developments are made available to people resident in London before buyers from overseas.

Alok Sharma:

The Government currently has no plans to introduce restrictions on overseas ownership of new homes on London or elsewhere in the country.

■ **Insulation: Safety**

Jim Fitzpatrick:

[3108]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, which regulations set out the safety requirements for cladding and external wall insulation systems; when those requirements were last reviewed; and who last reviewed those requirements.

Alok Sharma:

A number of parts of the Building Regulations are relevant - particularly those relating to structural safety, fire safety, resistance to moisture and conservation of fuel and power. The Building Regulations are kept under review, and the Prime Minister has made clear that we need to look at wider issues in the light of the Grenfell Tower fire.

■ Leasehold**Justin Tomlinson:**[\[3476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to reform the leasehold sector.

Alok Sharma:

Our manifesto made clear that we will crack down on unfair practices in leasehold, and the Housing White Paper highlighted the Government's aim to improve consumer choice and fairness in the leasehold sector and to tackle unfair and unreasonable abuses of leasehold. We will consult shortly where the most urgent reform may be needed, and it is our intention to look at wider reforms in the medium-term, both of which will be informed by experts with an interest in leasehold reform.

Justin Madders:[\[3832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what recent meetings he has attended on leasehold reform.

Alok Sharma:

The Secretary of State has regular meetings to discuss housing matters, including leasehold reform. The Secretary of State made his views clear at the Home Builders Federation's Policy Conference of 28 March 2017.

■ Local Government Finance: Tyne and Wear**Mr Stephen Hepburn:**[\[4843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what the change in the core spending power of the (a) South Tyneside and (b) Gateshead local authorities has been in each year since 2010-11.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The definition of spending power has changed over the period 2010-11 to 2019-20, with core spending power being first introduced at the 2016-17 Local Government Finance Settlement. The changes in definition mean that combining these year on year changes to calculate an overall change for the period 2010-11 to 2019-20 is not

meaningful. The table below shows the year on year change in spending power over the period 2010-11 to 2019-20:

	2011- 12	2012- 13	2013- 14	2014- 15	2015- 16	2016- 17	2017- 18	2018- 19	2019- 20
South Tyneside	-8.8%	-5.6%	-1.2%	-4.6%	-3.8%	-4.1%	2.0%	0.3%	1.6%
Gateshead	-7.3%	-3.6%	-1.4%	-4.3%	-3.6%	-3.9%	1.9%	0.7%	1.9%

■ Local Government: Belfast

Gavin Robinson:

[\[5285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what discussions his Department has had with Belfast City Council on City Deals since 8 June 2017.

Jake Berry:

The Department of Communities and Local Government has not had any contact with Belfast City Council since 8 June 2017.

However, officials from the department met with Belfast City Council and the Northern Ireland Office to discuss the deal.

The Department works with territorial offices in relation to city deals in devolved administrations including in Northern Ireland and we stand ready to support the development of a Belfast deal.

■ Non-domestic Rates

Royston Smith:

[\[4896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what progress has been made on reform of business rates.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 18 July 2017]: At Budget 2016 the government announced reductions in business rates to benefit all ratepayers – which will cost almost £9 billion over the next 5 years. The government has set an aim to revalue properties more frequently for business rates and will provide an update in due course.

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[5261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2017 to Question 3427, on non-domestic rates, when the joint working group last met with the Local Government Association.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Government is committed to working closely with local government to meet the Government's commitment to continue to give local government greater control over the money they raise. A joint steering group and a series of joint working groups were established with the Local Government Association in 2016 as one way, but not the only way, through which the Government could work with the local government sector on developing proposals for business rates retention. The different working groups meet on different frequencies depending on the work they are undertaking at any particular time. The Government will take a decision on how best to continue to engage the Local Government Association, the steering and working groups and the sector more generally as part of its future plans.

Andrew Gwynne:[\[5262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2017 to Question 3428, on non-domestic rates, whether his Department had completed analysing responses to Further Consultation on 100% Business Rates Retention consultation prior to the conclusion of the committee stage of the Local Government Finance Bill 2016-17.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Officials in the Department for Communities and Local Government have been analysing the responses received to the consultation on 100 per cent business rates retention, which closed during Purdah. Responses received through this consultation will help to inform future policy development.

■ **Non-domestic Rates: Southampton****Royston Smith:**[\[4897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how much Southampton City Council collected in business rates in each of the last seven years.

Mr Marcus Jones:

[Holding answer 18 July 2017]: The table below shows the total receipts of national non-domestic rates collected in the financial year, irrespective of the year to which it relates, for Southampton City Council from 2012-13 to 2016-17. This total includes the amount collected in respect of the billing year, in respect of the previous years and an estimate of receipts in respect of the subsequent billing year. These figures are also net of refunds and exclude court and administration costs.

Figures for 2010-11 and 2011-12 were not published at the local authority level.

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL RECEIPTS OF NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES COLLECTED IRRESPECTIVE OF THE YEAR TO WHICH IT RELATES IN SOUTHAMPTON (£000s)
2012-13	98,022
2013-14	100,147

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL RECEIPTS OF NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES COLLECTED IRRESPECTIVE OF THE YEAR TO WHICH IT RELATES IN SOUTHAMPTON (£000s)
2014-15	103,245
2015-16	102,998
2016-17	103,918

Source: QRC4 (Quarterly receipts of council tax and non-domestic rates collection)

Further details for each year can be found at the following link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/council-tax-statistics#collection-rates-for-council-tax-and-non-domestic-rates>. Further local authority level data for 2016-17 can be found at the following link

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/622535/Drop_down.xlsx

■ **Police Stations: Non-domestic Rates**

Andrew Gwynne:

[4809]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the potential financial effect on police forces of changes to the level of business rates on local police stations; and what discussions he has had with representatives of police forces on those changes.

Mr Marcus Jones:

My Department has not undertaken an estimate of the potential financial effect on police forces of the recent business rates revaluation, nor have we had any discussions with representatives of police forces on this matter. The revaluation was fiscally neutral with the majority of ratepayers seeing no increase or a reduction in their bills. We have put in place a £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme for England to support the minority of ratepayers that have received increased bills.

■ **Public Buildings: Asbestos**

Stephanie Peacock:

[5520]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number of public buildings which contain asbestos in (a) South Yorkshire, (b) Yorkshire and (c) in England and Wales.

Alok Sharma:

We have made no such estimate but there is a legal duty under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2012 for the owners of non-domestic premises (public or otherwise) to identify and record the presence of asbestos in their buildings.

■ Public Buildings: Fire Prevention

Caroline Lucas:

[4830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits to fire safety and post fire response in respect of public buildings of the guidelines produced by the EU research project RECONASS.

Alok Sharma:

Following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, the Prime Minister has committed to look at wider issues. This work will need to be progressed after the publication of the terms of reference for the public inquiry and the guidelines produced by RECONASS will be considered as part of that exercise.

An independent expert panel has been set up to provide advice to the Government on any immediate measures needed to make buildings safe following the Grenfell Tower fire. The panel will be led by Sir Ken Knight, former London Fire Commissioner and former Government Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser. It will consider safety measures, policies, inspection and regulation, taking account of both the Grenfell Tower fire and ongoing fire safety inspections. It will look at any immediate action required to ensure public confidence that everything possible is being done to make all public and private buildings safe as quickly as possible.

■ Public Lavatories: Disability

Andrew Gwynne:

[4883]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what recent representations he has received from groups representing disabled people on the adequacy of the level of provision by local authorities of public conveniences with disabled access.

Alok Sharma:

Within the last 6 months we received letters from one disability group, the Association for the Independence of Disabled people, which wanted to contribute to improving sanitary toilet provision. We also responded to 11 Ministerial letters, 3 official letters and 2 enquiries. Most asked Government for adequate Changing Places facilities or asked detailed questions about the layout and availability of local accessible public conveniences. There was a Westminster Hall debate in February 2017 on publicly accessible amenities with input from groups representing disabled people. Evidence was also submitted ahead of the recent Women and Equalities Select Committee. Government took part in the committee's inquiry 'Disability and the built environment' this year, and their report presented a range of views from disability groups on the provision of public conveniences.

■ Religious Buildings: Security

Andrew Gwynne:

[4808]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether his Department (a) has a role and (b) provides funding in respect of Government measures to protect religious buildings from attack.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The Department for Communities and Local Government does not have a direct role nor does it provide funding in respect of measures to protect religious buildings from attack. The Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, the Places of Worship security funding scheme and the Vulnerable Faith Institutions scheme are the responsibility of the Home Office.

■ Social Rented Housing

Mr David Lammy:

[5266]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of homes for social rent that will be delivered in (a) the London Borough of Haringey, (b) London and (c) England in (i) 2017, (ii) 2018, (iii) 2019 and (iv) 2020.

Alok Sharma:

The Mayor has overall responsibility for affordable housing policy and delivery in London. To support this, the Government has provided a record-breaking £3.15 billion package of funding for affordable housing in London, for at least 90,000 new affordable homes by March 2021.

The Mayor recently announced winning bids for the Affordable Homes Programme in London which can be found at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/record-17bn-deal-for-new-homes>

The delivery of affordable housing in England is reported in live tables 1000 – 1009 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply>

Planning for future social and affordable housing is the responsibility for the local authority and the department does not centrally hold figures on future expected delivery.

■ Social Services

Andrew Gwynne:

[4806]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the (a) financial capacity and (b) staffing resources of local councils to discharge their statutory social care duties effectively in 2017-18.

Mr Marcus Jones:

Earlier this year, the Government gave councils access to £9.25 billion more dedicated funding for social care over the next three years. This includes an additional £2 billion of funding in England, as announced at the Spring Budget 2017. The appropriate staffing required by a council to meet their duties is a matter for local authorities to determine.

■ Temporary Accommodation**Andrew Gwynne:****[4878]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of families with children living in temporary accommodation in (a) Bath, (b) Birmingham, (c) Bradford, (d) Brighton and Hove, (e) Bristol, (f) Cambridge, (g) Canterbury, (h) Carlisle, (i) Chester, (j) Chichester, (k) the City of London, (l) Coventry, (m) Derby, (n) Durham, (o) Ely, (p) Exeter, (q) Gloucester, (r) Hereford, (s) Kingston upon Hull, (t) Lancaster, (u) Leeds, (v) Leicester, (w) Lichfield, (x) Lincoln, (y) Liverpool, (z) Manchester, (aa) Newcastle upon Tyne, (bb) Norwich, (cc) Nottingham, (dd) Oxford, (ee) Peterborough, (ff) Plymouth, (gg) Portsmouth, (hh) Preston, (ii) Ripon, (jj) Salford, (kk) Salisbury, (ll) Sheffield, (mm) Southampton, (nn) St Albans, (oo) Stoke-on-Trent, (pp) Sunderland, (qq) Truro, (rr) Wakefield, (ss) Wells, (tt) Westminster, (uu) Winchester (vv) Wolverhampton, (ww) Worcester and (xx) York.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The numbers of families with children living in temporary accommodation in each local authority in England can be found in section 6 of the detailed local authority level homelessness tables published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness#detailed-local-authority-level-responses>

Andrew Gwynne:**[4913]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of families with children living in temporary accommodation.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The numbers of families with children living in temporary accommodation in England can be found in live table 775 published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness#statutory-homelessness-and-prevention-and-relief-live-tables>

Andrew Gwynne:**[4914]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of families with children living in temporary accommodation in (a) the East Midlands, (b) the North East, (c) the North West, (d) the South East, (e) the South West, (f) the West Midlands, (g) Yorkshire and the Humber and (h) the East of England.

Mr Marcus Jones:

The numbers of families with children living in temporary accommodation in England can be found in live table 775 published here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/621559/Statutory_Homelessness_and_Prevention_and_Relief_Live_Tables_2017_Q1.xls

Breakdowns by local authority can be found in the detailed LA tables:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

We do not publish data at the regional level.

■ Travellers: Caravan Sites**Richard Burden:****[5076]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of powers available to local authorities to deal with illegal traveller encampments in (a) England and (b) Birmingham.

Alok Sharma:

The Government recognises the issue of unauthorised encampments and the effect they can have on local communities. Local authorities and the police have a range of powers which enable them to take action and the Government wants to see them working together to address this issue. A summary of the powers available to deal with unauthorised encampments has been published on the Government website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-illegal-and-unauthorised-encampments>

We will consider whether these powers are adequate.

DEFENCE**■ Armed Forces: Civilians****Nia Griffith:****[5108]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) women and (b) men are employed in administrative roles in each service.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Ministry of Defence does not hold this information in the format requested.

■ Armed Forces: Housing**Nia Griffith:****[5106]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent steps his Department has taken to assess the adequacy of fire safety standards in (a) service accommodation and (b) substitute service accommodation.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

All occupied service family accommodation and single living accommodation are built to meet national building and fire regulations.

There are a small number of two and three storey properties with external wall insulation. The specification of the material used has been checked and confirmed as fire resistant.

For substitute accommodation, it is routine practice that prior to utilisation a contractor assesses the property to ensure it fully meets building and fire regulations.

In response to the Grenfell fire the Cabinet Office is undertaking a review of the Government estate to review fire safety arrangements. The priority is buildings where people sleep, which have ACM cladding and are over 18 metres high. The Ministry of Defence is taking part in this review.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles**Mrs Madeleine Moon:**[\[5084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost of producing the Mechanised Infantry Vehicle (a) onshore and (b) offshore; and if he will make a statement.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Mechanised Infantry Vehicle programme is currently going through its initial gate approval process: choices within the programme and the associated cost profiles will be matured as part of the assessment phase and presented at Main Gate in 2019.

Mrs Madeleine Moon:[\[5086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether maintenance will be included in the contract for the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle; if he will publish (a) the cost of that maintenance, (b) the length of that contract and (c) where that maintenance will take place; and if he will make a statement.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) has been selected as the preferred option for Package 1 of the Multi Role Vehicle - Protected (MRV-P) Programme. The Foreign Military Sales case for the JLTV is expected to include a costed offer for the provision of technical assistance and logistic support services for an initial in-service period. The length of the initial in-service support period is currently under review, together with the investigation of choices for the full in-service life of the vehicles. These choices, including costs and location of maintenance will be presented at the Ministry of Defence Main Gate approval point in early 2018.

■ Army: Recruitment

Royston Smith:

[5006]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Army's National Recruiting Centre will support visa applications from people who live overseas and who want to join the Army.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 17 July 2017 to Questions 4409 and 4410. Commonwealth citizens who are selected to attend an Army Assessment Centre for the limited number of specialist roles for which the five year UK residency requirement has been waived, are provided with a letter of invitation from the Army National Recruiting Centre. This letter can be included within their supporting documentation for any visa applications. Candidates are personally responsible for meeting the Home Office's visa requirements to enter and then legally remain in the UK during the selection process.

A separate process, which does not involve the Army National Recruiting Centre, applies for the recruitment of Nepalese citizens into the Brigade of Gurkhas.

Attachments:

1. Army: Foreign Nationals [Hansard Extract 17 July 2017.docx]

■ Dredging: English Channel

James Gray:

[5452]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure the protection of the remains of aircraft and airmen within or near the area subject to Marine Aggregate Dredging Application MLA/2016/00227, South Goodwin Sands, Area 521.

James Gray:

[5453]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure the protection of ship wrecks and the remains of their personnel or passengers within or near the area subject to Marine Aggregate Dredging Application MLA/2016/00227, South Goodwin Sands, Area 521.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The matters associated with Goodwin Sands are currently under consideration and I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft

Mrs Madeleine Moon:

[5083]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether (a) training and (b) maintenance facilities for the Poseidon P-8A will be based at Lossiemouth; and if he will make a statement.

Harriett Baldwin:

As announced in the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, the main operating base for the UK P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft will be RAF Lossiemouth. Joint investment by the Ministry of Defence and Boeing will enable the building of bespoke infrastructure at RAF Lossiemouth, to support and maintain our aircraft.

Nia Griffith:[\[5107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which countries had maritime patrol aircraft based at RAF Lossiemouth during 2016; and how many maritime patrol aircraft each of those countries deployed to RAF Lossiemouth during that year.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The table below gives the country and number of maritime patrol aircraft temporarily deployed to RAF Lossiemouth during 2016.

COUNTRY	NO OF AIRCRAFT
United States	20
Canada	8
France	5
Germany	3
Norway	1

■ **Middle East: Military Intervention****Lucy Powell:**[\[5087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will undertake to report to the House in the event that any UK airstrike is assessed to have caused civilian casualties in Iraq or Syria.

Sir Michael Fallon:

Yes.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Flags****Gavin Robinson:**[\[5283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what occasions in the last three years a non-national, non-military flag has been formally flown at any or all of his Department's sites in the UK.

Gavin Robinson:[\[5284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what process his Department follows when a request is made to fly a political campaign flag at one of or all of its sites.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Government policy on the flying of flags on Government buildings is owned by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Ministry of Defence (MOD) regulations are set out in Queen's Regulations. These regulations do not include the flying of political campaign flags at MOD sites. The Department has flown the following non-national and non-military flags at Whitehall and other sites over the last three years:

Rainbow Flag - annually during Pride Fortnight and other Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender events

Transgender Flag - annually on 31 March.

In addition, the Army routinely flies the Armed Forces Day Flag at all Army sites to mark Armed Forces Day.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Staff****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[4687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Nepalese citizens were recruited by his Department in each year since 2010.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Information on the numbers of Nepali nationals recruited into the Brigade of Gurkhas and UK Regular Forces, by Financial Year (FY), is provided in the following table:

FY2010-11	FY2011-12	FY2012-13	FY2013-14	FY2014-15	FY2015-16	FY2016-17
180	180	130	130	240	250	320

Note: The vast majority of Nepali national intake is to the Brigade of Gurkhas, with only a small number joining the UK Regulars. Numbers are rounded and do not include Locally Employed Civilians.

■ **Ministry of Defence: USA****Mrs Madeleine Moon:**[\[5081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the cost of flights taken by his Department's personnel to (a) Washington DC, (b) Las Vegas, (c) Seattle, (d) Los Angeles, (e) Orlando and (f) Dallas Fort Worth in each month of the last two years; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Madeleine Moon:[\[5082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many of his Department's personnel have taken flights to (a) Washington DC, (b) Las Vegas, (c) Seattle, (d) Los Angeles, (e) Orlando and (f) Dallas Fort Worth in each month of the last two years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is continuously searching for ways to reduce costs and deliver value for money for the tax payer. As a result, we have achieved savings of around £60 million a year in non-operational travel since financial year 2009-10.

Information about flights taken between April 2015 and March 2017 by MOD personnel is provided in the attached table. The data includes flights from the UK to the listed airports, as well as flights from these sites to the UK.

Overseas travel by MOD staff makes a key contribution to achieving defence objectives. A number of MOD personnel and defence contractors are based in the United States and staff need to travel to these sites to conduct essential business.

Overall expenditure on MOD travel is reducing, and we plan to make further savings, including by making greater use of video and audio conferencing.

Attachments:

1. Overseas Travel [20170719_PQ2017-07058-07060_Moon_Overseas_travel[1].docx]

■ Navy**Nia Griffith:**[\[5260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the oral contribution by the Minister of State for the Armed Forces of 10 July 2017, Official Report, column 11, whether he plans for the Navy to grow by 400 more personnel than the current 29,430 regular personnel, or the 30,060 regular personnel serving at the time of that policy announcement in 2015.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 2015 committed to an increase in the size of the Royal Navy of 400 personnel to 30,600 by 2025. This represents an uplift of 1,600 over the 2010 SDSR position.

■ Strategic Defence and Security Review**Dan Jarvis:**[\[5407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the review of the 2015 strategic defence and security review will take place.

Sir Michael Fallon:

I refer the hon. Member to the Cabinet Office statement of earlier today.

The Government has initiated work on a review of national security capabilities in support of the continued implementation of the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review.

To ensure that in the light of current national security challenges that our capabilities are as effective and efficient as possible, Defence will be playing a full role in this work.

■ Syria: Military Aid**Jim Shannon:****[5235]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent support the Government has given to assist Syrian forces in retaking Raqqa.

Mark Lancaster:

As part of the Coalition, the RAF continues to carry out airstrikes in support of the Syrian opposition forces' operations against Daesh in Raqqa. Air support of this kind has helped the Syrian forces to retake around 30% of the city so far.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ BBC: Pay****Mr Gregory Campbell:****[5103]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what representations she has made to the BBC to ensure that the levels of pay awarded to its presenters are published before the summer recess.

Matt Hancock:

The BBC's Annual Report and Account for 2016/17 has been published.

■ Broadband: Northern Ireland**Mr Gregory Campbell:****[5100]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans she has to expedite the roll-out of high speed broadband provision in rural areas of Northern Ireland.

Matt Hancock:

The government has invested over £11.4 million to support superfast broadband roll-out in Northern Ireland. Alongside local match funding, this will enable superfast coverage for over 65,000 premises by March 2018, of which over 35,000 have already gained coverage. Superfast coverage is now over 82% and is expected to reach almost 87% upon completion of the current delivery .

The government has also confirmed that it will make available £75 million per year over two years for further ultrafast broadband roll-out in Northern Ireland.

The Digital Economy Bill has passed through Parliament and has now received Royal Assent to become an Act. The Digital Economy Act 2017 includes a mechanism that will enable the Government to establish a broadband Universal Service Obligation, which will give people the legal right to request an affordable broadband connection of a minimum specified speed. This is currently aiming to be the 10Mbps though could increase in the future. Ofcom have set out a range of options for implementing the obligation, and information about this is available on their website.

■ Camelot Group**Philip Davies:** [\[4873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the effect on funding for good causes of the strategic review announced by the Camelot Group.

Tracey Crouch:

We welcome Camelot's decision to launch a strategic review of their business in the light of disappointing National Lottery good cause returns in 2016/17. The review is due to conclude later in the year.

■ Channel Four Television: Location**Tom Watson:** [\[5542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 30 June 2017 to Question 609, on Channel Four Television: location, what account she will take of (a) the financial effect of an increased Nations and Regions commitment on Channel 4 Corporation, (b) the state of the advertising market and broader economy and (c) the effect of any decision to relocate Channel 4 outside London on the UK independent production sector.

Tom Watson: [\[5543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 30 June 2017 to Question 609, on Channel Four Television: location, what account she will take of the responses to the consultation Increasing the Regional Impact of Channel 4 Corporation in any decision to relocate Channel 4 outside London.

Tom Watson: [\[5577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the role of the Board of Channel 4 Corporation in any decision on (a) the relocation of Channel 4 and (b) the location of Channel 4 staff.

Matt Hancock:

The government's consultation closed on 5 July and we will set out the next steps on this issue in due course.

■ Data Protection**Chi Onwurah:** [\[5425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the recent fine imposed on Facebook by the Italian regulators, what her Department's policy is on the sharing of data by companies following their merger or acquisition.

Matt Hancock:

The Information Commissioner's Office's (ICO) data sharing guidance sets out the obligations on companies when handling personal data following a merger or

acquisition. The data sharing guidance can be found at: https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1068/data_sharing_code_of_practice.pdf

■ Gaming Machines

Mr David Lammy:

[5345]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what research her Department has (a) conducted and (b) commissioned on the social and economic effects of fixed-odds betting terminals in the last 12 months.

Tracey Crouch:

In 2016 the Government announced a review of Gaming Machines and Social responsibility, which includes fixed odds betting terminals, and launched a call for evidence. As part of the ongoing work on the review the Department has considered research and evidence from a variety of external sources, as well as the responses received to the call for evidence.

The RGSB was set up by the Gambling Commission to advise on priorities for research relating to responsible gambling. GambleAware, an independent charity, leads on commissioning and funding research into gambling-related harm and supporting education and treatment programmes, taking into account the priorities set out by the RGSB. All gambling licence holders are required to make an annual financial contribution to one or more organisations that perform research, education or treatment for gambling-related harm, and most chose to support GambleAware.

GambleAware has published a number of research reports into fixed odds betting terminals since 2010. These are available on its website:

<https://about.gambleaware.org/research/research-publications/>

Mr David Lammy:

[5481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what meetings she and Ministers of her Department have held with gambling companies, campaigners and charities on her Department's review of fixed-odds betting terminals.

Tracey Crouch:

In October 2016 the government launched a call for evidence on stakes and prizes of gaming machines, their numbers and locations, and social responsibility measures to protect players and communities from gambling-related harm. The Gambling Minister held several meetings to help inform the analysis of evidence and responses.

These included meetings with the National Casino Forum (NCF) in November 2016, and the British Amusement and Gaming Machine industry trade body BACTA, the Association of British Bookmakers (ABB), independent bookmakers, the Bingo Association, the Campaign for Fairer Gambling, the Local Government Association and Newham Council in January 2017.

■ Internet: Data Protection

Chi Onwurah: [5300]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the policy of the Government is on the citizen's right to receive their browsing history as part of requests for data held on them by organisations.

Matt Hancock:

Consumers' rights with regard to the collection, processing and disclosure of their personal data are governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). The DPA provides rights for consumers in respect of their personal data, including the right to request a copy of information which an organisation holds about them - commonly known as 'subject access'. An individual can exercise this right under Section 7 of the DPA, by making a written subject access request to the organisation.

■ Lotteries

Philip Davies: [4877]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials of her Department have had with representatives from (i) Camelot, (ii) Lottoland, (iii) the Health Lottery and (iv) the People's Postcode Lottery in each of the last 24 months.

Tracey Crouch:

a) Details of ministerial meetings can be found on gov.uk and are published quarterly. DCMS ministerial meetings for the past 24 months can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-1-january-to-31-march-2017>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-1-october-to-31-december-2016>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-1-july-to-30-september-2016>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-ministerial-hospitality-overseas-travel-meetings-and-gifts-1-april-2016-to-30-june-2016>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-ministerial-hospitality-overseas-travel-meetings-and-gifts-1-january-2016-to-31-march-2016>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-ministerial-hospitality-overseas-travel-meetings-and-gifts-1-october-2015-to-31-december-2015>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-july-to-september-2015>

b) Officials of the department meet regularly with Camelot and the Gambling Commission to discuss their role as Lottery operator.

In the last 24 months, officials have met with Lottoland 2 times (03/07/17 and 29/07/17), The Health Lottery once (03/05/2016) and The People's Postcode Lottery 2 times (18/03/16 and 27/10/17). These dates exclude ministerial meetings which were also attended by officials.

■ Ministry of Defence: Flags

Gavin Robinson:

[\[5282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what protocol or policies exist to regulate formal flag flying on her Department's sites (a) in Great Britain, (b) in Northern Ireland and (c) internationally.

John Glen:

Flag Flying in England, Scotland and Wales is deregulated therefore any individual may fly any flag at any time, so long as they have the necessary planning permission. DCMS issues guidance on the designated days for flying the Union Flag and on occasion when and how to half mast. Northern Ireland must adhere to the Flags Regulations (2000).

Policies concerning buildings outside the UK do not fall under DCMS' remit.

■ National Lottery

Philip Davies:

[\[4874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she expects to make a decision on prohibiting third-party betting on the outcome of non-UK EuroMillions before Camelot has completed its strategic review.

Philip Davies:

[\[4876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to publish a response to the Consultation on Prohibiting Third Party Betting on the Outcome of non-UK EuroMillions.

Tracey Crouch:

The consultation on prohibiting third party betting on non-UK EuroMillions draws closed on 2 May 2017. We are currently analysing the responses and will publish a response in due course.

Philip Davies:

[\[4875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made on the effect of non-UK EuroMillions draws on funds provided to good causes in the UK.

Tracey Crouch:

The department published an impact assessment alongside its consultation on prohibiting third-party betting on non-UK EuroMillions.

The impact assessment is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596674/Prohibition_on_Betting_on_EuroMillions_-_Impact_Assessment_2016-17.pdf

Peter Dowd:

[5387]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many people received small lottery exemptions in (a) 2014-15, (b) 2015-16 and (c) 2016-17.

Matt Hancock:

Exempt lotteries (raffles) includes incidental lotteries, private lotteries, customer lotteries and small society lotteries registered with local authorities. Only small society lotteries require any form of formal approval, and this is at a local level.

As exempt lotteries are not centrally licensed, we do not hold information on the numbers of lotteries promoted

■ Performing Arts

Tom Watson:

[5465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she plans to take to ensure that the UK film and television industry maintains the right to contract freely on the basis of territorially exclusive licences during discussions on the Data Single Market proposals between the European Commission and European Parliament.

Matt Hancock:

The UK Government believes that copyright owners should remain able to tailor content to different markets and to license on a territorial basis. While we remain in the EU we are continuing to take an active part in negotiations regarding the DSM ensuring that British views are heard.

We are keen to ensure that the ability of audio-visual producers to license their content territorially does not change when we leave the EU.

■ Performing Arts: Migrant Workers

Kevin Brennan:

[5570]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of a new immigration visa system on non-UK EU creative freelancers working in the UK when the UK leaves the EU.

Matt Hancock:

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has held a series of roundtables with the sector on the impacts and opportunities affecting the creative industries as a result of the UK's exit from the EU.

■ Performing Arts: Recruitment

Kevin Brennan:

[\[5134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will meet representatives of the performing arts industry to discuss the hiring of talent from local communities.

John Glen:

Government believes everyone should have access to opportunities in the cultural sectors. Ministers and officials across the Department regularly meet with a range of representatives of the performing arts industry to discuss issues affecting the sector. The Government is clear that it expects the cultural sectors to represent our diverse society in their artistic talent, workforce and audiences.

■ Performing Arts: Vocational Guidance

Kevin Brennan:

[\[5572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with ministerial colleagues in the Department for Education on the provision of careers advice in schools on the creative industries.

Matt Hancock:

The Secretary of State has regular discussions with ministerial colleagues in the Department for Education on a range of issues relating to the creative industries, including the provision of careers advice. The creative industries are a focus of the Government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper and Sir Peter Bazalgette is reviewing access to skills and talent as part of his sector review.

■ Public Sector: Mutual Societies

Mr Steve Reed:

[\[5553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2017 to Question 3157, on public sector: mutual societies and social impact bonds, how many mutuals were created in each year since 2009.

Tracey Crouch:

The number of public service mutuals in England has grown from approximately 9 at the beginning of 2010 to more than 100 today. Based on the information held by DCMS, the number created each year since 2009 is:

2009: 1

2010: 4

2011: 43

2012: 13

2013: 17

2014: 12

2015: 11

2016: 2

2017 (to date): 3

There is no obligation for new public service mutuals to inform DCMS that they have spun out, so these numbers reflect the extent of our knowledge of the sector.

■ Small Businesses: Cybercrime

Chi Onwurah:

[5308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 11 July 2017 to Question 1540, on small businesses: cybercrime, what steps the Government is taking to improve uptake of the Cyber Essentials scheme among small and medium-sized enterprises.

Matt Hancock:

Cyber Essentials is a key part of the wider set of guidance offered to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), the Cyber Aware campaign and other Government partners, such as law enforcement. Currently, on Cyber Essentials the Government is:

- working with the NCSC to engage with industry partners and trade organisations to promote the benefits of Cyber Essentials;
- renewing procurement guidance stating that Government suppliers which handle sensitive data or supply certain IT products and services must hold a Cyber Essentials certificate;
- working with major businesses, including FTSE 100 companies, to encourage take-up of Cyber Essentials amongst their supply chains;
- about to start a short marketing campaign which will run this summer encouraging SMEs to take up the scheme.

The NCSC is taking a number of steps, with partners, to protect SMEs and their customers from the harm caused by cybercrime. This includes the provision of entry-level advice to SMEs. NCSC is taking forward work to help SMEs better understand the benefits and how to achieve Cyber Essentials certification.

■ Sports: Public Participation

Justin Tomlinson:

[3292]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many people were regularly participating in sporting activities in (a) North Swindon constituency, (b) England and (c) the UK in each of the last five years.

Justin Tomlinson:

[\[3293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many people under the age of 18 were regularly participating in sporting activities in (a) North Swindon constituency, (b) England and (c) the UK in each of the last five years.

Tracey Crouch:

The best sources of data available to identify the number of people participating in sporting activities in a) North Swindon constituency and b) England in each of the last five years is Sport England's Active People Survey and its Active Lives Survey, both of which are accessible via Sport England's website.

The Active People Survey collected data on participation rates across England from October 2005 to September 2016. The Active Lives Survey replaced the Active People Survey – using a different methodology to measure participation, but still focusing on England only - and was first published in January 2017. The attached table provided a detailed breakdown.

Both the Active People Survey and Active Lives Survey collect and provide data on people aged 16+. Data on the number below the age of 16 has not been collected to date, though Sport England is currently developing an Active Lives Children Survey, which will include data for children aged 5-15. The survey will be launched later this year with the first set of results available in early 2019.

Data on the number of people participating in sport across the UK as a whole is not collected because sport policy is a devolved matter.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Data [Adults 16+ Table.pdf]

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices: Greater London

Stephen Timms:

[\[5416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many apprenticeship providers operate in (a) Greater London and (b) the London Borough of Newham.

Anne Milton:

In the 2015 to 2016 academic year, there were 400 apprenticeship providers that trained apprentices for employers in Greater London and 140 apprenticeship providers that trained apprentices for employers in the London Borough of Newham.

Stephen Timms:

[\[5418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of apprenticeship starts in (a) Greater London and (b) the London Borough of Newham are with (i) levy-paying and (ii) non-levy-paying businesses.

Anne Milton:

The number of apprenticeship starts is published as part of the further education and skills statistical first release. Apprenticeship starts broken down by geographical region and local authority are available in the further education data library:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/624428/apprenticeships-geography-data-tool-starts-v1.xlsm

Currently, data on apprenticeship starts is only available reported to the end of April 2017, before the apprenticeship levy was implemented. The statistical first release will publish details of starts, where an apprenticeship service account holder has been able to use funds to support an apprenticeship, when data becomes available.

Data on the number of accounts registered on the apprenticeship service and the number of commitments made have been published as experimental statistics. This is available as part of the statistical first release collection:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>

■ Children: Day Care**Tracy Brabin:****[5118]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans she has to undertake an assessment of the effect of 30 hours of free childcare on the availability of funded two-year-old places after that roll-out has concluded.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Local authorities have a statutory duty to secure free early education places for two-year-olds who meet the eligibility criteria. In 2016, we invested £100m of capital funding to expand place capacity for 30 hours by creating nearly 18,000 additional places.

In July 2017, the Department for Education published the *Evaluation of Early Implementation of 30 Hours Free Childcare: Research report*. It concluded that there was no indication of adverse effects on other free entitlement provision from the implementation of 30 hours in those areas.

We will closely monitor the impact of the 30 hours policy, working with our delivery contractor 'Childcare Works'. We publish data annually on take up of free places by two, three and four-year-olds, and carry out regular voluntary surveys of local authorities. Overall, the proportion of two-year-olds benefitting from funded early education in England continues to rise, from 58% in 2015 to 71% in 2017. The proportion of two-year-olds benefitting from funded early education places by local authority is set out in Table 5LA of the Statistical First Release (SFR) Education provision: children under 5 years of age, January 2017 at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/education-provision-children-under-5-years-of-age-january-2017>.

Tracy Brabin:

[5119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of her Department's 30 hours of free childcare policy.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Department demonstrated its commitment to evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of her Department's 30 hours of free childcare policy, by undertaking an independent evaluation of its early implementation, early innovation and early rollout programmes.

The Department published the evaluation of early implementation of 30 hours of free childcare on 17 January 2017 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/30-hours-free-childcare-early-implementation-evaluation>).

We also plan to publish the evaluation of early rollout of 30 hours of free childcare in September 2017 and will take steps to implement the early learning from this as soon as it is made available.

The Department will also continue to monitor the implementation of 30 hours free childcare through the Early Years and Schools censuses, the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents and the Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey to monitor the 30 hours offer from both the providers' and parents' perspective. These data sources have provided a very rich and detailed set of information over many years .

Lucy Powell:

[5536]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2017 to Question 3431, on children: day care, what information her Department holds on the number of successful applicants with a family income (a) below £49,999, (b) £50,000 to £74,999, (c) £75,000 to £99,999, (d) £100,000 to £149,000 and (e) £150,000 to £199,999.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

I am sorry, but we do not hold data on the family income of successful applicants for 30 hours free childcare.

The additional 15 hours is available to families where both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage or living wage, and less than £100,000 per year. This also includes self-employed parents.

■ **Class Sizes: Sunderland**

Bridget Phillipson:

[5109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the pupil-teacher ratio was in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in (i) Houghton and Sunderland South constituency and (ii) Sunderland in each year since 2010.

Nick Gibb:

The table in the attachment provides the average pupil to teacher ratio[1] in state funded primary and state funded secondary schools as reported by schools in England, Houghton and Sunderland South constituency and Sunderland local authority in November each year from 2011 to 2016.

[1] The Pupil Teacher Ratios are calculated by dividing the total FTE number of pupils on roll in schools in each year by the total number of FTE teachers in schools in each year. Where schools are not open on Census (January) they are excluded. See School Workforce Census methodology document for further information: Methodology: SFR25/2017

Attachments:

1. 2011-16 average pupil to teacher ratio [5109 attachment.xlsx]

■ Department for Education: Disclosure of Information

Justin Madders:[\[2830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many protected disclosures were made by staff in her Department in each of the last three years for which figures are available; how many such disclosures were found to be valid; how many staff alleged detriment as a result of making such a disclosure; and how many staff who (a) made such a disclosure and (b) alleged detriment as a result of a disclosure subsequently left the employment of the Department.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Department has received the following numbers of protected disclosures in the last three years.

YEAR	NUMBER OF PROTECTED DISCLOSURES
2014	4
2015	3
2016	4

None of the above disclosures were found to be valid. All the disclosures were made anonymously. There are no records of any alleged detriment as a result of a disclosure or whether these employees have subsequently left the department.

■ Free School Meals

Frank Field:[\[4554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she plans to encourage local authorities in England to make use of their housing benefit and council tax data automatically to register all eligible children for free school meals with parents or guardians given the right to opt-out of such meals.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We understand that some local authorities have found this approach can be an effective tactic. However, it does not provide a complete or sustainable solution to automatic registration for free school meals (FSM).

We want to make it as simple as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility for FSM and the department is exploring what opportunities exist in the longer term to make FSM registration processes more efficient.

GCSE**Lucy Powell:****[5530]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the cost to (a) the public purse, (b) schools and (c) pupils of the introduction of new GCSE curricula and material relating to those curricula and the new grading system.

Nick Gibb:

The independent qualifications regulator, Ofqual, has produced an impact assessment for the reforms which is available at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161452/http://ofqual.gov.uk/documents/regulatory-impact-assessment-on-reforms-to-gcses-from-2015/>

This indicates that overall, schools interviewed thought that the cost impact of the reforms would be neutral for them. We do not anticipate any additional costs for pupils.

Ofqual spent approximately £370,000 during 2016-17 on testing and promoting understanding of the new grading arrangements with employers, parents, teachers and students and is planning to spend a further £82,000 this summer. The Department for Education has spent approximately £12,500 to date on communications about the GCSE reforms and is planning to spend a further £39,500 over the summer. All figures exclude VAT.

The wider costs of the reforms to the public purse form part of the Department for Education and Ofqual's running costs and cannot be identified separately.

Higher Education: Part-time Education**Gordon Marsden:****[5437]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the reasons for the decline in part-time undergraduate study among (a) higher-income households and (b) lower-income households.

Joseph Johnson:

Studying part-time brings enormous benefits for individuals, the economy and employers. Government regularly assesses the reasons for the decline in part-time undergraduate numbers since their peak in 2008 but does not hold data on their household income background.

We are committed to helping people from all backgrounds enter higher education in a way that suits them and we have taken action to support those who choose to study part-time. These actions include:

- From 2012, the offer of up-front fee loans for eligible part-time students, to level the playing field with undergraduate study;
- From academic year 2018/19, the introduction of undergraduate part-time maintenance loans, to bring greater parity of support between part-time and full-time;
- From 2015, the relaxation of Equivalent or Lower Qualification rules, so students who already hold an honours degree qualification and wish to study part-time on a second honours degree course in engineering, technology or computer science, have qualified for fee loans for their course. This is being extended for academic year 2017/18 to graduates starting a second part-time honours degree course in any STEM subject.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Mary Creagh: [\[5532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when she plans to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Wakefield dated 15 March 2017.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System sent a reply to the hon. Member's letter on 21 April 2017.

A copy of the response will be forwarded to the hon. Member.

■ **Pre-school Education**

Tracy Brabin: [\[5580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to pages 20 and 21 of the Early Years National Funding Formula Operational Guide, published in December 2016, how many local authorities have (a) requested to disapply the high pass-through requirement and (b) had their application to disapply accepted; and for what reasons successful applications to disapply were removed.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The Department received requests from seven local authorities for the Secretary of State's authorisation to modify the operation of Regulation 22 (the 93% pass-through requirement) for 2017-18. Two authorities subsequently withdrew their requests.

Of the remaining five requests, four were fully approved and one was partially approved.

■ Schools: Finance

Mike Kane:

[5461]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the pupil premium allocated to a school will be included in the calculation her Department makes to ensure no school will see a cut in funding as a consequence of the national funding formula.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The pupil premium remains a separate grant to the national funding formula (NFF). Illustrative NFF allocations do not therefore include pupil premium funding. The pupil premium totals nearly £2.5 billion in 2017-18 and will continue to be protected at current rates alongside the NFF, to support the children who need it.

Lucy Powell:

[5573]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to her oral statement of 17 June 2017 on school funding, if she will list the 30 new schools that will be delivered by local authorities and not the free school programme.

Nick Gibb:

My Rt hon. Friend, confirmed in her statement of 17 June 2017 funding to approve a further 140 free schools over the course of this parliament, as announced at the last Budget. This will include working more collaboratively with local authorities to provide free schools to meet basic need.

■ Schools: Fylde

Mark Menzies:

[4371]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she has taken to ensure that schools in Fylde constituency benefit from an increase in funding under the new national funding formula.

Nick Gibb:

We are providing an additional £1.3 billion for schools across 2018-19 and 2019-20 to support the introduction of the national funding formula from April next year. Along with the funding we had already committed for schools at the 2015 Spending Review, this will mean the core schools budget rises from just under £41 billion to £43.5 billion by 2020. Full details of the arrangements are set out at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/justine-greening-statement-to-parliament-on-school-funding>.

■ Schools: Nurses

Diana Johnson:

[3656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 10 October 2016 to Question 46648, from the hon. Member for Ashfield, on schools: nurses, if she will provide the same data for the Hull local authority for each year since 2009-10.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The number of nurses and nursery nurses reported by local authority maintained nursery and state funded primary schools in the City of Kingston Upon Hull between November 2010 and 2016 is provided in the table below. The source of this information is the School Workforce Census which is an annual survey collected in November each year.

	NURSERY			PRIMARY ^[1]		
	Nurses ^[2]	Nursery Nurses	Total	Nurses	Nursery Nurses	Total
2016	0	0	0	0	60	60
2015	0	0	0	0	60	60
2014	0	0	0	0	50	50
2013	0	10	10	0	60	60
2012	0	20	20	0	70	70
2011	0	20	20	0	70	70
2010	0	10	10	0	70	70

Source: School Workforce Census

[1] Some local authority maintained primary schools include nursery settings.

[2] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and less than 10 have been suppressed.

■ Sixth Form Colleges: Closures

Ms Angela Eagle:[\[3642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and which sixth form colleges have closed in England since 2010.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Eleven sixth form colleges have dissolved in England since 2010. In all cases the sixth form colleges were merged or converted to become an Academy, that is to say their assets, rights and liabilities were transferred to another education provider. The colleges are:

SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	DATE OF DISSOLUTION
New College, Pontefract	June 2017
Priestley College	May 2017
Strodes College	May 2017

SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	DATE OF DISSOLUTION
Rochdale Sixth Form College	April 2017
Hereford Sixth Form College	March 2017
Barrow in Furness Sixth Form College	July 2016
Prior Pursglove Sixth Form College	May 2016
Stockton Sixth Form College	May 2016
Totton College	November 2017
Ludlow College	July 2013
St Mary's Roman Catholic Sixth Form College	July 2011

■ Sixth Form Education

Gordon Marsden:

[\[5438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2017 to Question 3811, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the use of the £267 million underspend in the budget for 16 to 19 year old education.

Anne Milton:

The 16-19 budget set for each financial year is a forecast of anticipated spend. Actual spend varies from this because it is based on set funding rates per student. If actual student numbers are lower than forecast, the department works in conjunction with the Treasury to try to reallocate any underspends to other priorities in a way that maximises value for money. This could include a proposal to redeploy the funding to the next financial year. If alternative value for money activities cannot be identified, the funding is returned to the Treasury to support the overall fiscal position.

■ Teachers: North East

Mr Stephen Hepburn:

[\[4844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to improve the retention of teachers in (a) Jarrow constituency, (b) South Tyneside and (c) the North East.

Nick Gibb:

We are providing greater support to teachers to tackle the most frequently cited reason for teachers wanting to leave the profession, which is unnecessary workload. We are continuing our extensive work with the profession to remove unnecessary burdens so that teachers can concentrate on teaching and not bureaucracy and paperwork. This includes implementing the recommendations of the three independent review groups from the 2014 Workload Challenge – ineffective marking,

use of planning and resources, and data management. We are also encouraging schools to make greater use of the pay flexibilities, including retention allowances.

Although North East teacher leavers rates are lower than the national average for primary and secondary schools (in 2015) we are working with key stakeholders to ensure greater support for schools. This will include supporting schools in each region, including the North East, to ensure teacher retention challenges are addressed.

■ Teachers: Sunderland

Bridget Phillipson:

[5110]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of trends in the number of teachers in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in (i) Houghton and Sunderland South constituency and (ii) Sunderland since 2010.

Nick Gibb:

The table in the attachment provides the full time equivalent number^[1] of teachers in service in state funded primary and state funded secondary schools in Houghton and Sunderland South constituency, Sunderland local authority and England in November each year between 2010 to 2016.

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 teachers.

Attachments:

1. 5110_attachment [5110 attachment.xlsx]

■ UN Committee On the Rights of the Child

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[4616]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress she has made on implementing the recommendations made to the Government by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in June 2016.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We responded to the UNCRC's concluding observations through a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) published on 17 October 2016. The WMS is available online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-10-17/HLWS197/>.

That WMS encourages other government departments to read the recommendations and take them into account. It also outlines a framework of actions that my department is taking forward.

To support this work, my department has set up a UNCRC Action Group, which is developing cross-Whitehall training on children rights and has funded Children's Rights Alliance England to publish child friendly versions of the concluding observations.

■ Vocational Education

Rebecca Pow:

[\[5990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the timetable is for delivery of the first T-levels.

Anne Milton:

The Post-16 Skills Plan set out our plan to reform technical education including the introduction of 15 new technical routes to skilled employment, new college-based training programmes (T Levels) based on employer-designed standards, and high quality T Level work placements.

Delivering these reforms will be transformational; and we are determined to ensure they are a success and achieve their overall aims: to transform technical education and create a high quality system that delivers the skills, knowledge and behaviours that employers and the country need.

The only way to deliver this challenge successfully is through genuine partnership between government, business experts/leaders and education professionals.

My officials have now carried out extensive testing of the current delivery plans, including in relation to work placement provision, in discussion with employers, providers and awarding organisations. Following that assessment, we have concluded that we will deliver a small number of T levels from September 2020, with all routes available as planned in September 2022.

Over the summer, we will continue to refine and develop our plans working with business and the providers, and we will provide an update on progress in the autumn.

■ Vocational Guidance

Dr Sarah Wollaston:

[\[4461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when her Department plans to publish the careers strategy.

Anne Milton:

We will publish a careers strategy in the Autumn. The strategy will have a clear focus on improving social mobility.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture and Food: Migrant Workers

Ben Lake:

[\[5131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union on ensuring the availability of migrant workers for the agriculture and food manufacturing sectors when the UK leaves the EU.

George Eustice:

Defra Ministers have ongoing discussions with a range of government departments, including the Department for Exiting the European Union, about securing the workforce that the agriculture and food manufacturing industries need for the future.

■ **Agriculture: UK Trade with EU****Angus Brendan MacNeil:**[\[4375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effect on the agricultural sector of the UK leaving the EU without agreeing a trade deal with the EU.

George Eustice:

Leaving the EU presents a major opportunity for UK agriculture. We are working towards securing the best possible deal for the UK agriculture industry.

The Government is in the process of carrying out a programme of rigorous and extensive analytical work on a range of scenarios on a sector by sector basis.

■ **Bovine Tuberculosis: Cheshire****Esther McVey:**[\[900598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proposals his Department plans to bring forward to support Cheshire farmers in preventing the spread of TB; and what support is available for TB-infected farms.

George Eustice:

The Government is determined to implement all available measures necessary to eradicate this devastating disease as quickly as possible to create resilient and successful dairy and beef industries in Cheshire and elsewhere. That includes providing direct financial support, in the form of compensation for slaughtered cattle and for TB testing costs, as well as professional advice and guidance.

There have been TB hotspots in Cheshire and we acted swiftly 2 years ago to introduce 6 monthly TB testing to get on top of the disease, a move supported by industry.

We have consulted on extending the 6 monthly testing to other hotspots in the edge area, which could include other parts of Cheshire.

All farmers who have livestock compulsory slaughtered receive compensation for the animals they have lost.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Mass Media****Deidre Brock:**[\[4300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many public engagements for which a media calling notice was issued were attended by a departmental Minister in each of the last 12 months.

George Eustice:

Media are frequently invited to public engagements attended by ministers. The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Dredging: English Channel**James Gray:**[\[5454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will ensure that no decision will be taken on Marine Aggregate Dredging Application MLA/2016/00227, South Goodwin Sands, Area 521 by the Marine Management Organisation until the Secretary of State for Defence has come to a decision on the application made by Marinet Ltd on 22 February 2017, to designate all or part of area 521 as a controlled area under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) made a determination on whether to designate the Goodwin Sands as a controlled site under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 (PMRA 1986) on 2 June 2017. The MoD determined that due to the size and dimensions of a controlled site it would prevent any whole scale designation of the area of the Goodwin Sands.

James Gray:[\[5455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will ensure that no decision will be taken on Marine Aggregate Dredging Application MLA/2016/00227, South Goodwin Sands, Area 521 by the Marine Management Organisation until the Secretary of State for Defence has come to a decision to designate the area under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 and the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) made a determination on whether to designate the Goodwin Sands as a controlled site under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 (PMRA 1986) on 2 June 2017. The MoD determined that due to the size and dimensions of a controlled site it would prevent any whole scale designation of the area of the Goodwin Sands.

■ Fish: River Wyre**Mark Menzies:**[\[4332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of fish stocks in the River Wyre.

George Eustice:

To assess the health of salmon rivers in England, the Environment Agency carries out annual assessments against salmon stock targets using angler rod catch data. In recent years there has been a downward trend in the health of Atlantic salmon on the River Wyre and our projections suggest this trend will likely continue. Regrettably this

is in line with many other Atlantic salmon rivers in the UK and we are seeing sustainable salmon stocks fall across the country over recent years. In response, the Environment Agency and its partners launched in 2015 the [Salmon 5 Point Approach](#).

The most recent assessment (2016) placed the River Wyre in the 'at risk' category, and a 5 year prediction of the same category it may be necessary to impose some form of fishery regulation. The Environment Agency undertakes juvenile fish monitoring in the River Wyre. In 2016 a total of 15 sites were surveyed throughout the catchment. The majority of the sites were monitoring juvenile salmonids, while those in the lower part of the catchment monitor the coarse fish populations. The results indicate that the salmon and trout are still present in the upper parts of the catchment in average populations. A mixture of coarse fish were found in the lower half of the catchment in average populations.

■ Fisheries

Deidre Brock:

[\[4603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his policy is on access to and management of domestic waters after the UK leaves the EU; what discussions he plans to have with UK marine scientists on that policy; and if he will visit the NAFC Marine Centre in Shetland to discuss with them how the Common Fisheries Policy of the EU has affected fish stocks.

George Eustice:

As an independent coastal state we will develop and implement a domestic fishing policy that best meets the interests of the UK and is in line with our obligations under international law. We are working closely with our world class scientists to achieve this. Once we have taken back control of our waters, we will be able to negotiate future access.

I visited NAFC in June 2014 and regularly discuss fisheries issues with representatives from the Scottish and Shetland Island fishing industries.

■ Fisheries: South West

Kevin Foster:

[\[900597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the opportunities available for the fishing industry in the South West after the UK leaves the EU.

George Eustice:

On leaving the EU, the UK will under international law become an independent coastal state with responsibility for controlling and managing its Exclusive Economic Zone. This will provide an opportunity to reach new fairer agreements on access and quota arrangements which will benefit West Country fishermen. .

■ Food Supply

Ben Lake: [\[5130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union on ensuring that there will be no risk to the UK food supply when the UK leaves the EU.

George Eustice:

We continue to work across government and with industry to shape the priorities and interests for the UK agri-food sector.

We want to grow more, sell more and export more British food, supported by the Industrial Strategy. This will allow the food and drink sector to become even more resilient, competitive and profitable. It is our priority to enable an innovative, productive and competitive food supply chain from farm and sea to fork, which invests in people and skills.

We are prioritising securing the freest trade possible with the EU, including an ambitious and comprehensive trade agreement and a new customs agreement. We work to promote transparency and open global markets internationally, as well as a competitive domestic market to help producers and retailers offer the best prices, quality and choice to consumers.

Ben Lake: [\[5333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure security of food supply in the UK once the UK leaves the EU.

George Eustice:

We continue to work across government and with industry to shape the priorities and interests for the UK agri-food sector.

We want to grow more, sell more and export more British food, supported by the Industrial Strategy. This will allow the food and drink sector to become even more resilient, competitive and profitable. It is our priority to enable an innovative, productive and competitive food supply chain from farm and sea to fork, which invests in people and skills.

We are prioritising securing the freest trade possible with the EU, including an ambitious and comprehensive trade agreement and a new customs agreement. We work to promote transparency and open global markets internationally, as well as a competitive domestic market to help producers and retailers offer the best prices, quality and choice to consumers.

■ Food: Labelling

Nick Smith: [\[900601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to promote (a) local and (b) British produce through food labelling.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Accurate and informative food labelling helps people know the quality and provenance of their food. Most food for sale in the UK is labelled with the country of origin and producers are developing labelling to show the provenance of their food whether it is local to the community in which it is sold or made in Britain. The Government wants this to continue and will do what we can to protect the UK's iconic food and drink.

Protected Food Names, for example Traditional Welsh Cider and Traditional Welsh Perry, offer an effective way to demonstrate great local and UK food and we are working to increase the number of products covered by the protected designation of origin (PDO), protected geographical indication (PGI), and traditional specialities guaranteed schemes (TSG): the newest being Conwy Mussels.

■ **Litter****Bob Stewart:****[4870]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to introduce a legally binding extended producer responsibility scheme for litter.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government's Litter Strategy for England, published on 10 April, outlines a range of measures to reduce litter and littering behaviour. As part of the Strategy we are establishing a working group to explore voluntary or regulatory measures to reduce the incidence of commonly littered items.

■ **Marine Environment: Developing Countries****Dr Matthew Offord:****[4885]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits of the Sustainable Development Goal 44 for Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Call For Action, agreed at the recent UN Ocean Conference on Sustainable Development Goal 14, outlines a number of potential benefits for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) <https://oceanconference.un.org/callforaction>. In addition, a register of voluntary commitments on the conference website lists 541 commitments that relate specifically to SDG14 target A, which is of particular relevance to SIDS and LDCs. This includes the UK's Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme which in 2017 will deliver: Maritime Economy reports for each SIDS, a Climate Change report for the Caribbean, hydrographic charting, data collection and seabed habitat mapping around Grenada and St Vincent & the Grenadines, and the provision of novel technology.

<https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/?id=19609>

Further details on the benefits to SIDS and LDCs in relation to this specific funding programme will be available as the programme continues.

■ **Marine Environment: Environment Protection**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[4886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the potential benefits are of the UK becoming a signatory of the Environment Clean Seas Campaign.

George Eustice:

At the recent UN Oceans Conference, the UK made several voluntary commitments, including signing up to the UN's Clean Seas campaign. This programme aims to transform habits, practices, standards and policies around the globe to dramatically reduce marine litter and the harm it causes.

Mims Davies:

[\[900595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect and enhance the marine environment.

Steve Double:

[\[900596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect and enhance the marine environment.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Our vision is for our seas to be clean, safe, healthy, biologically diverse and productive. To achieve this we are working nationally and internationally to protect the marine environment. The UK demonstrated international leadership at the recent UN Ocean Conference and OSPAR Commission meeting. Marine protected areas around the UK and the Overseas Territories further demonstrate our commitment to protecting marine biodiversity.

■ **Red Tape Initiative**

Jon Trickett:

[\[4344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to step down as a member of the advisory board of the Red Tape Initiative following his re-appointment to the Cabinet.

George Eustice:

As announced on 22 June, in accordance with Cabinet Office guidelines and following his appointment to the Cabinet, the Secretary of State has stepped down from various bodies; including the Red Tape Initiative.

■ Sea Level: Environment

Andrew Rosindell:

[4735]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when his Department last conducted an assessment of the implications of a rise in sea levels for the environment.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The second UK Climate Change Risk Assessment was published in January 2017, and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017>. This was underpinned by the second Climate Change Risk Assessment Evidence Report, published in June 2016, by the Adaptation Sub-Committee of the Committee on Climate Change. The assessment considers the future risks and opportunities of sea level rise across the UK. Further information can be found at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/tackling-climate-change/preparing-for-climate-change/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017/>.

In 2009, the Government published the UK Climate Projections, which include projections of sea level rise in waters surrounding the UK. Work is currently under way to complete an update of these projections for publication in 2018. The UK Climate Projections can be viewed at: <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk>.

■ Seas and Oceans: Acidification

Dr Matthew Offord:

[4887]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle ocean acidification.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

From 2010-2016, the Department partnered with the Natural Environment Research Council and the Department for Energy and Climate Change (now Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) to invest £12.4 million in the UK Ocean Acidification research programme (UKOA).

The programme provided baseline data for UK seas and supported development of long-term monitoring strategies. This fed into the Oslo Paris Commission (OSPAR) Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP). UKOA scientists helped establish the international Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON) initiative, which now involves around 30 other countries.

In March 2017, a detailed update on progress made by UKOA was made to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee inquiry on ocean acidification, which is available at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees>.

At the recent UN Ocean Conference in June 2017, the Department chaired an event in partnership with the [Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network](#) and others. The Intergovernmental Call for Action agreed at the Conference identified the threat posed by ocean acidification and the need to develop effective adaptation measures

to protect ocean biodiversity. The Department will continue to support regional co-ordination in monitoring ocean acidification through OSPAR.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ **British Nationals Abroad: Pension Rights**

Paul Blomfield:

[\[5539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2017 to Question 3561 and the Answer of 13 July 2017 to Question 3561, if he will protect the accrued pensions rights of UK nationals who have previously lived in another EU member state but are no longer resident in that country; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

As set out in the policy paper "Safeguarding the Position of EU Citizens Living in the UK and UK Nationals Living in the EU," the UK will continue to aggregate periods of relevant insurance, work or residence within the EU accrued before exit to help meet the entitlement conditions for UK contributory benefits and State Pension, even where entitlement to these rights may be exercised after exit.

■ **Charter of Fundamental Rights (EU)**

Paul Blomfield:

[\[5540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2017 to Question 3554, on immigration: EU nationals, whether (a) non-UK EU nationals and (b) UK nationals will continue to benefit from the right to equal treatment under the law enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK has a longstanding tradition of ensuring our rights and liberties are protected domestically and of fulfilling our international human rights obligations. The decision to leave the EU does not change this.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights did not create any new rights. Instead it was intended to catalogue the rights that already existed in EU law - this law is being converted into UK law on the point we exit the EU.

■ **EU Internal Trade: Cornwall**

Tim Farron:

[\[5078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether his Department has undertaken an impact assessment on the effect of leaving the single market on the economy of Cornwall.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government is committed to securing a deal that works for the entire United Kingdom - for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and all parts of England. As part of this commitment the Government and DExEU Ministers continue to engage extensively with regional stakeholders, and intend to continue this work throughout the exit process.

The Prime Minister has stated that we will we will not seek membership of the EU's Single Market after we leave the EU, but a bold and ambitious Free Trade Agreement as part of a new, deep and special partnership.

The Department for Exiting the EU is working with officials across Government and undertaking a programme of analytical work to assess the economic impacts of exiting the European Union across all areas of the UK.

Parliament has repeatedly asked the Government to protect information that could undermine the UK's negotiating position and the Government will respect this.

The government has provided a guarantee for all European Structural and Investment Fund projects signed before the UK leaves the European Union (EU), providing they are value for money and in line with domestic priorities, including where those projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU. The government's manifesto committed to create a UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Further details on the Shared Prosperity Fund will be set out in due course.

■ EU Internal Trade: Northern Ireland**Tim Farron:****[5079]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether his Department has undertaken an impact assessment on the effect of leaving the single market on the economy of Northern Ireland.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government is committed to securing a deal that works for the entire United Kingdom - for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and all parts of England. In the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive, we have engaged at an official level with the Northern Ireland Civil Service. We remain committed to working with a new Executive to ensure that we deliver a good deal for the whole of the UK, including Northern Ireland.

The Prime Minister has stated that we will not seek membership of the EU's Single Market after we leave the EU, but a bold and ambitious Free Trade Agreement as part of a new, deep and special partnership.

The Department for Exiting the EU is working with officials across Government and undertaking a programme of analytical work to assess the economic impacts of exiting the European Union across all areas of the UK.

Parliament has repeatedly asked the Government to protect information that could undermine the UK's negotiating position and the Government will respect this.

We are committed to securing the most frictionless trading relationship possible with the EU. We have no preconceived position on the way we do that: what matters is the ends, not the means. We welcome the European Council's commitment to develop flexible and imaginative solutions on the island of Ireland.

■ **European Aviation Safety Agency: Membership**

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[5607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, with reference to the Answer of 17 January 2017 to Question 60272, on European Aviation Standards Authority: Membership, what the Government's policy is on retaining membership of the European Aviation Standards Authority in negotiations on the UK leaving the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government will ensure that a high standard of aviation safety is maintained but the precise form of our relationship with EASA will be a matter for the negotiations.

■ **European Medicines Agency**

Tom Brake:

[\[5526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what assessment the Government has made of the effect on access to newly developed drugs and treatments of the UK ceasing to be a member of the European Medicines Agency.

Mr Robin Walker:

We recognise the importance of a close cooperative relationship between the UK and EU in the field of medicines regulation and science and research collaboration.

As part of the negotiations the Government will discuss with the EU and Member States how best to continue cooperation in the field of medicines regulation in the best interests of business, citizens and patients in the UK and the EU.

■ **Immigration**

Paul Blomfield:

[\[4628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, with reference to paragraph 6 of his Department's policy paper Safeguarding the position of EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU, published on 26 June 2017, whether a child born after the specified date to a lawful EU resident who arrived in the UK before the specified date will be eligible for settled status.

Mr Robin Walker:

Children of EU citizens who hold settled status and are born in the UK will automatically acquire British citizenship. EU resident parents who arrived before the specified date, but who need to apply for permission to stay post-exit in order to meet the five year residence requirement, will also need to apply for the same permission on behalf of their child when their child is born.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals**Layla Moran:****[3674]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions he has had with (a) Oxford University and (b) Oxford Brookes University on the residence status of staff and students from other EU countries at those universities when the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Robin Walker:

As part of our commitment to hear from every sector and region in the UK, DExEU Ministers continue to engage closely with organisations across the higher education sector to enable us to understand key issues.

The Department has engaged with both individual institutions and higher education umbrella bodies, including Universities UK, and the Russell Group, via a range of channels, including the BEIS high-level stakeholder working group on EU exit, universities, research and innovation.

The Government is already taking steps to ensure that existing EU citizens resident in the UK will, post-exit, be able to live their lives broadly as they do now. The Prime Minister announced our policy proposal on citizens' rights on Monday 26th June, setting out a fair and serious offer to EU citizens.

Details of Ministerial meetings will be published in the Department's Quarterly Transparency Returns, which will be made publicly available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ Atlantic Ocean Islands: Aviation****Mr Kevan Jones:****[4812]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect the re-routing of the South Africa Air Bridge has had on (a) medical treatment and (b) aeromedical evacuation for residents of (i) Ascension Island, (ii) St Helena and (iii) the Falkland Islands.

Sir Alan Duncan:

Emergency medevacs are unaffected by the rerouting of the South Atlantic Airbridge. The existing runway on Ascension is still able to be used for this purpose. Cases from St Helena go direct to Cape Town and those on the Falkland Islands usually go to a country in the region.

More routine medical treatment remains possible on all the islands. For medical appointments off island those on Ascension have been able to use the Ministry of Defence tactical flights to the UK, those on St Helena travel via the Royal Mail Ship to Cape Town, and those on the Falklands continue to use the South Atlantic Airbridge.

■ **British Indian Ocean Territory: Legal Costs**

Patrick Grady:

[\[3792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to his Department's freedom of information case FOI2007-15 on legal costs and Chagos Islands, what additional cost to the public purse has been incurred in the Bancoult, Chagos Refugee Group and Chagos Islanders case since 4 February 2015.

Sir Alan Duncan:

Since 1 January 2015, the Government Legal Department has raised invoices in the sum of £128,113 in respect of litigation brought by Chagossian interest groups in relation to the British Indian Ocean Territory.

■ **British Indian Ocean Territory: Minimum Wage**

Patrick Grady:

[\[3766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the legal minimum wage is in the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The laws of the British Indian Ocean Territory do not provide for a legal minimum wage.

■ **British Overseas Territories: Marine Protected Areas**

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[5293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Government's announcement of 15 September 2016 on making £20 million available to support delivery of the Blue Belt policy to increase marine protection within the UK Overseas Territories, whether that policy remains Government policy.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Government is fully committed to creating a Blue Belt around the UK Overseas Territories (OTs). We remain on track to deliver four million km² of protected ocean around our OTs by 2020. In support of our commitment, I was pleased to announce £20 million of funding to support our Blue Belt commitments over the next four years at the Our Oceans Summit in Washington DC last September.

So far, that funding has provided support to develop management, surveillance and enforcement plans to very large marine protected areas already announced. It has also supported the development of marine protection strategies to Territories committed to developing marine protection regimes by 2020. Specific funding arrangements for future years are under discussion.

■ **North Korea: South Korea**

Paul Masterton:

[\[4460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to de-escalate tensions in the Korean Peninsula.

Mark Field:

The British Government strongly supports international efforts to achieve a secure and stable Korean Peninsula. The UK continues to urge the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to end its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes which threaten regional stability and international peace and security. The UK has made clear that we would support a return to dialogue with the DPRK to de-escalate tensions on the Korean Peninsula but that the DPRK first needs to provide credible and genuine evidence that it is ready to discuss denuclearisation. Until then the UK and the international community needs to maintain pressure both diplomatically and through sanctions.

■ **Oman: Treaties****Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[5602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what international treaties the UK is a signatory to which require the UK to intervene on behalf of Oman in the event that Oman is attacked by a third country or countries.

Alistair Burt:

The UK is not a signatory to any treaty which would require the UK to intervene on behalf of Oman, in the event that Oman is attacked by a third country or countries. We have a strong historic and current defence and security relationship with Oman, which remains an important ally and friend.

■ **Rwanda: Elections****John Mann:**[\[5221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what reports he has received on alleged disappearances, threats, harassment and intimidations exerted against the political opposition, journalists and activists in Rwanda ahead of the presidential elections due to take place in August 2017.

Rory Stewart:

The British High Commission in Kigali and the Central Africa Team in London have received reports from opposition candidates themselves, Non Governmental Organisations, and the EU Delegation in Kigali. We take any such reports very seriously.

We remain concerned about the limited democratic space in Rwanda. The number of opposition candidates standing in the Presidential elections on 4 August is an example of these limitations.

Although we support the Government of Rwanda's Vision 2020 development programme, that programme clearly sets out their commitment to "the rule of law and the protection of human rights". We continue to speak candidly with Rwanda, raising concerns about Human Rights, freedom of expression, media freedoms and the lack of political space.

■ South Africa: Foreign Relations

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[5126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last met his counterpart in South Africa; and what issues were discussed at that meeting.

Rory Stewart:

The Foreign Secretary last met the South African Foreign Minister, Maite Mashabane, during the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in February this year. The discussion focused on bilateral relations between the UK and South Africa and the desire of both countries to work on a trade deal post Brexit.

■ South Korea and USA: Joint Exercises

Paul Masterton:

[\[4459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions the Government has had with the US on military exercises which that country is conducting in conjunction with South Korea.

Mark Field:

The British Government works closely with the US and ROK on security, intelligence and defence issues. We fully support the ROK's right to defend itself. This includes its right to hold legitimate military exercises with its partners.

■ Sudan: Human Rights

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[5124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of whether Sudan is meeting its international human rights obligations.

Rory Stewart:

We continue to be concerned by the human rights situation in Sudan, including restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of religion or belief, and sexual and gender based violence, especially in the conflict areas of Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile.

Sudan remains a Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Human Rights Priority Country. Improving human rights is a key objective in our engagement with Sudan. The launching of a Strategic Dialogue between the UK and Sudan in March 2016 has provided a means of discussing human rights issues and encouraging Sudan to meet their international obligations. The third session of the Dialogue (in March 2017) included a significant human rights element, with the FCO's Head of Human Rights and Democracy representing the UK.

■ Tibet: Human Rights**Kevin Brennan:**[\[5575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the human rights situation in Tibet and the ethnic Tibetan prefectures in China were raised at the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue held on 22 June 2017.

Mark Field:

As an EU Member State the UK contributed to preparations for the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue. The rights of religious and ethnic groups in Tibet and across China were raised at the last EU-China Human Rights Dialogue on 22 June.

The UK continues to have concerns about human rights and freedoms in Tibet. We consistently urge the Chinese authorities to respect all fundamental rights across the People's Republic of China, in line with both its own constitution and the international frameworks to which it is a party. We raised our concerns about Tibet at the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue held in Beijing on 27 June.

■ Turkey: Detainees**Joan Ryan:**[\[5063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the statement by Bärbel Kofler, the Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid at the Federal Foreign Office in Germany, of 13 June 2017, on the arrest and detention of Nuriye Gülmen and Semih Özakça.

Sir Alan Duncan:

We regularly raise concerns with the Turkish authorities over the situation of those who – like Nuriye Gulmen and Semih Ozakca – have been dismissed or detained under the State of Emergency following last year's attempted coup. We therefore share Ms Kofler's concerns. We have urged the Turkish authorities to respect international standards, including regarding the presumption of innocence, as well as freedom of expression and assembly.

■ Turkey: Human Rights**Mr David Lammy:**[\[5263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Turkish counterpart on the detention of human rights activists in Istanbul on 5 July 2017.

Sir Alan Duncan:

I am very concerned by the arrest on 5 July and remanding in custody of Amnesty International's Turkey Director, Idil Eser, and five other human rights defenders in Turkey. I also remain deeply concerned at the detention of Taner Kilic, Amnesty International's Turkey Chair. As I set out in my recent statement on these arrests, both the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister have raised these arrests in recent

discussions with Turkish counterparts as have I with the Turkish Ambassador. We continue to urge the Turkish authorities to uphold international standards with regard to the rule of law, including the presumption of innocence, and to protect fundamental rights including freedom of expression and assembly.

■ **Yemen: Armed Conflict**

Keith Vaz:

[4676]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if the Government will use its position in the UK to table a new UN resolution to end the civil war in Yemen.

Alistair Burt:

We welcome the agreement on 15 June of a Presidential Statement, sponsored by the UK as penholder, which called upon the parties to the conflict to agree the modalities for a ceasefire, take steps to address the humanitarian crisis, and restart political talks. We are now working urgently with our international and regional partners to ensure that the Security Council's words are converted into action.

HEALTH

■ **Abortion**

Maria Caulfield:

[5093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what research his Department has commissioned on fetal pain in the last three years.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

The Department funds the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to improve the health and wealth of the nation. NIHR is a comprehensive health and social care research system which funds high quality early translational, clinical and applied research to improve health; trains and supports health researchers; provides world class research facilities; works with the life sciences industries and charities to benefit all; and involves patients and the public at every step. The Department has not commissioned research on foetal pain through the NIHR in the last three years.

Maria Caulfield:

[5094]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many abortions performed later than 24 weeks gestation received funding from the public purse in the 2016-17 financial year.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

Abortion data is collected for calendar year, rather than financial year. Abortions undertaken at 24 weeks and over can only be carried out in an National Health Service hospital. In 2016, 221 NHS funded abortions were performed for residents of England and Wales at 24 weeks' gestation or later. An additional five abortions at 24 weeks or later were carried out in NHS hospitals but were privately funded.

Maria Caulfield: [5095]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much has been spent from the public purse on the provision of abortion in England in each of the last five years.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

Information on public expenditure on the provision of abortion in England is not collected centrally.

Maria Caulfield: [5112]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what account he plans to take of public opinion in his policy decisions on the time limits on abortions; and if he will make a statement.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

As with other matters of conscience, abortion is an issue on which the Government adopts a neutral stance.

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Addiction

Fiona Bruce: [5497]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people have been treated for alcohol addiction in each of the last three years.

Fiona Bruce: [5498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people have been diagnosed with problems relating to alcohol consumption in each of the last three years.

Fiona Bruce: [5499]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to reduce the number of cancer diagnoses related to alcohol consumption.

Steve Brine:

In 2015-16, there were 144,908 adults receiving specialist treatment for alcohol problems. Further data about the numbers of people in treatment for alcohol problems is contained in a series of annual reports from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System, which is available online:

<http://www.nta.nhs.uk/statistics.aspx>

Data is not available on the number of new diagnoses of alcohol-related disease each year. The estimated number of hospital admissions where the main reason for admission was alcohol-related was 339,000 in 2015-16 and 330,000 in the previous two years.

Further data on alcohol-related hospital admissions and incidence of alcohol-related cancer is available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-alcohol-profiles-for-england-lape>

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/local-alcohol-profiles>

There are a number of actions underway to tackle the harm caused by alcohol, including alcohol-related cancers. These actions include NHS England's national Commissioning for Quality and Innovation programme to incentivise the delivery of alcohol identification and brief advice; Public Health England's One You campaign to motivate people to take steps to improve their health, with a focus on alcohol use; and the NHS Health Check provides an opportunity for general practitioners to offer advice to reduce alcohol use if appropriate.

The Government believes in informing and empowering citizens, and has a responsibility to provide the most up to date, clear information to enable people to make informed choices about their drinking. The 2016 United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines provide the public with the most up to date scientific information.

■ **Alcoholic Drinks: Gambling**

Fiona Bruce:

[5496]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what his policy is on the potential link between alcohol and problem gambling; and what steps he is taking to tackle that link.

Steve Brine:

Alcohol misuse and problem gambling can be regarded as significant public health problems with adverse consequences for the individuals concerned and to wider society.

A range of Government initiatives have been taken at a national level to tackle alcohol misuse. An essential part of our strategy to tackle alcohol harms is the provision of high quality, evidence based treatment services. Local alcohol and drug treatment services are commissioned by local authorities on the basis of local needs assessment. They should be commissioned to have competent staff who are equipped to identify and respond appropriately to a broad range of patient needs, including problem gambling, and then refer them appropriately through established pathways.

Additionally there are a range of services available to problem gamblers, details of which can be found on the NHS Choices website.

The Responsible Gambling Trust (RGT) funds GamCare, an independent charity offering help and support, and a specialist National Health Service service for gambling disorders. The RGT collects donations from the gambling industry to fund them. Some NHS mental health services also treat gambling problems and self-help is available from Gamblers Anonymous.

Public Health England has published a briefing for local authorities, with the Local Government Association, on problem gambling and what action local authorities could take.

■ Allergies

Jon Cruddas: [\[5451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, which Minister of his Department leads on policy relating to allergies.

Steve Brine:

As the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Primary Care, I am responsible for policy relating to long term conditions, including allergies.

■ Analgesics

Jim Shannon: [\[5225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many deaths caused by pain-killers have occurred in the NHS in each of the last five years.

Steve Brine:

This information is not collected centrally.

■ Baby Care Units

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[4578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what mechanisms are in place to ensure co-ordination of the work of the Neonatal Transformation Review and the proposed quality surveillance programme on neonatal care.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[4579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what account will be taken of Scottish maternity and neonatal review during the neonatal transformation review process.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Scottish maternity and neonatal review is a well-conceived document that will be used in the deliberations of the Neonatal Review.

Networks have been formally established in England for 15 years and are now configured as Operational Delivery Networks which provide an important role in coordinating and quality assurance of locally delivered care.

The NHS England Clinical Reference Group is coordinating both the Neonatal Transformation Review and the progress of the Quality Surveillance Team's Peer Review of Neonatal Services. The results of both have been designed to complement each other and minimise the work required of the local neonatal teams. Both processes will feed into the work of the Local Maternity Systems and Operational Delivery Networks over the next 12 months to ensure that we have a coordinated approach to improving the specialist care available for babies, alongside the initiatives developed by Better Births.

■ Cancer: Diagnosis

Jim Shannon:

[\[5484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps are being taken to speed up the process of patients receiving cancer tests and diagnoses.

Steve Brine:

The independent Cancer Taskforce published the Cancer Strategy for England in July 2015. A major recommendation of the Strategy was a new cancer waiting times target that, by 2020, National Health Service cancer patients will be given a definitive diagnosis or the all clear within 28 days of being referred by a general practitioner. The Faster Diagnosis Standard is currently being tested in five local health economies. This project is being independently evaluated, with an interim evaluation report delivered in May 2017. A final report is due in May 2018, which will inform national roll-out.

■ Cervical Cancer: Research

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[5122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of funding for research into cervical cancer in the last five years.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

The Department funds research into all aspects of human health, including cancer, through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) at the level of £1 billion per year. NIHR cancer research expenditure has risen from £101 million in 2010/11 to £142 million in 2015/16.

As with other Government funders of health research, the NIHR does not allocate funding for specific disease areas. The level of research spend in a particular area, such as cervical cancer, or bowel cancer, is driven by factors including scientific potential and the number and scale of successful funding applications.

Nineteen major funders of cancer research in the United Kingdom work together as the 'National Cancer Research Institute' (NCRI). These funders include the Department, the Medical Research Council and Cancer Research UK. Through coordinating their research, NCRI partners maximise the impact of research for cancer patients and the public.

■ Children: Eyesight

Jim Shannon:

[\[5270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to improve the examination of eyes for (a) children with autism and (b) other sensory-affected children.

Steve Brine:

NHS England has set up a working group to consider whether the provision of National Health Service sight tests for people, including those with learning

difficulties, who may have a need for, but difficulties accessing services can be improved. The working group is expected to report back their findings and recommendations in the autumn.

■ Colorectal Cancer: Research

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[5125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of funding for research into bowel cancer in the last five years.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

The Department funds research into all aspects of human health, including cancer, through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) at the level of £1 billion per year. NIHR cancer research expenditure has risen from £101 million in 2010/11 to £142 million in 2015/16.

As with other Government funders of health research, the NIHR does not allocate funding for specific disease areas. The level of research spend in a particular area, such as cervical cancer, or bowel cancer, is driven by factors including scientific potential and the number and scale of successful funding applications.

Nineteen major funders of cancer research in the United Kingdom work together as the 'National Cancer Research Institute' (NCRI). These funders include the Department, the Medical Research Council and Cancer Research UK. Through coordinating their research, NCRI partners maximise the impact of research for cancer patients and the public.

■ Colorectal Cancer: Screening

Justin Tomlinson:

[\[4837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the availability of bowel cancer screening for people under the age of 30.

Steve Brine:

No assessment has been made regarding availability of bowel cancer screening for people under the age of 30. Bowel screening is offered to men and women aged 60-74 years old with an average risk of developing the condition. High risk screening falls outside the United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC) remit; which is to offer whole population screening to asymptomatic people.

Individuals with symptoms or those considered to be high risk should speak to their general practitioner.

The UK NSC has an open process by which stakeholders and/or members of the public may submit a proposal to the Committee, providing robust peer reviewed evidence to support a change to an existing programme. This would include a modification such as a change to the screening age. Submissions relating to existing programmes are accepted throughout the year. More information about the UK NSC's process is available on its website.

■ Commissioning Support Units

Karin Smyth:

[4638]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the Answer of 7 March 2017 to Question 65785, on commissioning support units, if he will set out the timetable for a formal decision on the autonomy of such units.

Steve Brine:

The decision on whether to make Commissioning Support Units autonomous has been deferred until NHS England has decided how these units can be best positioned to support Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships and the move to develop Accountable Care Systems. They expect to be in a position to consider this later this year.

■ Digestive System: Drugs

Jim Shannon:

[5237]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions clinical bodies have had with his Department on the potential connection between heartburn drugs and early death.

Steve Brine:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) continuously monitors the safety of all medicines on the market in the United Kingdom and seeks independent expert advice from the Commission on Human Medicines on important new safety issues. The MHRA is aware of a recently published United States study which reported that use of particular types of gastrointestinal (GI) drug known as proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) were associated with an increased risk of death when compared with use of other types of GI medication known as H2 receptor blockers.

As with all medicines, all new evidence on the safety of PPIs is kept under close review and this latest study will be carefully considered and any new advice for healthcare professionals or patients will be communicated.

There have not been any discussions by MHRA with clinical bodies on this issue.

PPIs are effective medicines in treating and preventing stomach ulcers and other GI disorders, and any patients on a PPI should continue their treatment as recommended by their healthcare professional.

■ Food: EU Law

Ben Lake:

[5129]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of updating UK law in line with EU food safety regulations in the period after the UK has left the EU.

Steve Brine:

The European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill 2017 will ensure that the body of existing EU food safety law continues to have effect in United Kingdom law. This will

provide businesses and stakeholders with maximum certainty as we leave the EU. We will then have the opportunity, over time, to ensure our legislative framework maintains food safety standards.

The Food Standards Agency's statutory objective is to protect public health and consumers' other interests in relation to food while maintaining access to a range of goods that are trusted and safe.

■ Gender Recognition: Clinics

Sarah Champion: [5096]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what changes NHS England is proposing to make to the way in which services are commissioned and offered in gender identity clinics.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

NHS England has launched a 12 week consultation on specialised gender identity services for adults (those aged 17 and above). The consultation is open until 30 September 2017.

The consultation will focus on proposed service specifications that detail how Gender Identity Clinics will deliver specialised outpatient services, as well as how surgical units will deliver surgical interventions. The service specifications have been developed taking into account the outcome of engagement with the transgender community and clinical experts and describe new proposals for how specialised gender identity services could be delivered in the future.

A decision will be made by NHS England later this year, once the outcome of the consultation has been considered. Further information about the consultation, including the consultation documentation, can be found on NHS England's website and accessed via the following link:

<https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/survey/gender-identity-services-for-adults/>

■ General Practitioners: Negligence

Mr Laurence Robertson: [5392]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on GPs' budgets of changes in the discount rate used to calculate medical negligence claims; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Laurence Robertson: [5393]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what extra funds he is making available to GPs to cover the cost of the increasing number and value of claims for medical negligence; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The cost of indemnity to general practitioners (GPs) is already recognised as a business expense, and reflected in the sums received by GP practices via the GP

contract. In recognition of the rising costs of indemnity, NHS England put an extra £30 million in to the GP contract in March 2017 to cover indemnity-related inflation for GPs from 2016-17. A further sum of approximately £30 million will be made available for April 2018.

On 27 February the former Lord Chancellor (Elizabeth Truss) announced a change in the personal injury (PIDR) discount rate. The Department is aware of the risks of indemnity subscription rises associated with this change and the potential consequences for GPs. This is why alongside the February announcement the Government committed to working closely with GPs and the Medical Defence Organisations (MDOs) to ensure that appropriate funding is provided to meet the additional costs to GPs associated with the PIDR change. The Department is continuing to work with MDOs and with GP representatives. At the time of writing, the MDOs have not reflected the PIDR change in their subscription rates.

■ Grenfell Tower: Fires

Caroline Lucas:

[4991]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department has taken to provide psychological assessment and mental health support to (a) emergency service personnel, (b) volunteers, (c) local residents, (d) victims and (e) other people affected by the Grenfell Tower fire; what assessment he has made of the capacity of local mental health services to provide full and ongoing access to psychological treatment and support for all who are assessed or diagnosed as being in need because of that fire; and if he will make a statement.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

Comprehensive psychological services have been put in place for those affected by the fire.

Central and North West London NHS Trust (CNWL) is the lead health provider for the National Health Service response to the Grenfell fire. CNWL established a walk-in desk at the Westway centre on the day of the fire. Twelve qualified staff are working from this space including one general practitioner and two child and adolescent mental health service workers.

Much of CNWL's work is now focussed on outreach work in the community such as visits to former residents of the tower block in their temporary accommodation, visits to a number of community centres, going door to door in the three blocks immediately surrounding the tower and liaising with local schools and colleges.

Enhanced mental health support for first responders, including the fire brigade and those working to support the bereaved, has been put in place by London's NHS Mental Health Services. A pathway of care has been designed, reflecting learning from Manchester and using London's clinical expertise in this area. London Fire Brigade Counselling and Wellbeing team continue to identify and support individual firefighters. The NHS is providing additional support to the London Fire Brigade on

request. The London Fire Brigade is also working closely with NHS England to establish what psychological support may be available for the families of firefighters.

■ Health Services: Dudley

Ian Austin: [\[5259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the effect on the employment status of staff would be of the failure of Dudley's multi-speciality community provider.

Steve Brine:

The new Multi-specialty Community Provider contract includes additional provisions that allow Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group to understand the financial health of the provider and take early action to rectify and prevent failure, as well as ensure continuity of services.

Practical arrangements to ensure service continuity on contract expiry or early termination for any reason will be agreed with the provider before the contract is awarded. These arrangements will aim to protect the employees involved, and will be reflected in obligations on the part of the provider in the signed contract.

■ Heart Diseases: Hospitals

Jonathan Reynolds: [\[4811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he has received representations on the proposal to end surgical provision for congenital heart conditions in Greater Manchester and to refer patients to Liverpool or Leeds.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Department has received representations on this subject, such as recent correspondence, however this is a matter for NHS England. No decision has been made to end surgical provision for Congenital Heart Disease conditions at Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

NHS England opened a further public consultation on 9 February 2017 to provide the public with information about these proposals, and the potential impact they may have, if implemented, on the delivery of services, and to seek views about their plans. This consultation closed on 17 July 2017.

NHS England and Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust staff recently met with patients and their representatives to provide further information. At the meeting, patients were able to express their views, and their feedback will help to inform the next steps.

■ Hospitals: Hygiene

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[5240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what progress his Department has made on implementing his Department's policy to publish a hand hygiene indicator for NHS Trusts;

and whether he plans to include publication of such an indicator in the forthcoming draft Patient Safety Bill.

Steve Brine:

The Department is working with NHS Improvement and Public Health England on progressing this policy as part of the programme to improve infection prevention and control and to halve healthcare-associated Gram-negative bloodstream infections by 2021.

Details of the draft Patient Safety Bill will be published later this year.

■ **Liver Cancer: Coffee**

Jim Shannon:

[5267]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what discussions his Department has had with health promotion agencies on guidance on the links between excess coffee consumption and liver cancer.

Steve Brine:

Public Health England has not held any discussions with health promotion agencies on guidance on the links between excess coffee consumption and liver cancer.

■ **Medical Treatments: Innovation**

Pauline Latham:

[4699]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what funding is available for treatments which have been made available under the Early Access to Medicines Scheme after marketing authorisation but before the publication of NICE guidance.

Pauline Latham:

[4700]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans he has to transfer the funding of medicines under the Early Access to Medicines Scheme from pharmaceutical companies to the NHS.

Steve Brine:

The Early Access to Medicines Schemes is a voluntary scheme. Companies are not paid for the medicines they supply into the scheme. However, the Government has recently announced new funding as part of a wider package of up to £86 million aimed at addressing barriers to uptake of innovation that were recommended in the Accelerated Access Review. Small to Medium Enterprises with products that meet the requirements for the Early Access to Medicines Scheme will be able to access this funding opportunity. Further announcements will be made on how small businesses can apply for this support. More information can be found at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/86-million-funding-announced-for-new-medicine-and-technology>

■ Mental Health Services

Norman Lamb: [\[5568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on progress on the implementation of local Crisis Care Concordat plans.

Norman Lamb: [\[5599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when the Crisis Care Concordat steering group will next meet.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

Health Ministers have regular discussions with their colleagues in other Government departments about a range of issues.

Departmental officials are liaising with Home Office officials to make arrangements for the next Crisis Care Concordat Steering Group meeting later this year.

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Alex Cunningham: [\[5386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) cost of appointments missed by children and young people accessing child and adolescent mental health services in the last 12 months.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

The number of appointments missed by children and young people accessing child and adolescent mental health services for 2016/17 was 291,624. The cost of missed appointments is not collected.

■ Mental Health Services: Nurses

Luciana Berger: [\[5509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to his tweet on mental health nurses and funding of 12 July 2017, what the evidential basis is for his statement that mental health nursing is the fastest growing nurse speciality.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health recognises the need to make progress with increasing the numbers of nurses working in mental health settings.

Health Education England will publish a Mental Health Workforce Plan over the summer setting out the actions needed to shape the future workforce and skill mix, including further expansion of the numbers of mental health nurses as well as other professions.

■ NHS Trusts: Location

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[5256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the merits of (a) same site co-location in delivering cohesive relationships between

clinical teams and (b) inter-Trust Service Level Agreements in delivering more cohesive relationships between neighbouring trusts.

Mr Philip Dunne:

This is a matter for NHS England.

Collaboration between clinical teams and between provider organisations can often help to improve services. In the case of some services, such as Congenital Heart Disease services, clinicians have agreed specific standards to support high quality care.

■ **NHS: Euratom**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[5305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment the Government has made of the potential effect of the UK withdrawing from Euratom on (a) the NHS budget and (b) the provision of NHS cancer treatments.

Steve Brine:

The United Kingdom's ability to import medical isotopes from Europe and the rest of the world will not be affected by withdrawing from Euratom. Medical radio-isotopes, used in the treatment of some cancers, are not subject to Euratom Supply Agency contracts or to Euratom safeguards. The Government remains committed to improving outcomes for all cancer patients and has confirmed funding of over £600 million between 2017/18 and 2020/21 to deliver on the independent Cancer Taskforce's Strategy for England and invested £142 million on cancer research in 2015/16.

■ **NHS: Fund Raising**

Helen Goodman:

[\[5419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many appeals for fundraising by the public have been supported by the NHS for (a) NHS equipment and (b) NHS services in the last three years.

Helen Goodman:

[\[5420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what criteria his Department has in place to assess the merits of launching appeals for public fundraising for NHS services and equipment.

Helen Goodman:

[\[5421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the effect of appeals for public fundraising to finance NHS healthcare and equipment on geographical health inequalities.

Mr Philip Dunne:

This information is not collected centrally. The Department does not set criteria to assess the merits of launching such appeals and no assessment has been made of

their effect on geographical health inequalities. We are aware that many people are keen to support the National Health Service through charitable activity, often after they or their family have received good care from their local NHS.

NHS charities are independent of NHS trusts, their funds and assets are not Exchequer funds, and are held for the beneficiaries of the charity only. Funds donated to the NHS must therefore be managed separately from an NHS body's own monies.

■ NHS: Land

Diana Johnson: [5278]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of how many acres of land held by (a) Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust and (b) Humber NHS Foundation Trust will be sold as a result of the Naylor Review; and what the total proceeds of those sales is estimated to be.

Diana Johnson: [5279]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether he plans for any of the proceeds of sales arising as a result of the recommendations of the Naylor Review to be used to fund NHS revenue spending.

Diana Johnson: [5280]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of homes that will be built as a result of the sale of NHS assets held by (a) Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust and (b) Humber NHS Foundation Trust after the Naylor Review.

Mr Philip Dunne:

'NHS Property and Estates: why the estate matters for patients' (the Naylor Review) is an independent report prepared for the Department and published on 31 March 2017. The report is available on the Department's website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-property-and-estates-naylor-review>.

The Government is giving careful consideration to the Review's recommendations and will respond in due course.

The Review did not identify specific surplus National Health Service land and buildings nor recommend the sale of particular sites. It is for local NHS land owners to determine whether land and buildings are no longer needed for patient care and available for disposal, as part of the development of local plans by sustainability and transformation partnerships. We are engaging with the NHS to enable them to identify opportunities to support delivery of the Department's existing aims to release land no longer required by the NHS sufficient for 26,000 homes and to generate up to £2 billion of proceeds for reinvestment in healthcare facilities and services.

NHS Digital undertakes an annual collection of data from individual NHS organisations on the land and property that they have deemed surplus to the delivery of healthcare. The latest data are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/nhs-surplus-land-financial-year-2016-to-2017-england>

The following table shows the land area in hectares (ha) and estimated number of housing units for each plot declared as surplus by Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust and Humber NHS Foundation Trust as part of this data collection:

TRUST	SURPLUS LAND PLOT AREA (HA)	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS
Hull and East Yorkshire NHS Trust	31.75	680
Humber NHS Foundation Trust	1.00	20

No estimate of proceeds from the disposal of these sites has been made. The number of housing units built on each site is subject to local planning permission.

The Department is committed to ensuring that the NHS has the capital resources it needs and capital receipts from the sale of surplus NHS land are a key part of this, supplementing the Department's capital budget set by HM Treasury in the 2015 Spending Review. We recognised at the time of the Spending Review the potential need to transfer resources from this capital budget in order to help meet overall spending priorities; £1.2 billion was transferred from the Department's capital budget to revenue in 2016-17. The Department is planning to reduce the level of transfer with the aim of eliminating it entirely by the end of the Spending Review period.

■ NHS: Tyne and Wear

Mr Stephen Hepburn:

[5209]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to make the Tyne and Wear Sustainability and Transformation Plan process more accountable and open to the public.

Steve Brine:

It is important that the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) process is accountable and open to the public. It is for local areas to determine how best to do this.

Throughout its development, the Tyne and Wear STP has made efforts to ensure it is accountable and open to the public. For example, between October 2016 and January 2017, the NHS Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group published an STP summary document and presentation slide pack to raise awareness of the proposals, and to listen to any ideas or concerns about the detail of the draft plan.

A dashboard and assessment of STP performance will be published shortly. Local communities can use this as a mechanism for holding the local National Health Service to account.

■ **Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust: Octagon Healthcare**

Clive Lewis: [5274]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will publish a breakdown of PFI payments made by Norwich and Norfolk NHS Trust to Octagon Healthcare, including (a) capital costs and (b) service payments made to SERCO.

Clive Lewis: [5275]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of trends in the levels of PFI payments made to the Norwich and Norfolk NHS Trust to Octagon Healthcare over the next two decades.

Clive Lewis: [5614]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the Answer of 18 April 2017 to Question 69941, what proportion of the overall £250 million savings were realised for the Norwich and Norfolk NHS Trust in its PFI payments to Octagon Healthcare as a result of his Department's initiative to extract savings and better value for money for PFI contracts.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The latest published information for the overall cost projections for all private finance initiative (PFI) schemes over the lifetime of their contracts, including that for the new District General Hospital project procured by Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, is available on the Treasury's website, via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/private-finance-initiative-and-private-finance-2-projects-2016-summary-data>

The table shows that for the New District General Hospital (Project I.D 373) the total unitary charge payment (UP) for 2015/16 was estimated as £57.0 million. The table shows the estimated UP for each year to the end of the contract in 2036/37. UPs are subject to meeting agreed performance and quality standards, contractual variations agreed between the parties, and include an annual uprate assumption for inflation of 2.5%. Information on the different elements of the UP expenditure are not collected for this data collection exercise and are not held by the Department.

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust did not report any savings on their PFI contract when the survey was conducted in 2014.

■ **Pensioners: British Nationals Abroad**

Tom Brake: [5567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of potential additional pressures on (a) the NHS and (b) other care providers from UK

pensioners living in other EU countries who return to the UK as a result of the UK leaving the EU.

Mr Philip Dunne:

The Government has made clear that its first priority is to reach agreement on the post-exit position of European Union citizens now living in the United Kingdom and of UK nationals living in other EU countries. It will put those citizens first, and do all it can to provide reassurance to the EU citizens who have made the UK their home, and likewise for UK nationals who have done the same in countries across the EU.

Over one million UK nationals have moved to other countries in the EU, and many have built their lives there. Their ability to stay, and for life to continue much as it does now, depends on the agreement that is reached between the UK and the EU. The UK has stated its intention, subject to negotiations, to guarantee that qualifying individuals, resident before a specified date, will be granted 'settled status' in UK law and free to reside in any capacity and undertake any lawful activity, to access public funds and services and to apply for British citizenship. It expects that the EU will offer reciprocal treatment for UK nationals resident in its member states.

The Government has not made an assessment at this stage of the impact on public services, including the National Health Service and social care, of any changes in migration as this is dependent upon ongoing negotiations.

■ **Primodos**

Chris Ruane:

[\[4635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent estimate he has made of the number of people who were affected by the hormone pregnancy testing drug Primodos.

Steve Brine:

The evidence for a possible causal association between Hormone Pregnancy Tests (HPTs, including Primodos) and birth defects is still under consideration by the Expert Working Group of the Commission on Human Medicines on HPTs and so the number of people who may have been affected by Primodos has not been estimated.

■ **Royal Brompton Hospital**

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[5257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the length of time taken was between NHS England receiving the response from Royal Brompton and Harefield Foundation Trust to the Impact Assessment on the congenital heart disease consultation on 7 February 2017 and the printing of the consultation documents.

Mr Philip Dunne:

This is a matter for NHS England.

We understand that the Royal Brompton and Harefield Foundation Trust's initial response to the impact assessment was received by NHS England on 7 November

2016, and a response to a fact check exercise was then received by NHS England on 7 February 2017.

NHS England then launched a public consultation on the implementation of proposed changes to Congenital Heart Disease services on 9 February 2017, which included publication of associated documentation.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum

Thangam Debbonaire: [5403]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will introduce a transparent system for monitoring her Department's performance on decision-making on applications for asylum support and publish the results, broken down by decision on section 95 (long-term cash or cash and accommodation support) and section 98 (emergency support) applications.

Thangam Debbonaire: [5533]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish data on the performance of her Department on its decision-making on applications for asylum support broken down by section 95 and section 98 applications; and if she will make a statement.

Brandon Lewis:

Asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute can apply for free accommodation and cash support to cover their essential living needs whilst their cases are considered. If they have an emergency need for accommodation they can ask to be put in initial accommodation whilst their support applications are being processed and the vast majority of such requests are processed on the same day. We aim to resolve Section 95 applications received from people in Initial Accommodation within 3 days and other applications from people staying in private accommodation within 10 days.

All cases are considered on their own merits, in some cases applicants are asked to provide further information before a decision on eligibility can be reached. The Home Office monitors closely the performance of asylum support application decision making and we take seriously all complaints about performance failure. The department has robust procedures in place to inspect, investigate and resolve issues when specific information is received, however there are no plans to publish this performance or complaints data.

■ Avon Fire and Rescue Service: Equipment

Thangam Debbonaire: [5295]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of reductions to the numbers of Primary Crewed Aerial Appliances in Avon Fire and Rescue Service on the fire readiness of that service.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Home Office has made no assessment. It is the responsibility of each fire and rescue authority to manage their resources across prevention, protection and operational response to mitigate effectively local risk.

■ Crime: Cheshire**Helen Jones:**[\[5549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that Cheshire Police fully and accurately record crimes involving vulnerable victims; and if she will make a statement.

Helen Jones:[\[5550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has met the Chief Constable of Cheshire to discuss the under-recording of rape offences by that force.

Helen Jones:[\[5551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps have been taken to ensure that Cheshire Police improves its recording of rape and sexual offences as a result of the recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary report on crime data.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The number of sexual offences, including rapes, recorded by police forces in England and Wales has increased significantly since the first round of crime data integrity inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). The Office for National Statistics has noted that the rise is believed to result from improved crime recording accuracy by forces, and an increased willingness of victims to come forward and report these crimes.

HMIC has made a number of recommendations to Cheshire Police in relation to the accuracy of crime recording. Responding to those recommendations is the responsibility of the Chief Constable, with the directly elected Police and Crime Commissioner holding them to account.

■ Criminal Investigation: Digital Technology**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[4486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the Government's policy is on whether a person should be permitted to erase data remotely while a digital device is being examined by the police or during any other lawful investigation in England and Wales.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The investigation of criminal offences is an operational matter for the police. However, where evidential material, including data held on digital devices, has been seized for the purpose of investigating an offence, any attempt to tamper with, or erase, the material is likely to amount to an offence of perverting the course of justice.

■ Drugs: Canada**Paul Flynn:** [\[5113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential implications for UK drugs policy of the Canadian Government's proposals to change the law relating to illegal drugs in that country.

Sarah Newton:

The Government is aware of decriminalisation approaches being taken overseas. The Government has no intention of decriminalising drugs. Drugs are illegal because evidence has shown they are harmful to human health and are associated with much wider societal harms including family breakdown, poverty, crime and anti-social behaviour.

■ Drugs: Decriminalisation**Jeff Smith:** [\[5335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what evidence in favour of decriminalisation she considered in drafting the Drug Strategy 2017.

Sarah Newton:

The 2017 Drug Strategy was informed by extensive consultation with key partners in the drugs field – the partners who will be delivering the Strategy on the frontline.

The Government has no intention of decriminalising drugs. Drugs are illegal because evidence has shown they are harmful to human health and are associated with much wider societal harms including family breakdown, poverty, crime and anti-social behaviour.

■ Drugs: Misuse**Paul Flynn:** [\[5074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 on levels of use of legal highs.

Sarah Newton:

On 14 July the Home Office published *The Psychoactive Substances Act Review Framework* which set out the Government's plans to measure as far as possible any change in activity before and after the implementation of the Psychoactive Substances Act.

As part of this work, the Government is monitoring use of psychoactive substances through the Crime Survey for England and Wales. The forthcoming publication (27 July) *Drugs misuse: findings from the 2016/17 Crime Survey for England and Wales* will provide the latest data on use of psychoactive substances in England and Wales.

Gavin Robinson:

[5281]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what consultation her Department has undertaken with councils and Police Service Northern Ireland to review the effects of legislation on legal highs.

Sarah Newton:

The Government liaised with the Northern Ireland Executive during the progress of Psychoactive Substances Bill through Parliament. We are undertaking a review of the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. The review will report its findings by late 2018.

The framework for the review was published on 14 July 2017, and is available at www.gov.uk.

Jeff Smith:

[5337]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what funding her Department has provided to (a) support the implementation of the Drug Strategy 2017 and (b) evaluate the effect of that strategy.

Sarah Newton:

The Government recognises that effectively funded and commissioned services are crucial to the implementation of the Drug Strategy 2017. The Government has confirmed the continuation of the ring-fenced Public Health Grant to local authorities until April 2019, which funds drug and alcohol services.

The Home Secretary-chaired Drug Strategy Board will monitor the progress of the Strategy on an ongoing basis.

Jeff Smith:

[5338]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will allocate additional funding to evaluate the effect of the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 on harm reduction.

Sarah Newton:

We are undertaking a review of the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. The review will report its findings by late 2018. The framework for the review was published on 14 July 2017, and is available at www.gov.uk.

■ **Drugs: Rehabilitation**

Jeff Smith:

[5336]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs's recommendation that the treatment services that are most effective will be those that combine harm reduction services with support to recovery.

Sarah Newton:

The Government consulted the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) during the development of the Strategy. The Government's response to the ACMD, along with the ACMD's advice, was published on 14 July.

The new Strategy sets out clear expectations for a range of partners, including those in health, housing, criminal justice and employment to offer people with a drug dependence problem the best chance of recovery through support at every stage of their life.

■ Forced Marriage

Tim Farron: [\[5077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many suspected cases of forced marriage have been investigated by the police in England in each year since 2010.

Tim Farron: [\[5398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many prosecutions there have been for forced marriage in England in each year since 2010.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The police do not publish/record the number of suspected cases of Forced Marriage which have been investigated.

However, data from the CPS annual violence against women and girls reports on police referrals and prosecutions is set out below:

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Referrals	46	51	59	67	82	90
Prosecutions completed	41	42	41	45	46	53

In addition, between 2009 and March 2017 over 1,250 Forced Marriage Protection Orders were issued to protect those at risk and assist with repatriating victims.

■ Greater Manchester Police

Andrew Gwynne: [\[4731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2017 to Question 2723, how many of the additional 41 armed response vehicles and around 650 armed officers she plans to be based in Manchester.

Mr Ben Wallace:

For security reasons, the Home Office cannot comment on the operational deployment of armed policing capabilities.

■ Grenfell Tower: Fires

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[5255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make the note of proceedings in the Ministerial briefing on the Grenfell Tower fire in the Grand Committee Room on 15 June 2017 publicly available.

Mr Nick Hurd:

There is no official record of the ministerial briefing on the Grenfell Tower fire which was held before the first sitting of this House in the new parliamentary session.

■ Home Office: Databases**David Hanson:****[5191]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure Border Force regions use the Intelligence Management System instead of local spreadsheets.

David Hanson:**[5430]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has issued to Border Force teams on the use of the Intelligence Management System instead of local spreadsheets to log intelligence data.

Brandon Lewis:

Border Force Intelligence Directorate is in the process of procuring, designing and delivering a bespoke workflow tool integrated with the Intelligence Management System. This will enable us to discontinue the use of spreadsheets to record intelligence.

Guidance has been provided to all operational Border Force staff on the use of the Intelligence Management System. This guidance was communicated in the form of an interim operational instruction in August 2016.

David Hanson:**[5194]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the most recent (a) guidance and (b) training was issued for UK Visas and Immigration caseworkers on using the Intelligence Management System.

Brandon Lewis:

UKVI issued detailed training guidance to temporary migration caseworkers in June 2016. This included detailed instruction on how to complete the online referral form.

Immigration Enforcement deliver training on request to UKVI caseworkers as part of their intelligence cycle transformation work.

Intelligence requirements are regularly circulated to all staff as set out in the quarterly threat assessment. These provide clear indications of what information is needed to fulfil those intelligence gaps and complete the intelligence picture.

David Hanson:**[5195]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken in response to the findings in the report from the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration of 21 July 2016 on intelligence functions of Border Force and Immigration Enforcement regarding making best use of the Intelligence Management System.

Brandon Lewis:

Border Force and Immigration Enforcement are continually making improvements to the Intelligence Management System as part of the system's development to meet business needs specific to each organisation.

For example, the link between the Intelligence Management System and the Single Intelligence Platform enables Intelligence Management System records and information to be automatically uploaded into Single Intelligence Platform. This has been completed and went live in autumn 2016. This was a significant improvement ensuring the system is used to its full potential.

Border Force is working on delivering a border specific user interface in IMS. This will enable Border Force to improve and increase the recording of information received within IMS.

■ Immigration**Paul Blomfield:**[\[4290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraph 6 of her Department's policy paper, Safeguarding the position of EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU, published on 26 June 2017, whether non-EU family members who are married to a disabled or terminally ill EU citizen who passes away before having accrued five years' residence will be eligible to qualify for settled status.

Brandon Lewis:

The Government's policy paper (Cm 9464), sets out the UK's proposals for securing the rights of EU citizens and their family members. Paragraph 29 footnote 6 sets out that the definition of family member includes those with retained rights. The Free Movement Directive sets out that rights of residence can be retained by family members of an EU citizen in certain circumstances, for example, the death of the EU citizen. We will set out the details of the new scheme, including detailed eligibility criteria, in due course.

■ Immigration Controls**David Hanson:**[\[5187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Border Force category (a) A, (b) B and (c) C alerts were (i) issued and (ii) produced a successful outcome for maritime and air freight for each year since 2010.

Brandon Lewis:

This information is exempt from disclosure under sections 31(1) (a) & (e) of the Freedom of Information Act due to the potential to compromise National border security.

■ Immigration Controls: Enforcement

David Hanson:

[\[5196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress the Border Force and Immigration Enforcement have made on the implementation of the Deloitte review of intelligence commissioned in 2014.

Brandon Lewis:

Since publication of the Deloitte Review, Immigration Enforcement (IE) and Border Force (BF) have made a number of changes in direct response to its recommendations. This includes strengthening tasking and prioritisation processes, organisational restructures and developing a culture where the value of intelligence is understood across the organisation.

We consider that all of the Deloitte recommendations have now been addressed or are incorporated as part of our Transformation programme, and therefore the review is now closed.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Paul Blomfield:

[\[4682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2017 to Question 3708, on Immigration: EU nationals, how her Department will determine who is eligible for deemed leave.

Brandon Lewis:

The Government's policy paper (Cm 9464) is clear that the Home Office will provide a period of blanket residence permission, to start immediately on the UK's exit from the EU for EU citizens, and their family members, lawfully resident in the UK before the date agreed with the EU.

This will be a generic "umbrella" of temporary leave to give individuals time between the moment that free movement ends and the time that they obtain their residence document; allowing them to remain lawfully in the UK, and continue to undertake lawful activities during that interim period. Such leave, known as 'deemed leave' in UK law under the Immigration Act 1971, will not require an application.

Gordon Marsden:

[\[5439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with university representative bodies on the effect of changes to immigration rules on students from the EU studying in UK universities.

Gordon Marsden:

[\[5440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to ensure that changes to immigration rules will not reduce the number of EU students able to study in UK universities.

Brandon Lewis:

We are working across Government to identify and develop options to shape our future immigration system.

Parliament will have an important role to play in this and we will ensure universities and the higher education sector have the opportunity to contribute their views.

Tom Brake: [5581]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU nationals have been detained under Immigration Act powers in each of the last five years.

Brandon Lewis:

The number of people entering detention by nationality is published in tables dt_04 and dt_04_q in 'Immigration Statistics, January to March 2017', available from the Home Office website at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/615173/detention-jan-mar-2017-tables.ods

■ Immobilisation of Vehicles**Louise Haigh:** [5097]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many tyre deflation systems for use against motorcycles are held by the Metropolitan Police.

Louise Haigh: [5098]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many tactical pursuit and containment trained officers there were in the Metropolitan Police in each year from 2010 to date.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The requested information is not held centrally. Decisions on the number of tyre deflation systems and pursuit-trained officers are an operational matter for the Metropolitan Police Commissioner.

■ Maryam Rajavi**Toby Perkins:** [R] [5636]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is her policy to allow Maryam Rajavi to visit the UK.

Brandon Lewis:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer Ben Wallace gave to Question 4672, published on 18 July 2017, Official Report Column.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Richard Burden:

[\[5600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letters of 5 July 2016, 19 July 2016, and 17 February 2017 from the hon. Member for Birmingham Northfield regarding a constituent's immigration case.

Brandon Lewis:

The letters of 5 and 19 July 2016 and 17 February 2017, were responded to on 26 July 2016 and 31 March 2017 respectively.

■ **Metropolitan Police**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[4730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2017 to Question 2727, on what date the most recent assessment was conducted on the capacity of the Metropolitan Police to handle multiple large-scale terrorist attacks.

Mr Ben Wallace:

We keep our preparedness for terrorist attacks under constant review. Since the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in 2008, the Home Office has worked with emergency services to develop a strong, police-led capability to deal with large-scale attacks in the UK. We looked again at our response following the terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015. Those attacks highlighted the challenges any country would face managing multiple, concurrent incidents. In October 2016, Lord Harris published a report on London's preparedness for a terrorist attack. I recently met with him to discuss its contents.

His report emphasised that the UK's intelligence agencies and police are "amongst the best in the world", and highlighted that London's response to terrorist attack is fast and effective. The Home Office is continuing to work to ensure the highest priorities are given the right resources, and to test and review measures to respond to terrorist attacks. We have revised our risk assessments, and are delivering an uplift in our specialist response capability, including a five year £144 million programme to increase the number of armed officers. Not only are we increasing the number of specialist armed officers but they are now better trained and equipped to deal with the full range of complex attacks.

■ **Slavery**

Carolyn Harris:

[\[4469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish (a) the report of the evaluation of National Referral Mechanism pilots and (b) statutory guidance on victim identification and assistance under section 49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Sarah Newton:

The National Referral Mechanism pilot has been testing a new model for identifying and referring victims, processing cases and making effective decisions.

Interim guidance for frontline staff has been published and we will consult with stakeholders on the statutory guidance required under section 49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 prior to publication.

■ **Stalking****Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[5123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to introduce a stalkers' register.

Sarah Newton:

This Government is committed to tackling stalking and ensuring that the right tools are in place to protect victims of this deeply disturbing crime. That is why we have strengthened the law by making stalking an offence in its own right and are currently taking steps to introduce a new civil stalking protection order.

Convicted perpetrators of stalking are already recorded on systems such as the Police National Computer and we have no current plans to create a separate stalkers register.

■ **Travellers: Caravan Sites****Richard Burden:**[\[5075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of powers available to the police to deal with illegal traveller encampments in (a) England and (b) Birmingham.

Mr Nick Hurd:

There are a range of existing powers available for both the police and local authorities to tackle unauthorised encampments. The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 provides specific powers to the police to move travellers from unauthorised encampments if certain criteria are met. The Home Office work closely with the police to ensure these powers are effective. However, the decision on whether to use these powers and remove travellers from a site is an independent decision to be made by the police.

A summary of the powers available to deal with unauthorised encampments has been published on the Government website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-illegal-and-unauthorised-encampments>

■ UK Border Force: Computer Software

David Hanson:

[5330]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has undertaken an assessment of the effect of switching off the ATHENA border force software at the end of May 2016 on the Border Force.

Brandon Lewis:

Athena was replaced by the Single Intelligence Platform (SIP) at the beginning of May 2016. The single intelligence platform was designed specifically for intelligence across the Border Force, Immigration Enforcement and HM Passport Office. It is better suited to the operational needs of Home Office intelligence, is simpler to use, has greater functionality than Athena and has delivered significant efficiencies. SIP has enabled wider access including HM Passport Office.

It has been built and developed by Home Office Digital Data and Technology. Improvements and new functionality are added on a weekly basis. The user research conducted every week provides a wealth of empirical evidence confirming the positive effect on the user experience.

Information from the decommissioned Athena database remains available and accessible to intelligence staff in Immigration Enforcement and Border Force.

■ UK Border Force: Freight

David Hanson:

[5190]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) airports, (b) ports and (c) train terminals had a dedicated Border Force customs team to deal with freight in each year since 2010.

Brandon Lewis:

This Government has ensured that sufficient resources are available to ensure the security of the border is not compromised. Border Force uses a sophisticated combination of experienced officers, intelligence, data, technology and partnership working. All airports, ports and train terminals have Border Force Customs to deal with freight.

■ UK Border Force: Handbooks

David Hanson:

[5192]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Border Force staff have accessed the Professional Practice Manual on her Department's intranet since it was introduced.

Brandon Lewis:

Border Force does not have access to the level of information that is required in response to the PQ.

David Hanson:

[5193]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has a hard copy of the Professional Practice Manual to each Border Force operation site since it was introduced.

Brandon Lewis:

The Professional Practice Manual (PPM) is an Immigration Enforcement product. Border Force staff refer to their own guidance and, in addition, have access to PPM via the Home Office Intranet.

■ Visas

Paul Blomfield:

[5241]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether those who have paid for her Department's Priority Service and not received a response within the 60 days' time standard will (a) be reimbursed the fee and (b) have their case processed within a revised time standard; and if she will make a statement.

Brandon Lewis:

UKVI's published timescale for processing standard visa applications is 12 weeks (60 working days) for settlement applications, and three weeks (15 working days) for non-settlement applications. Applications made under the priority visa service will be placed to the front of the processing queue and expedited, however timescales for decision are not guaranteed. If there is a problem with an application or it is complex and expected to take longer than the standard processing timescale, UKVI will write to the customer within the standard processing time and explain what will happen next.

Both UKVI and its commercial partners make clear in communications to customers that the priority visa service fee will not be refunded if processing takes longer than the publicised times or the visa is refused, other than in exceptional circumstances. UKVI will consider refunds in any exceptional cases. These requests should be made via the usual enquiry helpline: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration/about/complaints-procedure#how-to-complain>

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ Divisions

Mrs Maria Miller:

[5329]

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, what was the (a) earliest and (b) latest time of day at which a division took place in the (i) 2014-15, (ii) 2015-16 and (iii) 2016-17 Parliamentary Session.

Tom Brake:

The earliest and latest time of day at which a division took place was as follows:

(i) 2014–15 Session

Earliest : 9.34am (27 February 2015 – Motion to Sit in Private)

Latest : 10.29pm (23 March 2015 – Budget Resolutions and economic situation: Corporation tax)

(ii) 2015–16 Session

Earliest : 9.34am (12 October 2015 – Motion to Sit in Private)

Latest : 12.28am (7 September 2015 – European Union Referendum Bill – Third Reading)

(iii) 2016–17 Session

Earliest : 9.34am (4 November 2016 – Motion to Sit in Private)

Latest : 12.21am (6 February 2017 – European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill — Consideration of Lords Amendments)

■ House of Commons: Working Hours

Frank Field:

[4488]

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many employees experienced a reduction in working hours during the 2017 Dissolution period; and what the (a) smallest, (b) average and (c) largest total reduction in earnings was by proportion of those people who did experience a reduction in working hours.

Tom Brake:

No members of staff experienced a reduction in their contractual working hours as a result of Dissolution or a decrease in their contractual earnings.

Staff employed in areas where there was a reduction in work as a result of Dissolution would have had limited opportunity to work non-contractual additional hours or overtime, unless they were helping out areas that were busier because of the Dissolution, such as Digital Services or the New Members Reception Area. Staff continue to receive their contractual monthly salary during periods of lower operational demand. Some staff will have taken annual leave or used up banked hours of Time off in Lieu (TOIL).

Fluctuations in working hours are managed locally; mainly through flexitime or rostering arrangements. This information is not held centrally.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Africa: Renewable Energy**

Alex Cunningham: [5402]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what investments in solar and other renewable energy sources have been made in Africa from her Department's budget in each of the last five years.

Rory Stewart:

Between 2011 and 2016, UK Aid provided 12 million people with improved access to clean energy and installed more than 400 MW of clean energy capacity, of which a significant number are in Africa.

DFID funding for renewable energy is through bilateral programmes and contributions to multilateral funds, multilateral development banks and climate-specific funds such as the Climate Investment Funds (<https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-200368>) where there are significant renewable energy ambitions. African renewable energy programme spend for the previous 5 years is publically available through DevTracker.

■ Developing Countries: Abortion

Ian Paisley: [5606]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what information her Department holds on the number of abortions which have been carried out as a result of her Department's spending in developing countries from 2011 to 2016.

Ian Paisley: [5618]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of the extent to which Government funding to Marie Stopes International is used by that organisation to provide elective abortions in (a) Uganda and (b) other countries where such abortions are illegal; and if she will make a statement.

Ian Paisley: [5619]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much has been spent from the public purse on funding for the provision of abortions in developing countries from 2011 to 2016.

Ian Paisley: [5620]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate her Department has made of the proportion of the £1.1 billion which the Government has announced will be spent on family planning over the next five years that will be spent on the provision of abortions.

Ian Paisley: [5621]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what information her Department holds on the estimated number of abortions which will be carried out as a

result of the £1.1 billion funding her Department committed to family planning at the 2017 International Family Planning Summit.

Alistair Burt:

By helping the world's poorest women access modern contraception, we will prevent an estimated 6 million unintended pregnancies and 3 million abortions on average each year.

Family planning reduces, but on its own does not eliminate, the backstreet abortions that kill women. So, where this is not against local law, the UK will consider supporting access to safe abortion in the world's poorest countries. UK aid cannot be used to fund illegal services.

■ **Developing Countries: Malaria**

Jim Shannon:

[\[5483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the implications of emerging resistance to insecticides and drugs for the level of international financing required to eliminate malaria.

Alistair Burt:

Our assessment is that insecticide and drug resistance pose a real threat to the recent progress seen on malaria. This is why DFID is a leading global funder of efforts to tackle malaria, through research funding, bilateral treatment and control programmes and our funding to multilateral institutions such as the Global Fund. This support includes developing new drugs and new insecticides, in response to current levels of insecticide resistance. We also support drug management programmes that decrease the chances of resistance building up, and other measures of tackling malaria, such as the use of bednets.

■ **Developing Countries: Renewable Energy**

Alex Cunningham:

[\[5401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much of her Department's budget has been spent on renewable energy projects in each of the last five years.

Rory Stewart:

Between 2011 and 2016, UK Aid provided 12 million people with improved access to clean energy and installed more than 400 MW of clean energy capacity.

DFID funding for renewable energy is through bilateral programmes and contributions to multilateral funds, multilateral development banks and climate-specific funds such as the Climate Investment Funds (<https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-200368>) where there are significant renewable energy ambitions. Renewable energy programme spend for the previous 5 years is publically available through DevTracker.

■ Development Aid

Catherine West:

[5254]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to tackle (a) barriers to economic development, (b) preventable diseases and (c) malaria in developing countries.

Alistair Burt:

DFID is taking major steps to tackle the barriers to economic development. In January the Secretary of State launched DFID's Economic Development Strategy which sets out how the UK is stimulating growth that transforms economies and how we are helping the poorest countries to attract investment, trade more, and create millions of jobs. This will help create prosperous economies that lift people out of poverty, help countries overcome the need for aid, and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals whilst also benefiting Britain. The Strategy can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587374/DFID-Economic-Development-Strategy-2017.pdf

DFID is a leading global actor on preventable diseases, including malaria, TB, HIV/Aids, providing significant funding to the World Health Organisation, the Global Fund on Aids, TB and Malaria, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and running programmes across regions and from country offices.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Joan Ryan:

[R] [4445]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will (a) make an assessment of the potential merits of the conclusions of the report from the Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre of 12 July 2017 on coexistence projects between Israelis and Palestinians and (b) take steps to ensure that the Government continues to fund such projects.

Alistair Burt:

The UK assesses that people-to-people programmes are important to improve inter-community understanding and help build the necessary environment for a just and peaceful solution, as recognised in the report. The UK will be providing up to £3 million over three years to fund a people-to-people programme to help Israelis and Palestinians work together to achieve improvements in their lives and build understanding between people on both sides of the conflict.

■ Nigeria: Education

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[5171]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department has plans to increase the proportion of the Government's international aid budget spent on education in Nigeria.

Rory Stewart:

The education budget in Nigeria is likely to remain around the same proportion as it is currently. The UK is establishing an education in emergencies programme in North-East Nigeria which is supporting delivery of education during the crisis, in addition to the current education portfolio.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:[\[5172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps the Government is taking to support the provision of education for the children of Nigeria.

Rory Stewart:

UK supported education programmes are delivering school improvements, addressing barriers that girls face in attending schools, improving teacher development systems and generating evidence on what works to improve learning outcomes for children. They have delivered these services to over 7 million children across 11 states in Nigeria since 2010.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:[\[5441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what proportion of the Government's international aid budget is spent on education in Nigeria.

Rory Stewart:

The UK spent £30.2 million on education programmes in 2016/17 which represents around 10% of DFID's bilateral support to Nigeria.

■ Overseas Aid: Fisheries**Pauline Latham:**[\[4813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many projects her Department is currently supporting are aimed specifically at reducing the impacts of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Rory Stewart:

The Department contributes to reducing the impacts of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing through two multilateral programmes.

DFID core funding to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation includes support to the activities of its Fisheries and Aquaculture Department and the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. UK support to the Global Environment Facility helps strengthen the management of fisheries and marine protected areas.

■ Sustainable Development: Marine Environment**Pauline Latham:**[\[4814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much funding is currently allocated by her Department to projects aimed at achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14.

Rory Stewart:

The Department supports activities aimed at achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14 through our funding to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). For example FAO hosts the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. The GEF has funded marine protected areas across the world that are more than twice the size of Alaska.

The UK's core support to FAO in Financial Year 2016-17 was £17,681,203. DFID's contribution to the Global Environment Facility in Financial Year 2016/17 was £52,500,000. Neither FAO nor the GEF publish a breakdown of spending specifically on SDG14.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE■ **Exports**

Toby Perkins: [5413]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the total value of exports from the UK of (a) services and (b) goods was to each other country in each year since 2009-10.

Mark Garnier:

The value of UK exports of goods and services by partner country (by calendar year only) is available from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/adhoc/006656balanceofpaymentsannualgeographicaldatatables/2015updateddetailedgeographictradedata.xls>

Source: ONS Balance of Payments annual geographical data tables.

■ **Trade Agreements**

Toby Perkins: [5412]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether he has held trade negotiations with his counterpart in any non-EU state.

Mark Garnier:

Ministers and officials in the Department for International Trade are working closely with counterparts across a wide range of markets in order to promote the UK as a great place to do business and with which to trade. We have established a series of working groups and high-level dialogues with key trade partners, to explore the best ways of progressing our trade and investment relationships. However, as members of the EU, the UK cannot negotiate and conclude new trade agreements.

JUSTICE

■ Courts: Digital Technology

Richard Burgon:

[5434]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of digitalisation of court services on the ability of vulnerable people to access those services; and if he will make a statement.

Dominic Raab:

Our reforms will make it easier for vulnerable users to access justice including victims and witnesses. Our modernisation and digitisation of the courts system will streamline and simplify many complex court processes.

We are building digital services which are accessible to all. In doing so, HMCTS is researching and testing with a wide range of user groups – including the elderly, the young, vulnerable groups, geographically remote users and users with low literacy and/or low IT literacy. We are using the insights and research findings from these groups to help us redesign our services to be easier to understand and navigate for all.

We recognise that some people will need support to use digital services, and HMCTS is designing a range of assisted digital support channels to be available for this purpose. Our assisted digital support services will cover a range of channels, from web chat or telephone assistance through to more intensive face to face support. Access to paper channels will be maintained in some services for those who need them. Plans for future assisted digital support services formed part of the consultation '[Transforming our Justice System](#)', published in September 2016.

■ Employment and Support Allowance: Appeals

Sir David Crausby:

[4918]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many appeals against decisions on entitlement to employment and support allowance following a work capability assessment were resolved within (a) three, (b) three to six, (c) six to nine, (d) nine to 12 and (e) over 12 months in each of the last five years.

Sir David Crausby:

[4924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many appeals have been made to the outcome of work capability assessments in each of the last five years.

Dominic Raab:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Employment Tribunals Service

Justin Madders:

[4677]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, in how many tribunal claims the claimant was successfully classed as a worker in the last three years.

Dominic Raab:

The Employment Tribunal does not record information on the number of successful claimants that are classed as a worker, or an employee, as defined in the Employment Rights Act 1996.

■ **Family Courts****Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[4925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what guidance his Department has issued to the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service on interviewing children in family court cases.

Dominic Raab:

The Ministry of Justice has not provided any such guidance to the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass).

Cafcass has produced guidance to its social work practitioners on this as part of its Operating Framework on which it is currently consulting.

■ **G4S: Electronic Tagging****Richard Burgon:**[\[5385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will place in the Library a copy of the contract with G4S for electronic tagging.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

As previously advised, G4S is our preferred Bidder for the Electronic Monitoring Hardware and the contract is currently being finalised. Once agreed and signed a redacted version, which will not contain commercially sensitive information, will be published on Contracts Finder in accordance with current transparency regulations.

■ **Harassment****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[4485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the Government's policy is on whether a person should be permitted repeatedly to order goods and services for another person for the purposes of causing distress, anxiety or disrupting that person's daily life in England and Wales.

Dominic Raab:

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence for someone to pursue a course of conduct which amounts to harassment of another and which they know, or ought to know, amounts to harassment of the other.

Harassment is generally understood to involve improper, oppressive and unreasonable conduct that is targeted at an individual and calculated to alarm them or cause them distress. Depending on the circumstances, repeatedly sending letters or unwanted 'gifts' or other objects to someone or arranging for others to deliver unwanted items to them could constitute harassment.

Where such behaviour is reported to the police, it would be for them to investigate, for the Crown Prosecution Service to decide whether a prosecution should be brought, and for the court to determine whether the elements of the offence are made out.

■ **Magistrates Courts: Sunderland**

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[5569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service has made an assessment of the adequacy of car parking provision at Sunderland Magistrates' Court.

Dominic Raab:

There is adequate car parking provision at Sunderland Magistrates' Court for magistrates and court staff. There is no on-site parking provision for court users, however there is ample public car parking in the immediate vicinity of the court.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Advertising**

Deidre Brock:

[\[3411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much his Department has spent on advertising on social media in each month since January 2016.

Dr Phillip Lee:

Over the period of January 2016 – July 2017, the MOJ spent £24,912.52 on social media advertising. This spend was with Facebook and was to support the recruitment of prison officers by HMPPS.

Detail of the spend by month is shown in the table below.

MONTH	SPEND
2016-01-01	£2,640.00
2016-01-02	3,397.90
2016-01-03	1,322.81
2016-01-04	£76.30
2016-01-05	-
2016-01-06	£450.00
2016-01-07	£150.00
2016-01-08	£543.21
2016-01-09	£377.78
2016-01-10	£1,620.31
2016-01-11	£623.48

MONTH	SPEND
2016-01-12	£202.50
2017-01-01	£2,088.20
2017-01-02	£1,000.03
2017-01-03	£796.75
2017-01-04	£4,359.14
2017-01-05	£2,342.30
2017-01-06	£2,921.81
Total	£24,912.52

Government advertising is purchased by our media buying partner, Carat. Carat has held the contract for UK Government media buying since January 2015. These values have been confirmed by Carat.

■ Personal Injury: Compensation

Richard Burgon: [4491]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will place in the Library his Department's estimates and evidence base for the potential amount of savings to motorists to accrue from proposed reforms to the whiplash claims process.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

A consultation stage impact assessment was published in November 2016 and is available at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/reforming-soft-tissue-injury-claims/>. A validated impact assessment detailing the estimated savings to motor insurance premiums arising from the Government's whiplash reforms, including the data sources and evidence used, will be published alongside the Civil Liability Bill which was announced in the Queen's Speech.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [4929]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department plans to publish Part 2 of its response to the consultation entitled Reforming the soft tissue injury (whiplash) claims process.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Government will publish Part 2 of its response in due course.

■ Prison Accommodation

Richard Burgon:

[5433]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to publish proposals on the future of the prison estate in England and Wales.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

On 3 November 2016, the then Secretary of State for Justice published a White Paper on Prison Safety and Reform outlining the Ministry of Justice's plans for radical reform of the prison system.

This included an ambitious agenda to modernise the prison estate, improve education and empower governors, to help tackle violence, reduce reoffending and keep staff and prisoners safe.

As part of our wholesale reforms, we are investing £1.3bn to modernise the estate. This will include closing older prisons that are not fit for purpose, and creating in their place high-quality, modern establishments

On 22 March 2017, we announced plans, subject to planning approvals, value for money and affordability, to build four modern prisons: adjacent to HM Prison Full Sutton in Yorkshire (with a pre-planning consultation event held on 11 and 12 April 2017), Port Talbot in Neath, and redevelop HM Prison and Young Offender Institution Rochester in Kent and HM Prison and Young Offender Institution Hindley, in Greater Manchester. This is in addition to the plans previously announced for new sites at former HMP Wellingborough and HM Prison and Young Offender Institution Glen Parva.

On the 19 July 2017 we announced that we still plan to redevelop the prisons at Rochester and Hindley as part of our prison modernisation programme. However, cells at these sites will be kept in use for now, as part of forward-planning for the estate.

No further decisions have been made beyond those that have already been announced.

■ Prisons: Drugs

Luciana Berger:

[5383]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the weight of drugs recovered in prisons was in each year since 2010 broken down (a) by suspected drug type and (b) by (i) class A, (ii) class B and (iii) class C.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The attached table shows all drug finds by type since 2010. The data is not recorded in a way that allows direct comparison with Schedules of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Drug finds in prisons are recorded in broad categories of drug type, which would not take into account any differences in classifications for drugs of a similar type.

Data on the weight of drugs found has been available since October 2015, when an enhanced reporting system was introduced. This enabled the selection of psychoactive substances categories. Please note that the data records the weight of all drugs found in an incident, but not separately for each individual drug type.

Attachments:

1. Drug Finds by Type since 2010 [5383 Luciana Berger 18 07 17 Drug seizures (final).xlsx]

■ **Prisons: Pilot Schemes**

Richard Burgon:

[\[5432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of pilot prisons and additional powers for governors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

A process evaluation is underway on the pilot prisons and this learning has informed the development of the additional powers for governors announced in the white paper. Work is underway to develop an evaluation strategy for the full Prison Reform programme, which will incorporate the additional powers for governors.

■ **Prisons: Unmanned Air Vehicles**

Luciana Berger:

[\[5535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Answer of 16 November 2015 to Question 15648, and to the Answer of 17 July 2017 to Question 4436, for what reasons the policy on the disclosure of data on the seizures of drones in prisons has changed.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The risks presented by the illicit use of drones in prisons are significant, as is the profound impact on prison safety and security. We rightly take a zero tolerance approach to smuggling of contraband into prisons and work closely with the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to ensure those caught are prosecuted. To date, there has been a total of 35 arrests and 11 convictions of criminals involved in drone activity – resulting in those convicted are sentenced to a total of more than 40 years in jail.

I consider that there are risks presented by the publication of the data requested, which have the potential to cause further instability and increase violence and disorder in prisons, prejudicing the safe running of our institutions.

The data requested would be likely to be used by some to subvert the effectiveness of our current counter measures. This is because the information is likely to prove invaluable to those engaged in criminality within prisons.

Disclosure of this information could also prejudice any ongoing investigation of a drone incident and risk alerting possible suspects as well as weaken the possibilities of future arrests.

■ Rape: Trials

Ms Harriet Harman:

[4856]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases where a rape complainant's previous sexual history was used as evidence in court without an application being made to the judge under subsection 41(3)(c)(i) of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 prior to the trial have taken place in each of the last five years.

Dr Phillip Lee:

This information requested is not held centrally.

■ Repetitive Strain Injury: Compensation

Mr Nigel Evans:

[4475]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the highest amount paid in compensation has been for a case of repetitive strain injury in a public sector workplace.

Dominic Raab:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Repossession Orders

Sir David Crausby:

[4926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many repossessions there were in (a) the UK and (b) Bolton in (i) the current financial year to date and (ii) each of the previous five financial years.

Dominic Raab:

This information is available from Ministry of Justice published statistics at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/613324/mortgage-landlord-possession-statistical-data-jan-mar-2017-zip.zip

A supporting document for Mortgage and Landlord possession statistics is available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/613302/mortgage-landlord-possession-statistics-jan-mar-2017-guide.pdf

This information covers England and Wales, not the whole of the UK.

■ Sex Offender Treatment Programme

David Hanson:

[4604]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's report, Impact evaluation of the prison-based Core Sex Offender Treatment Programme, published on 30 June 2017, when the decision was made to halt that programme.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The HM Prison and Probation Service Executive Committee took the operational decision to cease delivery of the Core and Extended Sex Offender Treatment Programmes and accelerate transition to the Horizon and Kaizen programmes in February 2017 following receipt of the peer reviewed evaluation report and advice from the independent Correctional Services Accreditation and Advisory Panel.

David Hanson:**[4605]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the reasons are for the time taken to publish the report, entitled Impact evaluation of the prison-based Core Sex Offender Treatment Programme, published on 30 June 2017.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Ministers were informed of the outcomes of the evaluation and the planned operational response in February 2017. The report was published on 30 June, shortly after the pre-election period.

■ Terrorism: Compensation**Mr Nigel Evans:****[4612]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the maximum compensation payment is under the Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme for (a) loss of limb and (b) loss of life.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme (the Scheme) is a government funded scheme designed to compensate victims injured in terrorist incidents outside the UK on or after 27 November 2012. The rules of the scheme and the value of the payments awarded are set by Parliament and are calculated by reference to a tariff of injuries. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) administer the Scheme on behalf of the Government and decide the amounts awarded for claims independently of ministers and Parliament.

A copy of the Scheme can be found at the link below and the tariff of injuries can be found at Annex C to the Scheme:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243508/9780108512124.pdf

There are two categories of payments under the Scheme:

- injury payments for survivors of a terrorist incident, including physical and mental injuries
- where there is loss of life in a terrorist incident, bereavement awards can be made to certain defined close relatives

The maximum amount payable under the Scheme for

a) loss of limbs (upper or lower body) is £110,000.

b) loss of life is £11,000 for a single qualifying relative, or £5,500 each where there is more than one qualifying relative.

Where a victim has been injured, additional payments, such as loss of earnings or special expenses incurred as a direct result of the incident, may also be paid to qualifying claimants.

Where there is a loss of life additional payments, such as child payments, dependency payments and funeral payments may also be paid to qualifying relatives.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ Sinn Féin: Finance

Lady Hermon: [\[4678\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, if the Government will take steps to stop representative money being paid to hon. Members elected for Sinn Féin under the circumstances that those hon. Members refuse to take their seats; and if she will make a statement.

Andrea Leadsom:

Under a resolution of the House financial assistance is provided to opposition parties represented by Members who have chosen not to take their seats.

It is the Government's view that this issue is primarily a matter for the House itself to resolve.

Lady Hermon: [\[4680\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, how much Representative Money has been paid to hon. Members elected for Sinn Féin since Representative Money was first made available to those hon. Members; and if she will make a statement.

Andrea Leadsom:

Since the resolution of the House of 8 February 2006, up to and including the 2016/17 financial year, the total Main Budget allocation of Representative Money to Sinn Féin has been £1,119,796.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Prime Minister: Staff

Andrew Gwynne: [\[4882\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, how many foreign policy advisors in 10 Downing Street are not members of staff of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Mrs Theresa May:

My foreign affairs team comprises staff from a range of departments with relevant expertise, including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SCOTLAND**■ Scotland Office: Brexit**

Hywel Williams: [5511]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many staff in his Department have responsibilities relating to the UK leaving the EU.

David Mundell:

Staff in the Scotland Office cover a wide variety of issues important to Scotland, including work relating to exiting the EU.

Hywel Williams: [5631]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much and what proportion of his Department's expenditure has been identified as relating to its work on the UK leaving the EU in 2017-18.

David Mundell:

Work relating to exiting the EU now forms part of the policy portfolio of most staff and therefore we are unable to identify proportional expenditure.

■ Scotland Office: Ministerial Policy Advisers

Deidre Brock: [5350]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many special advisers were employed in his Department; and what the aggregate salary for special advisers was in each year since 2007.

David Mundell:

Details of how many special advisers were employed in the Scotland Office and what the salary for special advisers was in each year can be found at the following:

<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=Special+adviser+data+releases%3A+numbers+and+costs>

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION**■ Elections: Fraud**

Mr Peter Bone: [900617]

To ask the hon. Member for Houghton and Sunderland South, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what steps the Committee is taking to tackle voter fraud.

Bridget Phillipson:

The Commission has recommended since 2014 that an accessible proof of identity scheme should be developed and implemented for polling station voters in Great Britain. This would address the current absence of effective checks against personation and improve public confidence. The Commission notes that the

Government has stated its intention to bring forward legislation during the current Parliament, to ensure that a form of identification must be presented before voting.

Prior to the general election on 8 June, the Commission produced detailed guidance to help (Acting) Returning Officers and police forces to put in place plans to prevent and detect electoral fraud. The Commission also continued its successful partnership with Crime Stoppers, the anonymous crime reporting charity, to make sure people could report concerns about electoral fraud.

TRANSPORT

■ **A281: West Sussex**

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[5246]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, who is responsible for the repair and maintenance of road signs on the A281 in West Sussex.

Jesse Norman:

The A281 in West Sussex is maintained by West Sussex County Council. This includes repair and maintenance of road signs.

■ **Aviation: Tickets**

Mr Roger Godsiff:

[5133]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to issue further regulations or guidance regarding the overbooking of commercial flights and airlines' powers to remove passengers from overbooked flights.

Mr John Hayes:

There are strong consumer protections in place for those who are removed from flights due to overbooking. The Government does not consider further legislation is necessary.

■ **Dartford-Thurrock Crossing**

Adam Holloway:

[4683]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the potential effect on levels of congestion at the Dartford Crossing after the construction of the proposed new Lower Thames Crossing.

Jesse Norman:

Through traffic modelling and forecasting Highways England has made an assessment of the scheme's potential effect on levels of congestion at the Dartford Crossing. This is reported in section 4 of the Post-Consultation Scheme Assessment Report Volume 5.

https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/cip/lower-thames-crossing-consultation/supporting_documents/PostConsultation%20Scheme%20Assessment%20Report%20Volume%205.pdf

As the detailed design for the scheme progresses this will be subject to further assessment and an enhanced traffic model is being developed incorporating the latest travel demand data. This will be used to produce revised traffic volume and congestion forecasts for the local and wider road network, including the Dartford Crossing.

■ Electric Vehicles

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[5101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of an increase in numbers of electric cars by 2020 on the capacity of the National Grid.

Jesse Norman:

We have regular discussions with all the key parties in the electricity systems – including energy suppliers, network operators and National Grid – to ensure that they are prepared for electric vehicle take up. We are also taking powers as part of the Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill, announced in the Queen's speech, which will mean all chargepoints sold or installed in the UK will be 'Smart' enabled. Smart charging has the potential to reduce the demands from electric vehicles by ensuring their charging can flex to meet grid needs. Through their 'Future Energy Scenarios' work published on 13 July 2017, National Grid project that with smart charging the additional peak demand caused by electric vehicles in GB could be reduced to 6GW in 2050. Northern Ireland Electricity Networks is responsible for the transmission and distribution of electricity in Northern Ireland, and energy policy in Northern Ireland is devolved.

■ Electric Vehicles: Sales

John McNally:

[5114]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to tackle potential changes in electric car sales after the UK has left the EU.

Jesse Norman:

This Government has a number of initiatives in place to encourage electric vehicle ownership and has committed to invest more than £600m to 2020 to make the UK a leader in both their use and their development and manufacture. The UK's network of rapid chargepoints is the largest in Europe and has helped the UK become the largest market for electric vehicle sales in the EU. The UK's exit from the EU will not reduce the Government's ambition to be at the global forefront of the global transition to electric vehicles, and we remain committed to meeting our national and international climate change targets.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Eddisbury

Antoinette Sandbach:

[4807]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will place in the Library copies of any engineering reports that HS2 Ltd has received since 1 February 2017 to date from external consultants or which have been prepared internally regarding the route of High Speed 2 through Eddisbury constituency.

Paul Maynard:

HS2 Ltd.'s technical work on the Phase 2b route is summarised in the HS2 Ltd. route refinement advice that was published on 17 July. I am happy to arrange a technical meeting for the hon Member for Eddisbury to speak with HS2 Ltd. engineers to talk through any further engineering questions in detail.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Iron and Steel

Gill Furniss:

[5404]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to ensure that 95 per cent of steel used in the construction of the HS2 project is British steel.

Paul Maynard:

Whilst HS2 Ltd. does not directly buy steel it does apply a strategic and transparent approach to the sourcing of steel for the HS2 Programme through its Tier 1 contractors and their supply chains. HS2 Ltd ensures a fair procurement process which complies with UK procurement law and the Government policy on the procurement of steel.

HS2 Ltd wants UK steel companies to be able to compete on a level playing field when bidding for public procurement opportunities.

All the successful bidders for the recently announced Main Works contracts have confirmed they will comply with contractual requirements to tender their contracts in an open and transparent manner. These main suppliers have already commenced discussions direct with the British Constructional Steel Association and have articulated a desire to work together collaboratively on steel sourcing. To maximise British involvement in these supply chain opportunities HS2 Ltd has engaged extensively with businesses of all sizes from a diverse range of sectors and across the UK and will continue to do so.

The Secretary of State has said that he expects to match the existing record of 95% of steel in rail being UK steel.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Lichfield

Michael Fabricant:

[5009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many houses in Lichfield constituency have been purchased by (a) the High Speed 2 Exceptional Hardship Scheme and (b) other related schemes since each such scheme was launched; and what the average cost has been of purchases under each such scheme.

Paul Maynard:

The number and average value of houses purchased in the Lichfield constituency broken down by HS2 scheme/arrangement is as follows.

SCHEME/ARRANGEMENT	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES PURCHASED	AVERAGE VALUE OF EACH PURCHASE
Exceptional Hardship Scheme*	12	£549,235
Need to Sell	5	£550,500
Voluntary Purchase	2	£406,625
Statutory Blight	11	£829,636
Atypical arrangements	1	£406,625

*In May 2016 the Exceptional Hardship Scheme was withdrawn for the Phase 2a section of HS2 when the Need to Sell scheme was confirmed for this part of the route

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Liverpool Port

Bill Esterson:[\[5460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to include options to link HS2 to the Port of Liverpool in the consultation announced on 17 July 2017.

Paul Maynard:

There are no plans to consult on options to link HS2 to the Port of Liverpool. The government and Transport for the North continue to develop a single integrated strategy for Northern Powerhouse Rail, including a range of options for Manchester to Liverpool, and the wider NPR network. Options outlined in the Crewe Hub consultation could also result in faster journey times for some Liverpool services.

■ High Speed Two: Pay

Mrs Cheryl Gillan:[\[5089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on the (a) range of salaries of HS2 Ltd personnel and (b) increases in those salaries in each of the last three years.

Paul Maynard:

The department holds details of the pay grading system for direct employees of HS2 Ltd. This grading system operates on a banded basis, which ranges from band 9 to band 25.

In 2015 a flat rate increase of 2% was administered to all eligible employees. Since 2016 pay increases have been awarded through 'Performance Related Pay Progression process'. For both 2016 and 2017 the median increase issued to eligible employees was 2 per cent.

As per High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd Remuneration Committee terms of reference, the remuneration of Executive Directors and senior direct reports to the CEO are determined by the committee.

The Pay Bands up to pay band 23 are listed below - HS2 Ltd senior salaries over £150,000 per annum are published annually by the Cabinet Office here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-officials-high-earners-salaries

Central London Pay Ranges

Level Min Max

19 £63,050 £94,550

18 £53,850 £80,800

17 £43,750 £65,600

16 £39,250 £58,900

15 £36,550 £54,900

14 £33,850 £50,800

13 £28,400 £42,600

12 £25,050 £37,600

11 £23,400 £35,150

10 £21,600 £32,450

9 £16,500 £24,800

Regional Pay Ranges

Level Min Max

19 £54,500 £81,750

18 £47,450 £71,150

17 £40,750 £61,150

16 £36,300 £54,450

15 £32,600 £48,900

14 £30,150 £45,250

13 £25,250 £37,900

12 £22,300 £33,500

11 £20,900 £31,300

10 £19,300 £28,950

9 £15,400 £23,100

Senior

Level Min Max

23 £134,500 £201,750

22 £113,550 £170,300

21 £91,000 £136,500

20 £79,300 £119,000

21 £84,300 £126,500

20 £67,464 £101,196

Mrs Cheryl Gillan:

[5090]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on the 10 (a) highest and (b) lowest remuneration packages at HS2 Ltd by job title.

Paul Maynard:

The Department for Transport does not hold information on the 10 highest and lowest remuneration packages at HS2 Ltd by job title.

However, information on senior officials' salary bands and job titles within HS2 Ltd as at 30 September 2016 can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-officials-high-earners-salaries>

Further information on the 10 highest and lowest remuneration packages together with job titles should be requested from HS2 Ltd.

■ High Speed Two: Vacancies

Mrs Cheryl Gillan:

[5091]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on how many vacant posts there are at HS2 Ltd; and what the salaries are of those vacant posts that are being advertised.

Paul Maynard:

The number of vacant posts at HS2 Ltd is 85. 1 vacant post is currently being advertised at a starting salary of £43,750.

■ Lower Thames Crossing

Adam Holloway:

[4684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether an assessment has been made of the potential effect on levels of congestion in Gravesham in the event that the (a) existing or (b) proposed new Lower Thames Crossings are heavily congested.

Jesse Norman:

In developing its proposals for the Lower Thames Crossing, Highways England examined the impact of incidents on the operation of the Strategic Road Network, and the knock-on effects on the local road network.

These assessments will be further refined as the detailed design for the scheme takes shape.

■ Manchester Metrolink

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[4462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding his Department plans to make available to support the expansion of the Metrolink tram network in Greater Manchester.

Jesse Norman:

It is for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to decide how to fund any future extensions to the Manchester Metrolink system. This could include bidding for central Government funding. GMCA has already received funding from the Local Large Majors Fund to help develop a business case for a short extension of the Airport Line to serve the expanded terminal. They plan to bid for scheme funding by the end of the year. The bid will be in competition with a number of other schemes and decisions on which will be funded are to be taken in the New Year.

■ Merchant Shipping: Crew

Karl Turner:

[\[5290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of the seafarer (a) officer and (b) rating jobs in the merchant shipping industry are held by UK-domiciled seafarers.

Mr John Hayes:

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency does not collate information relating to the proportion of the seafarer (a) officer and (b) rating jobs in the merchant shipping industry which are held by UK-domiciled seafarers.

■ Merchant Shipping: India

Karl Turner:

[\[5379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will provide an update on the ownership of the Malaviya Seven and the status of its crew since it was detained in Aberdeen Harbour by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency on 5 October 2016.

Mr John Hayes:

The ship remains under arrest by the Admiralty Marshall due to non-payment of dues, which include the crew's wages.

Officials from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency continue to liaise with the crew to enquire about their living conditions. The crew await completion of the legal process which will enable them to get paid and repatriated.

■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance

Craig Tracey:

[\[R\]](#) [\[4610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that UK citizens travelling in the EU will be able to benefit from the Green Card system as the UK leaves the EU.

Jesse Norman:

The United Kingdom's membership of the Green Card system predates our membership of the European Union and is not at risk from withdrawal. Maintaining our current vehicular access to the EU without Green Card checks after we leave is one of a number of issues that will need to be addressed through negotiations. The Government made clear in its White Paper on EU withdrawal that our focus in negotiations will be on ensuring new barriers do not arise from our exit.

■ **Parking: Pedestrian Areas****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[4827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to give councils outside London the power to ban pavement parking in order to reduce problems experienced by people with visual impairments.

Jesse Norman:

Councils already have the power to ban pavement parking by means of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). Following discussions with local authorities and other stakeholders my department is planning to launch a survey in autumn 2017 in order to gather evidence about the TRO procedure, the costs and timescales for processing TROs, and information about options for change.

■ **Railways: South West****Luke Pollard:**[\[4465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to respond to the Peninsula Rail Task Force report.

Paul Maynard:

The Department for Transport welcomes the Peninsula Rail Task Force report and the contribution it makes to the consideration of longer term improvements to the rail network in the South West.

We are investing more than £400 million in the network in the South West, including an extra £10 million for the line from Exeter to Newton Abbot via Dawlish that we announced in November 2016. We will continue to work with Network Rail and the Task Force to explore the potential for longer-term improvements in 2019 and beyond.

■ **Railways: Waste Disposal****Alan Brown:**[\[5250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many trains in service still discharge effluent onto the rail tracks.

Paul Maynard:

There are currently fewer than 500 trains that discharge effluent onto the rail network, this excludes non-Department for Transport services such as those let by Scottish

Ministers, Open Access or charter operators. By 31 December 2019, all Department for Transport Franchisees will have ceased the discharge of effluent, this will be achieved by modifications or the introduction of new trains.

■ **Railways: West Midlands**

Andy McDonald:

[\[5092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to announce the award for the West Midlands rail passenger franchise; for what reasons the announcement of that award has been delayed; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Maynard:

Franchise competitions have always varied in how long they take to conclude, that's one of the reasons that almost every franchise has this kind of extension facility written into it. Calling this short extension enables us to ensure, that the eventual outcome of the competition represents the best deal for passengers. We will make an announcement in due course.

■ **Shipping: Cabotage**

Karl Turner:

[\[5380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union on the effect on maritime cabotage policy of the UK leaving the EU.

Mr John Hayes:

The Secretary of State and his ministerial team have regular discussions with the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union and his ministerial team. We are committed to ensuring that our exit from the EU is a success and our discussions to that end encompass a wide range of issues of importance to the UK maritime sector.

■ **Shipping: Crew**

Karl Turner:

[\[5288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the supply of UK (a) officers and (b) ratings will meet the increases in demand for seafarers in the UK shipping industry over the next decade, forecast in the UK Seafarer Projections report commissioned by his Department.

Mr John Hayes:

Having a skilled workforce is essential to the future of the UK's maritime sector and is an area I am personally committed to.

Alongside the Seafarers Projections report, a review of the Support for Maritime Training (SMarT) scheme was also commissioned and the report published on 18th July. Both of these pieces of work will be used to inform future policy with the aim to increase the number of officers and ratings.

The Department continues to support seafarer training through the £15m SMarT scheme. It has been working with industry and the unions on the development of the SMarT Plus proposal which aims to increase officer numbers to 1200. The latest version of the proposal was received in June and is currently under consideration.

Work is underway in developing a range of rating apprenticeships which will deliver more routes into ratings training. The Deck Apprenticeship is now approved and the Engine Room and Catering rating apprenticeships are progressing well. These apprenticeships, along with the levy and the tonnage tax ratings option will help stimulate increased demand for ratings training. Coupled with this is the Ratings Taskforce of which the Department is an active member. At the recent Ratings Summit, which was attended by a number of officials, a range of actions were put forward by attendees and the Department looks forward to seeing the development of a Ratings Strategy by the Ratings Taskforce which will address some of these actions.

Karl Turner:

[\[5289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of the seafarer (a) officer and (b) rating jobs onboard tonnage tax qualifying vessels are held by UK-domiciled seafarers.

Mr John Hayes:

The figures for 2016/2017 are

	UK FLAG ONLY				ALL FLAGS			
	British	EU/ EEA	Other	% British	British	EU/ EEA	Other	% British
Ratings	1,538	489	1,325	46%	1,702	1,208	7,531	16%
Officers	1,479	658	683	52%	2,153	2,362	3,105	28%

■ Shipping: Telecommunications

Bill Esterson:

[\[5459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 17 July 2017 to Question 4563, what estimate he has made of the number of UK seafarers able to call or have Skype conversations with friends and family in the UK when they are in foreign ports.

Mr John Hayes:

The government has made no estimate of the number of UK seafarers able to call or have Skype conversations with friends and family in the UK when they are in foreign ports.

Similar to foreign seafarers in UK ports, UK seafarers are able to use the services of seafarer welfare providers in foreign ports, such as free wi-fi, to call or have Skype

conversations with people in the UK. In addition, some major foreign ports and shipowners allow UK seafarers to use their wi-fi for free

■ **Tunnels: Pennines**

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[4463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent progress his Department has made on the proposed trans-pennine tunnel.

Jesse Norman:

Highways England and Transport for the North are continuing work to understand the cost and benefits of linking the Manchester and Sheffield areas by tunnel. This will be completed by the autumn, when more information will be made available.

WALES

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Newport (Gwent)**

Jessica Morden:

[\[4538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether he has had discussions or corresponded with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on his Department's service centre in Newport.

Alun Cairns:

I have regular discussions with Ministerial colleagues about all matters pertaining to Wales. I will work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure that the interests of staff and customers are paramount as plans are finalised.

■ **European Union (Withdrawal) Bill**

Paul Flynn:

[\[5541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to the Answer of 3 July 2017 to Question 982, for what reason the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill makes no reference to powers set to be devolved to the National Assembly for Wales.

Alun Cairns:

The European Union (Withdrawal) Bill establishes a transitional arrangement that replicates current EU frameworks in UK law, referred to as retained EU law. The Government is now beginning intensive discussions with the devolved administrations about where common frameworks are needed in the areas covered by the transitional arrangement. Where frameworks are not needed, the Bill provides a mechanism for passing powers to the devolved nations.

■ Finance: Wales**Jessica Morden:** [\[4540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether he has had discussions or corresponded with HM Treasury on funding for Wales since the announcement of the Government's agreement with the Democratic Unionist Party.

Alun Cairns:

Ministers and I have regular discussions with HM Treasury on targeted interventions to support economic growth in Wales. These include City and Growth Deals such as the deals we have already announced for Cardiff and Swansea and the deal we have committed to for North Wales which we are discussing with local partners. Wales also benefits from the financial security of the new funding settlement put in place by the fiscal framework we agreed with the Welsh Government last year to guarantee a fair level of funding for the long-term.

■ Iron and Steel: Wales**Jessica Morden:** [\[4539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether he has had discussions or corresponded with Cabinet Colleagues on measures to support the steel industry in Wales since 8 June 2017.

Alun Cairns:

I have frequent discussions and correspond regularly with my Cabinet colleagues on the steel industry in Wales. We are working with the sector, the unions and devolved administrations to support the steel sector develop a long-term viable solution for the steel industry in Wales and across the whole of the UK.

■ Severn River Crossing: Tolls**Jessica Morden:** [\[4537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, if he will publish the details of any correspondence or discussions he has had with HM Treasury on ending the Severn tolls.

Alun Cairns:

I have regular discussions with Ministerial colleagues about matters pertaining to Wales. The Government's position on the tolls is very simple and straightforward; we will abolish them.

■ Wales Office**Hywel Williams:** [\[5514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many staff in his Department have responsibilities relating to the UK leaving the EU.

Alun Cairns:

The Department for Exiting the European Union has responsibility for overseeing preparations for the withdrawal of the UK from the EU and conducting these

withdrawal negotiations in support of the Prime Minister. In doing this it is working very closely with other Government departments, including the Wales Office.

The Wales Office has refocused its priorities following the United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union and work relating to exiting the EU now forms part of the policy portfolio of most staff.

■ **Wales Office: Mass Media**

Deidre Brock: [\[4306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many public engagements for which a media calling notice was issued were attended by a departmental Minister in each of the last 12 months.

Alun Cairns:

The Wales Office does not hold such records.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ **Abortion: Northern Ireland**

Jim Shannon: [\[5500\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she had discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive prior to the decision to provide NHS-funded abortions to women resident in Northern Ireland on the potential effect of that decision on the independent authority of that Executive and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Anne Milton:

Abortion in Northern Ireland is a devolved issue. The decision to fund abortions for women usually resident in Northern Ireland does not affect the devolution settlement.

Discussions will be held with the Northern Ireland Executive on delivering this policy as our plans develop.

Jim Shannon: [\[5501\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she has made an estimate of the projected cost of providing NHS abortions in England for women resident in Northern Ireland; and if she will make a statement.

Jim Shannon: [\[5504\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what discussions she has had with the Northern Ireland Assembly on the effect of the provision of private appointments, travel costs and accommodation costs for women seeking abortion in England on the original estimate of the costs to the public purse of the provision of abortions for women resident in Northern Ireland on the NHS in England.

Anne Milton:

We are currently engaging key stakeholders to work out the details of the scheme. Further information will be available in due course.

Jim Shannon:

[\[5503\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether her Department has assessed the potential effect of the provision of NHS-funded abortions in England to women resident in Northern Ireland on the number of abortions among Northern Irish residents.

Anne Milton:

We are working to analyse the effect of this policy on the number of women from Northern Ireland seeking abortion.

■ Equality and Human Rights Commission

Mr Charles Walker:

[\[5277\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what information she holds on (a) the position of Disability Commissioner, (b) the appointment of a Disability Commissioner and (c) the abolition of the post of Disability Commissioner provided by (i) the Board of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, (ii) the Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, (iii) the Deputy Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, (iv) other members of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, (v) the Chief Executive of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and (vi) the Disability Advisory Committee of the Equality and Human Rights Commission between (A) 1 November 2016 and 9 March 2017 and (B) 9 March and 21 April 2017.

Nick Gibb:

A number of Equality and Human Rights Commissioner appointments, including to the role of Disability Commissioner, were advertised between September and November 2016. The role of Disability Commissioner was not a statutory post but rather, a role created by the Commission. Commissioners filling that role customarily chaired the Commission's statutory Disability Committee as a key element of their duties. The Equality and Human Rights Commission is an independent body and decisions about the roles and responsibilities of Board members are a matter for the Commission itself. Following an Order - The Equality Act 2006 (dissolution of the Disability Committee) Order 2014 SI No. 406 - which came into force on 01 April 2014, the statutory Disability Committee was dissolved on 31 March 2017, before the appointment of any new Commissioners could be made, and no candidate for the advertised appointments was specifically offered the role of Disability Commissioner.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Children: Poverty

Carolyn Harris:

[\[5162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what percentage of children living in poverty in Swansea East in each year for which data is available.

Caroline Dinenage:

National statistics on the number of children in relative low income are set out in the annual "Households Below Average Income" publication. The number and proportion of children in relative low income is not available at local authority or constituency level in this publication because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates at this geography.

Latest 3-year estimates for Wales of the proportion and number of children in low income are available in Table 4.16ts and Table 4.17ts in the file

"4_children_timeseries_risk" from this link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/599136/hbai-2015-2016-supporting-ods-files.zip

Ian C. Lucas:**[5168]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of children the Government classified as living in poverty in Wrexham in each of the last 10 years for which data is available.

Caroline Dinenage:

National statistics on the number of children in relative low income are set out in the annual "Households Below Average Income" publication. The number and proportion of children in relative low income is not available at local authority or constituency level in this publication because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates at this geography.

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Chris Elmore:**[5180]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of children were in poverty in Ogmores constituency in each year for which data is available.

Caroline Dinenage:

National statistics on the number of children in relative low income are set out in the annual "Households Below Average Income" publication. The number and proportion of children in relative low income is not available at local authority or constituency level in this publication because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates at this geography.

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David Hanson:

[5493]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what percentage of children were living in poverty in Delyn constituency in each year for which data is available.

Caroline Dinenage:

National statistics on the number of children in relative low income are set out in the annual "Households Below Average Income" publication. The number and proportion of children in relative low income is not available at local authority or constituency level in this publication because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates at this geography.

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■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Brexit**

Hywel Williams:

[5515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many staff in his Department have responsibilities relating to the UK leaving the EU.

Caroline Dinenage:

EU Exit is an all-of-government operation. The Department for Exiting the European Union is doing detailed work with departments to prepare for the upcoming negotiations by understanding the risks and opportunities of leaving the EU and to coordinate planning.

Members of staff across the Department for Work and Pensions are working closely with the Department for Exiting the European Union to consider the implications of EU Exit on DWP policy objectives, and to provide advice and analysis to Ministers on EU Exit and exit-related issues.

Given the interactions between EU Exit work and the Department's other priorities, it would not be possible to give an accurate figure.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Staff**

Jessica Morden:

[5505]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will publish work carried out to assess the equality impact on staff working in Newport of transferring to a potential hub for his Department north of Cardiff.

Damian Hinds:

DWP has been mindful of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and has carried out local level equality analysis to inform understanding of the effect of our plans. DWP

will consider any requests for equality analysis reports in the normal course of business.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Treforest**

Jessica Morden:

[\[4865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will publish the budget for (a) building, (b) designing and (c) purchasing land for his Department's potential new hub in Treforest.

Damian Hinds:

Costs associated with the DWP estate are not generally published separately due to commercial sensitivities.

Jessica Morden:

[\[4866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the transport infrastructure from Newport serving the potential site for his Department's hub in Treforest.

Damian Hinds:

Travel time by public transport is one of a number of factors that have informed our decisions for all of our future estate, including our preferred location for any new acquisitions. Until we have concluded our commercial arrangements we will not be in a position to provide further details on proposed hub locations, but I can confirm that transport links will be a key consideration.

■ **Disability Living Allowance: Blaenau Gwent**

Nick Smith:

[\[5014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of constituents in Blaenau Gwent who were categorised as lifelong recipients of disability living allowance were subsequently judged as ineligible for personal independence payments in each year for which data is available.

Penny Mordaunt:

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

■ **Employment and Support Allowance**

Gerald Jones:

[\[5286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of employment and support allowance claims were overturned at the mandatory reconsideration stage between (a) January and December 2016 and (b) January and June 2017.

Penny Mordaunt:

The information requested for Employment and Support Allowance claims is shown in the table below:

NATIONAL LEVEL	1ST JANUARY 16 TO 31ST DECEMBER 16	1ST JANUARY 17 TO 30TH JUNE 17
% Overturned at Mandatory Reconsideration	9.9%	12.3%

Source :

Decision Making and Appeals Case Recorder (DMACR).

The above data source is a Departmental performance management, data capture and reporting tool. This type of internal management information does not form part of the official statistics outputs that are released by the Department in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice.

■ Employment and Support Allowance: Mental Health

Luciana Berger:

[5384]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of employment and support allowance claimants in (a) the work-related activity group and (b) support group have a primary diagnosis related to mental health.

Penny Mordaunt:

The information available on the number of Employment and Support Allowance claimants by phase of claim and medical condition is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Housing Benefit: Private Rented Housing

Will Quince:

[5538]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the number of exemptions made in respect to the exemption for care leavers up to the age of 22 for the Shared Accommodation Rate in relation to private rented accommodation; and what estimate his Department has made of the cost of those exemptions.

Caroline Dinenage:

This information is not available.

■ **Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing**

Will Quince:

[5537]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the number of exemptions which will be made in respect to the exemption for care leavers up to the age of 22 for the Shared Accommodation Rate in relation to social rented sector when introduced in 2019; and what estimate his Department has made of the cost of those exemptions.

Caroline Dineneage:

This information is not available.

■ **Industrial Diseases: Respiratory System**

Peter Aldous:

[4817]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to reduce the number of people with occupational respiratory disease.

Penny Mordaunt:

Tackling ill health is one of six themes in HSE's strategy for the health and safety system, 'Helping Great Britain work well'. The strategy is available at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/strategy/index.htm>.

Tackling occupational respiratory disease remains one of HSE's health priorities and is a key element of HSE's Health and Work strategy and occupational lung disease plan which are available at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/strategiesandplans/health-and-work-strategy/index.htm>.

The aim is to reduce the incidence rate and number of new cases of occupational related lung disease. To help achieve this HSE will focus its inspection and enforcement activity where it can have the most effect and continue to work with a broad range of partners including the recently established Healthy Lung Partnership.

■ **Industrial Injuries**

Sir David Crausby:

[4921]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many workplace injuries where exposure to high temperatures was a contributory factor were reported to the Health and Safety Executive in each year since 2009-10.

Penny Mordaunt:

The 'Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations' (RIDDOR) puts duties on employers, some self-employed and people in control of work premises (the Responsible Person) to report certain serious workplace accidents.

RIDDOR is designed to collect top-level information on such cases, including information on the main accident factor, as assessed by the Responsible person

making the report. RIDDOR does not however provide information on contributory factors associated with a reported injury.

Prior to September 2011 injury reports included detailed information on the **main agent** causing the injury. The table below shows the number of injuries to workers caused by exposure to hot environmental temperatures as reported to all enforcing authorities under RIDDOR (1995) for the years 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Table : Injuries to workers caused by exposure to hot environmental temperatures* as reported to all enforcing authorities under RIDDOR (1995), 2009/10 and 2010/11.

*identified by agent code 16.01: Physical phenom - heat

	2009/10	2010/11
Fatal Injury	-	-
Non-fatal injury	39	42
Major injury	23	21
Over 3-day injury	16	21

Since RIDDOR reporting moved online in September 2011 this information is no longer collected, so we cannot identify injuries caused by environmental heat from this date.

■ Medical Examinations

Mr Steve Reed: [\[5251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many health and disability assessment centres are not wheelchair-accessible.

Mr Steve Reed: [\[5252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure that health and disability assessment centres are accessible to wheelchair users.

Mr Steve Reed: [\[5253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure that access to health and disability assessment centres is compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

Penny Mordaunt:

All Assessment Centre buildings [operated by Independent Assessment Services (an Atos company), Capita, and the Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA)] are compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and are wheelchair accessible.

The assessment providers are required to ensure that the needs of all claimants are considered, including proximity to public transport routes and access to suitable parking. Before attending an assessment, claimants are given the opportunity to alert

the assessment provider to any additional requirements they may have. The providers will endeavour to meet any reasonable requests.

If a claimant is unable to travel to, or access an Assessment Centre as a result of their health condition or impairment, a home visit may be offered.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Blaenau Gwent**

Nick Smith:

[5017]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of constituents in Blaenau Gwent have had their personal independence payments overturned as a result of (a) mandatory reconsideration and (b) an appeal hearing in each year for which data is available.

Penny Mordaunt:

Table 1 below shows the number of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) initial decisions and Mandatory Reconsideration decisions where the award was changed by year since the introduction of PIP in the Parliamentary Constituency of Blaenau Gwent.

Table 1 – Number of Initial decisions and Mandatory Reconsiderations decisions where the award changed by year of decision.

YEAR OF INITIAL DECISION	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (TO APRIL)	TOTAL
Number of Initial decisions for PIP (Exc. Withdrawn cases)	50	1,280	1,370	1,510	990	5,180
Year of Mandatory Reconsideration	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (to April)	Total
Number of Awards Changed at Mandatory Reconsideration	#	20	70	60	30	180

Tribunal Statistics, including appeal outcomes are published by the Ministry of Justice and so we will not be able to provide consistent regional breakdown of these statistics for Blaenau Gwent.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Cardiff Central

Jo Stevens: [\[5132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of constituents in Cardiff Central constituency who were categorised as lifelong recipients of disability living allowance were subsequently judged as ineligible for personal independence payments in each year for which data is available.

Chris Elmore: [\[5183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people in Ogmore constituency who had been categorised as lifelong recipients of disability living allowance have subsequently been found to be ineligible for personal independence payments in each year for which data is available.

Ian C. Lucas: [\[5324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people in Wrexham constituency were categorised as lifelong recipients of Disability Living Allowance and have subsequently been judged ineligible for Personal Independence Payments in each year for which data is available.

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[5326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what percentage of people in Gower constituency who had been categorised as lifelong recipients of disability living allowance and have subsequently been judged ineligible for personal independence payments in each year for which data is available.

Carolyn Harris: [\[5328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what percentage of people in Swansea East constituency were categorised as lifelong recipients of disability living allowance and were subsequently judged ineligible to receive personal independence payments in each year for which data is available.

David Hanson: [\[5347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of constituents in Delyn constituency who had been categorised as lifelong recipients of disability living allowance have subsequently been judged as ineligible for personal independence payments in each year for which data is available.

Nick Thomas-Symonds: [\[5397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of constituents in Torfaen constituency who were categorised as lifelong recipients of disability living allowance were subsequently judged as ineligible for personal independence payments in each year for which data is available.

Penny Mordaunt:

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

■ Social Security Benefits: Administrative Delays

Chris Stephens:

[5462]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to assist households facing financial difficulties as a result of the time taken to process social security applications and payments.

Damian Hinds:

Claimants can request a Short Term Benefit Advance or a Universal Credit Advance before they receive their first payment of benefit.

■ Social Security Benefits: Applications

Debbie Abrahams:

[5377]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications for (a) employment and support allowance payments and (b) personal independence payments were assessed from application to decision from April 2015 to March 2017; and what the average length of time was for such assessment of each of those payments.

Penny Mordaunt:

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA):

The available information on the number of applications made to ESA can be found in the ESA Outcomes of Work Capability Assessments quarterly statistics published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/employment-and-support-allowance-outcomes-of-work-capability-assessment>

These statistics cover ESA applications made up to September 2016 and are the latest figures available.

Information on the average length of time taken for the ESA assessment process is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP):

The latest available data on PIP registrations and clearances split by type of clearance (i.e. whether the claim was awarded, disallowed or withdrawn) for both new claims and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) reassessed claims for each month since PIP was introduced in April 2013, can be found at <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here: <https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html>.

The Department publishes a range of Official Statistics on PIP here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-independence-payment-april-2013-to-april-2017>

These include average clearance times by new claims and DLA re-assessment claims and normal rules and special rules for terminally ill people. Specifically, tables 5A and 5B in the file "Data tables: PIP: Official Statistics to April 2017" show the

Average Actual Clearance Times (Median number of weeks) for each stage of the PIP claimant journey.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Children**

Alison Thewliss: [5296]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the benefit cap on the health and well-being of children.

Caroline Dineneage:

We do not hold any data on the effect of the benefit cap on the health and well-being of children.

The Government believes that encouraging households to move into work through the benefit cap will help to increase the household's income and help to improve their wellbeing:

Research shows that for adults without work, re-employment leads to improvement in health and wellbeing, whereas further unemployment leads to deterioration.

Research also shows that it is not in the best interests of children to live in workless households. For example, children in households where neither parent is in work are much more likely to have challenging behaviour at age 5 than children in households where both parents are in paid employment.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**

Chris Stephens: [5463]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to assist households facing financial difficulties as a result of benefit sanctions.

Damian Hinds:

Sanctions are only used in a minority of cases when people fail to meet each of their requirements that they agreed in their Claimant Commitment without good reason.

We have a well-established system of hardship payments, available as a safeguard if a claimant demonstrates that they cannot meet their immediate and most essential needs, including accommodation, heating, food and hygiene, as a result of their sanction.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations**

Debbie Abrahams: [5368]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will list (a) the qualification levels of assessors who undertake work capability assessments or personal independence payment health assessments and (b) the proportion of assessors who are members of professional bodies.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department has set clear requirements on the professions, skills, experience and training of Health Professionals (HPs) employed by Assessment Providers to carry out health assessments.

All HPs undertaking Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments must be an occupational therapist, level 1 nurse, physiotherapist, paramedic or doctor.

Work Capability Assessments are carried out by HPs who are an occupational therapist, nurse, physiotherapist or doctor.

All HPs undertaking assessments on behalf of the Department must be fully registered with the relevant licensing body (i.e. doctors must have a license to practise); have no sanctions attached to registration unless they relate to disability; have at least 2 years post full registration experience or less than 2 years post full registration experience by individual agreement with the Authority and have also met requirements around training, experience and competence.

Approval for an HP must be conferred by the Department's Chief Medical Officer (CMO) on behalf of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

Debbie Abrahams:**[5378]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will publish the indicators for agreed outcomes for (a) personal independence payment health assessments and (b) work capability assessments; and if he will publish the performance against those indicators for each year since 2010.

Penny Mordaunt:

We have interpreted 'agreed outcomes' as benefit award rates. There are no indicators in relation to agreed outcomes for either Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments or Work Capability Assessments (WCAs).

The Department routinely publishes information relating to award outcomes on a quarterly basis.

The latest PIP statistics are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-independence-payment-april-2013-to-april-2017>

The latest Employment and Support Allowance statistics are available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/617749/esa-wca-summary-june-2017.pdf

Debbie Abrahams:**[5466]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will publish (a) the value and duration of all contracts his Department holds with contractors for the delivery of work capability assessments and personal independence payment assessments and (b) the amount spent on each contract including (i) underspends and (ii) overspends in each year for which data is available.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Department holds one contract for the delivery of Work Capability Assessments (and other smaller assessments) which commenced in March 2015 for the period of 3 years, with an option to extend for up to two further years. The estimated contract value at the point of contract award for the original 3 year term (1 March 2015 – 28 February 2018) was:

SUPPLIER	CENTRE FOR HEALTH AND DISABILITY ASSESSMENTS (CHDA - A MAXIMUS COMPANY)
Original contract price	£595m

Contract Year 1 (to 28 February 2016) = £126.8m (excluding £13.9m set up costs which are spread over the life of the contract).

Contract Year 2 (to 28 February 2017) = £150.6m.

Overall, the Department's spend against this contract is lower than anticipated at contract award due to a number of factors including service credits, efficiency savings delivered and changes in the target cost agreed following small changes in requirements.

The Department holds 3 contracts for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) assessments, which commenced in July 2012 for a period of 5 years with the option to extend for a period of up to a further 2 years (which the Department exercised its rights to). The contract value for the original 5 year term (1 July 2012 to 31 July 2017) was:

CONTRACT	LOT 1	LOT 2	LOT 3
Supplier	Atos	Capita	Atos
Region	NW England, NE England, Scotland, Isle of Man	Central England, Wales	London, Southern England
Original contract price	£206.7m	£121.6m	£183.9m

Total spend against these contracts is as follows:

Contract Year 1 (to 31st July 2013) = £0.8m

Contract Year 2 (to 31st July 2014) = £54.8m

Contract Year 3 (to 31st July 2015) = £211.4m

Contract Year 4 (to 31st July 2016) = £236.5m

PIP contracts are paid on the basis of outcomes, primarily the number of assessment reports produced, with service credits related to performance. There is not therefore a

single overspend / underspend figure recognised for these contracts over the referenced contract period.

■ Universal Credit

Debbie Abrahams:

[5297]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of universal credit claimants have waited (a) six, (b) eight, (c) 10, (d) 12 and (e) longer than 12 weeks for an initial payment between April 2016 and March 2017.

Damian Hinds:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer I gave on 19 July 2017 to question 4292.

Stephen Timms:

[5414]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department has taken to improve the accuracy of income data used in calculating awards of universal credit; and what estimate he has made of the improvement obtained by those steps.

Damian Hinds:

The Real Time Information (RTI) system ensures that we get Universal Credit claims right by providing us with accurate and timely details of earnings from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. The HMRC database holding the PAYE data reported in real time receives the data from employers, holds it and passes on relevant data for Universal Credit claimants to DWP. The system is working well with over 99% of individual employment records now being reported in real time. A number of processes are in place to deal with inaccurate data from employers. DWP and HMRC analysts monitor the RTI data received, looking for trends, patterns and causes. Both Departments then work together with employers and partners such as software developers and payroll bureaux to improve the quality of the data. This work supplements the BACS payment validation process.

Universal Credit claimants are required to report all unearned income to DWP and provide the evidence to verify that income where necessary. In replacing existing income replacement benefits and tax credits, Universal Credit has simplified the treatment of unearned income. There are no partial disregards and all unearned income that will be taken into account in the Universal Credit assessment is prescribed in the regulations. Once rolled out, DWP expects the high-level design of Universal Credit to lead to around £1bn in Annually Managed Expenditure savings each year from reduced fraud and error, compared to the benefits and Tax Credits that Universal Credit will replace.

■ Universal Credit: Administrative Delays

Chris Stephens:

[5464]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to assist households facing financial difficulties as a result of errors or delays in the rollout of universal credit.

Damian Hinds:

We have a number of safeguards in place to help claimants transition to Universal Credit including Advances and Budgeting Support. Claimants can apply for an advance immediately and can receive up to 50 percent of their indicative award shortly afterwards. Personal Budgeting Support is also discussed at the claimant's initial work search interview to gauge their potential support needs and can include money advice. We continue to work closely with landlords, Local Authorities and other organisations to ensure claimants are supported throughout the assessment process.

■ Work Capability Assessment**Dan Jarvis:**[\[5406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans he has to reform the work capability assessment.

Penny Mordaunt:

We have consulted on reforms to the Work Capability Assessment as part of the Improving Lives Green Paper, and have committed in our manifesto to building more personalised and tailored employment support to help disabled claimants and those people with health conditions return to work where appropriate. We will set out our plans in due course.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ The Insolvency Service Performance Targets 2017-18

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility (Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Margot James): [\[HCWS84\]](#)

I have set performance targets for the Insolvency Service for the financial year 2017-18.

The Insolvency Service is the Government agency that provides public services to those affected by financial distress or failure.

The Insolvency Service provides the frameworks that deal with insolvency and the financial misconduct that sometimes accompanies or leads to it. Its aim is to deliver economic confidence through a corporate and personal insolvency regime which is regarded as fair and that gives investors, lenders and creditors confidence to take the commercial risks necessary to support economic growth.

In 2017-18, an important priority for the Insolvency Service will be to maintain its current high level of customer service whilst initiating a major change programme. I have set measures and targets at a level which reflects the challenges that the agency continues to face.

Attachments:

1. The Insolvency Service Performance Targets 2017-18 [The Insolvency Service Performance Targets 2017.docx]

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Committees and Implementation Taskforces

First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Damian Green): [\[HCWS100\]](#)

Today the Government is publishing an updated list of Cabinet Committees and Implementation Taskforces.

Copies of the associated documents will be placed in the Library of House and published on Gov.uk.

DEFENCE■ **Type 26 Frigates****Secretary of State for Defence (Sir Michael Fallon):**[\[HCWS89\]](#)

Following the announcement earlier this month that the Ministry of Defence had signed a £3.7 billion contract for the first batch of the new Type 26 anti-submarine warfare frigates, I am pleased to announce that the frigates will be known as the City Class. The first ship is to be named HMS GLASGOW and her construction formally began today. Naming the ships after cities provides significant and readily identifiable linkages with large populations across the United Kingdom. GLASGOW is a name with a distinguished historical pedigree, and this first name in the class provides a tangible connection with the city where the ships will be constructed. There have been eight Royal Navy ships of the name from the early 1700s, who between them have earned ten battle honours. In more recent history, two ships served in the World Wars, including the Arctic Convoys and the Normandy Landings, and the last ship to bear the name was awarded the 'Falkland Islands 1982' battle honour to add to the 'Falkland Islands 1914' honour won by her predecessor. The Type 26 Frigates, the first of which we expect to enter service with the Royal Navy in the mid 2020s, will provide essential protection to our nuclear deterrent and aircraft carriers into the 2060s, keeping British interests safe across the world.

EDUCATION■ **Post 16 Education****Minister of State for School Standards and Minister for Equalities (Nick Gibb):**[\[HCWS99\]](#)

Today the Government is publishing Professor Sir Adrian Smith's authoritative and wide-ranging review of 16-18 mathematics education in England.

The government is determined to give all young people the world-class education they need to fulfil their potential. This includes providing opportunities to develop the mathematical and quantitative knowledge and skills appropriate to their chosen careers. In an increasingly technological world this will be vital to ensuring that our future workforce will be productive and competitive in the global marketplace.

Sir Adrian Smith's review identifies a strong economic and social mobility case for raising participation in post-16 mathematics and improving knowledge and skills at all levels. He presents clear evidence for the value of mathematical and quantitative skills to students, whichever route they take.

The report includes recommendations and challenges that are wide-ranging – for example, the need to address negative cultural perceptions of mathematics. These issues will require detailed engagement and action between government, industry, universities, schools and colleges.

I have today written to Sir Adrian thanking him for the review and confirming that the Government will set out our plans across the range of Sir Adrian's recommendations in due course. The letter confirms that work is already underway to address a number of the challenges highlighted in the report, and there are a number of recommendations where we have been able to take immediate action.

We agree with Sir Adrian that we must be ambitious and take greater action to encourage and support more young people to choose mathematics post-16, particularly in areas where take-up is low. That is why one of the immediate actions we are taking today is to announce a new £16m Level 3 Maths Support Programme. It will build on the momentum created by the Further Mathematics and Core Maths Support Programmes, and will work with schools and colleges to improve mathematics education by sharing best practice, and delivering knowledge-rich curriculum materials, as well as working to increase participation and attainment in 16-18 mathematics. The programme will work to deliver focused intervention targeted to those who need it most.

The other immediate actions we have taken in response to Sir Adrian's recommendations are set out in my letter. For example, taking forward work on the new T level qualifications to ensure they include mathematics where employers identify this as a requirement for employment; working with the newly constituted Royal Society Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education to ensure appropriate expert advice. We are also working with institutions such as the Royal Society and British Academy to encourage universities and employers to signal the value of level 3 mathematics qualifications for entry to undergraduate courses with a significant quantitative element and for a wide range of job roles.

We have placed a copy of Sir Adrian's report and our letter in the libraries of the House and on the government's website.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Inter-Pillar Transfer Rate in England

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Michael Gove):
[\[HCWS87\]](#)

Today I am announcing that the amount transferred from farmers' Pillar 1 direct payments to Pillar 2 rural development in England will remain at 12% for 2019 and 2020.

Leaving the EU presents an unprecedented opportunity to develop a new system that works for us. The Government has committed to maintain the same total in cash funds until the end of this parliament. As we prepare to leave, we will work with farmers, food producers and environmental experts across the United Kingdom and with the devolved administrations to devise a new agri-environment system, to be introduced in the following parliament.

I have, therefore, concluded that the inter-pillar transfer should remain unchanged in England under the current Common Agricultural Policy framework.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**■ Appointment of new Bulgarian Commissioner to the European Commission**

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Mr Steve Baker): [\[HCWS104\]](#)

My right hon. Friend, Baroness Anelay of St Johns DBE, Minister of State for Exiting the European Union, has made the following statement:

On 7 July 2017, the Council of the European Union supported the appointment of Ms Mariya Gabriel as the new Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society. The UK voted in favour of the appointment of Ms Gabriel as Commissioner. Ms Gabriel is scheduled to hold the post until 31 October 2019.

The Bulgarian Government nominated Ms Gabriel as Commissioner following the resignation of the previous commissioner for Bulgaria, Ms Kristalina Georgieva, in December 2016. Before her appointment, Ms Gabriel had been a member of the European Parliament since 2009.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report 2016**

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Boris Johnson): [\[HCWS90\]](#)

I have today laid before Parliament a copy of the 2016 Foreign and Commonwealth Office Report on Human Rights and Democracy (Cm 9487).

The report highlights policy developments on human rights issues overseas in 2016.

The report assesses the human rights situation in 30 countries which FCO has designated as its Human Rights Priority Countries. These are: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burma, Burundi, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Libya, Maldives, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

This report focuses on how the Government is striving to protect and promote human rights around the world. In the two centuries since Britain became the first country to outlaw the slave trade, this country has helped to lead the struggle for justice and decency. The Government's approach towards human rights stands in this long tradition, based on the firm belief that our values are not only right in themselves but the key to prosperity and development.

■ EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement

Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Alan Duncan):
[\[HCWS93\]](#)

The Government wishes to inform the House of its decision to opt in to the Council Decision on Conclusion of the EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), in respect of Article 18(2) of the Agreement, which relates to judicial cooperation in the field of civil and commercial matters. This article falls within Title V of Part III of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union.

The SPA, a framework political agreement, will update the previous EU-Canada 1976 Framework Agreement for commercial and economic cooperation between the European Communities and Canada. It has two aims: i) to enhance EU-Canada political ties and cooperation on foreign and security policy issues; and ii) to upgrade cooperation on a wide range of other areas. The SPA, though not technically linked to the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA), is complementary and will provide wider benefits to the EU-Canada relationship.

The SPA has been under negotiation, between the EU, its Member States and Canada, since 2011. The draft Council Decision on Conclusion issued on Thursday 24 November 2016. Notwithstanding the result of the referendum on EU membership the Government consider that it is in the UK's interests to opt in to Article 18(2) of this Agreement at the Conclusion stage of the SPA negotiations. Article 18(2) of the agreement provides for judicial cooperation in civil and commercial matters. While it is not specific about the type of cooperation that might be envisaged, the Government believes that it is beneficial for the UK to be involved in any such work between the EU and one of our closest Commonwealth partners whilst we remain a member of the European Union.

We do not expect the Council Decision on Conclusion to be adopted until all Member States have ratified the SPA.

■ Provision of Security Assistance to Somalia

The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Rory Stewart):
[\[HCWS91\]](#)

The UK remains committed to building a stable, peaceful and prosperous future for Somalia. Instability in Somalia affects stability across East Africa – fuelling irregular migration and providing a foothold for terrorist groups such as Al Shabaab and Daesh. It is important that we maintain our support in order to tackle these shared threats to both the UK and the Somali people. This is why the British Government has announced a further £21m of support for security work in Somalia, and helped to agree the Security Pact at the London Somalia Conference earlier this year.

In the shorter-term, with the support of the Somali Government, the UK has funded the construction of a police training facility in Mogadishu at a cost of £1,767,016 which will shortly be handed over to the Somali Police Force. This facility has been funded by FCO policy programme funding. The development of security partners and Counter Terrorism

(CT) policing in Somalia is vital to help ensure that the Somali authorities have the right tools to deploy in their ongoing fight against terrorism.

The provision of this facility is fully in line with the Government's strategic CT objectives for East and South Africa. Using the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance guidance, FCO officials have also assessed the project for human rights risks, and concluded that the risk of such violations arising from the project's delivery may be mitigated.

HOME OFFICE

■ European Union opt-in and opt-out Decision: Second Generation Schengen Information System

The Minister of State for Fire and Policing (Mr Nick Hurd): [\[HCWS96\]](#)

The Government has decided not to opt out of a new EU proposal for a Regulation governing the use of the Second Generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) for police and judicial cooperation purposes ("the draft Police Cooperation Regulation"), and not to opt in to a proposal for a Regulation on the use of SIS II for the return of illegally staying non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals ("the draft Returns Regulation").

SIS II is an EU-wide system that circulates alerts on people and objects that are of interest to law enforcement agencies across the EU. This includes people who are wanted for extradition on European Arrest Warrants, stolen vehicles, lost or cancelled travel documents and suspected criminals and terrorists on whom information is sought.

The Proposed Police Cooperation Regulation will replace the legislation that currently governs SIS II's use for that purpose. The UK has participated in this aspect of SIS II since April 2015. Our law enforcement agencies benefit from this, for example by being able to detain at the border people who are wanted under European Arrest Warrants and to obtain intelligence from police forces across the EU on suspected criminals and security risks. The draft Regulation contains a number of proposals that would update SIS II's capabilities, for example allowing it to store a wider range of biometric data and permitting alerts to be created to protect children who are at risk of going missing. There are some changes we will seek, in particular to maintain Member States' control over when alerts are created, but the Government believes we will be in a better position to do this by not opting out and remaining full participants in the negotiation.

The Proposed Returns Regulation would allow Member States to use SIS II to circulate alerts on non-EEA nationals who have been made subject to removal decisions. Therefore, the UK will not opt in to the draft Returns Regulation.

The decisions announced here have no implications for our general opt out from the internal border-free zone established by Schengen.

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, or opt out of, 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.

■ **Home Office Science Advisory Non-Departmental Public Bodies**

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd): [\[HCWS92\]](#)

On 21 July 2014, my predecessor, Home Secretary Theresa May, announced in Parliament, through a Written Ministerial Statement, the commencement of the triennial review of the Home Office Science Advisory Non-Departmental Public Bodies: the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD); the Animals in Science Committee (ASC); and the National DNA Database Ethics Group (NDNADEG). I am now pleased to announce the completion of the review.

The ACMD, ASC and NDNADEG are independent bodies that advise ministers on scientific issues.

The review concludes that the functions performed by the ACMD, the ASC and the NDNADEG are still required and that they should be retained as non-departmental public bodies. The review concludes that the control and governance arrangements are robust and compliant with the principles set out in the Principles of Good Corporate Governance for Advisory NDPBs, the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory NDPBs and the Principles of Scientific Advice to Government.

The review recommends that the remit of the NDNADEG should be extended to cover the ethical issues associated with all forensic identification techniques including facial recognition technology and fingerprinting, and the collection and retention of biometric data. This recommendation has been accepted and therefore the name of the NDNADEG will change to the Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group. The review also makes two recommendations in relation to accountability of Ministers for the bodies: that the Chair of the NDNADEG should meet a Home Office Minister in the next twelve months; and an annual report should be published for the ASC and ACMD. Both recommendations have been accepted.

The full report of the triennial review of the ACMD, the ASC and the NDNADEG can be found on the GOV.UK website and copies have been placed in the House Library.

■ **Introduction of a modified process for newly naturalised passport applicants**

The Minister of State for Immigration (Brandon Lewis): [\[HCWS97\]](#)

I am writing to advise you that Her Majesty's Passport Office are introducing changes to their interviewing processes.

HM Passport Office reserves the right to call any passport applicant for an identity interview. However, where the identity of a newly naturalised British citizen can be confirmed using records already held by UK Visas & Immigration, they will not be routinely required to attend an interview as part of their first UK passport application.

The new process maintains our high standards of identity assurance but removes an unnecessary burden on newly naturalised citizens by no longer requiring them to confirm their identity twice to the Home Office before being issued with a UK passport.

■ **Proposed Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Mutual Recognition of Freezing & Confiscation Orders COM (2016) 819 final**

The Minister of State for Security (Mr Ben Wallace): [\[HCWS101\]](#)

The Government has decided that the UK will opt in to the Regulation on the Mutual Recognition of Freezing and Confiscation Orders.

The proposed Regulation would replace and build upon the existing mutual recognition framework which is currently in two existing instruments – the Council Framework Decision on the execution in the European Union of orders of freezing property of evidence (2003/577/JHA) and the Council Framework Decision (2006/783/JHA) on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to confiscation orders. These Framework Decisions were transposed into UK law in 2014.

Through our Serious Organised Crime Strategy and Action Plan for anti-money laundering and counter terrorist finance, we have made it clear that being able to recover criminal monies is a priority. The proposed Regulation will bring benefits to the UK through strengthening the ability of our operational agencies to have our orders recognised and executed, particularly in countries which have traditionally been slower to assist in cross border asset recovery cases.

The UK's experience of the existing Framework Decisions has been positive, although numbers of mutual recognition requests are limited due to the short time (since 2014) that the Decisions have been fully transposed in UK law. Asset recovery in some EU states has traditionally been difficult through mutual legal assistance routes, which are lengthy and cumbersome.

Opting into this measure is also consistent with the UK's approach to participating in EU mutual recognition measures to improve practical cooperation between Member States. Opting in at this point shows our continued positive engagement with this measure, and demonstrates our commitment to work together with our European partners to fight crime and prevent terrorism now and after we leave the European Union.

■ **Publication of Annual JHA Opt-in Reports to Parliament**

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd): [\[HCWS94\]](#)

The Home Office and Ministry of Justice have prepared the Sixth and Seventh Annual Reports to Parliament on the Application of Protocols 19 and 21 to the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) ('the Treaties') in Relation to EU Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Matters (Cm 9488). The Reports, which are today being laid before the House, are submitted on behalf of both my own Department and that of the Justice Secretary. Copies of the Command Paper are available from the Vote Office and on Gov.uk.

On 9 June 2008, the then Leader of the House of Lords committed to table a report in Parliament each year setting out the decisions taken by the Government in accordance with Protocol 21 ('the Justice and Home Affairs opt-in Protocol') and to make that report available for debate. These commitments were designed to ensure that the views of the Scrutiny Committees should inform the Government's decision-making process.

The Sixth Report covers decisions taken over the period 1 December 2014 – 30 November 2015. In that period, decisions on UK participation in 23 EU JHA legislative proposals have been taken. The UK has decided to opt in under the JHA opt-in Protocol in 11 cases and has decided not to opt in in 13 cases (this includes one decision on an international agreement where the UK opted into one set of JHA provisions in the measure, and did not opt into another). The Government has not asserted the Schengen opt-out to any proposals during that period.

The Seventh Report covers decisions taken over the period 1 December 2015 – 30 November 2016. In that period, decisions on UK participation in 36 EU JHA legislative proposals have been taken. The UK has decided to opt in under the JHA opt-in Protocol in 12 cases and has decided not to opt in in 24 cases. The Government has not asserted the Schengen opt-out to any proposals during that period.

These opt-in decisions are without prejudice to discussions on the UK's future relationship with the EU. The UK's relationship with the EU will change as a result of leaving the EU, however, the UK retains the rights and obligations of membership of the EU whilst we remain a member.

■ **Publications relating to the former independent reviewer of terrorist legislation**

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd): [\[HCWS105\]](#)

In November 2013, the then Home Secretary asked David Anderson QC to conduct a review of the framework of the UK's Deportation with Assurances (DWA) policy, and to make recommendations on how the policy might be strengthened or improved, with particular emphasis on its legal aspects. I am pleased to be publishing his report today (Cm 9462). I can confirm that no redactions have been made to the report.

In accordance with section 36(5) of the Terrorism Act 2006, David Anderson QC, the former Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, prepared a report on the operation in 2015 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and Part 1 of the Terrorism Act 2006, which was laid before the House on 1 December 2016. I have carefully considered its recommendations and observations. I am today laying before the House the Government's response (Cm 9489).

I am very grateful to David Anderson for his work on both reports

Copies of David Anderson's report into DWA, and the Government's response to his section 36(5) report will be available in the Vote Office and on GOV.UK.

■ Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules

The Minister of State for Immigration (Brandon Lewis): [\[HCWS95\]](#)

My right hon Friend the Home Secretary is today laying before the House a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules (HC 290).

The purpose of the changes is to give effect to the Supreme Court judgment in *MM (Lebanon) & Others*, handed down on 22 February 2017.

The changes, together with changes to the Secretary of State's guidance to decision-makers, are intended to give effect to the judgment's findings in respect of, firstly, the income sources which may be relied upon to meet the minimum income requirement in specified exceptional circumstances; and, secondly, the duty to have regard to the welfare of children under section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009. They also make other minor amendments and clarifications to the family Immigration Rules.

■ Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (01 March 2017 to 31 May 2017)

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd): [\[HCWS98\]](#)

Section 19(1) of the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011 (the Act) requires the Secretary of State to report to Parliament as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of every relevant three-month period on the exercise of her TPIM powers under the Act during that period.

The level of information provided will always be subject to slight variations based on operational advice.

TPIM NOTICES IN FORCE (AS OF 31 MAY 2017)	6
TPIM notices in respect of British citizens (as of 31 May 2017)	5
TPIM notices extended (during the reporting period)	0
TPIM notices revoked (during the reporting period)	1
TPIM notices revived (during the reporting period)	1
Variations made to measures specified in TPIM notices (during the reporting period)	10
Applications to vary measures specified in TPIM notices refused (during the reporting period)	3

TPIM NOTICES IN FORCE (AS OF 31 MAY 2017) 6

The number of current subjects relocated under TPIM legislation (as of 31 May 2017) 6

The TPIM Review Group (TRG) keeps every TPIM notice under regular and formal review. The most recent TRG meetings took place on 26 and 30 June, and 3 and 4 July.

The case of *Secretary of State for the Home Department v EC and EG* [2017] EWHC 795 (Admin) was heard again at the High Court between 24 January and 2 February 2017. In a judgment handed down on 11 April 2017 Mr Justice Collins upheld the Secretary of State's decision to impose a TPIM notice on EC and EG. This judgement can be found at www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2017/795.html.

JUSTICE

■ Update on the Lugano and Hague Conventions

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Mr David Lidington):
[[HCWS102](#)]

“The United Kingdom has opted in to the following Council Decisions:

(i) Council Decision of 7 February 2013, authorising the opening of negotiations on agreements between the EU and Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland in the areas of cross-border service of judicial and non-judicial documents and the taking of evidence in civil and commercial proceedings. (Norway, Iceland and Switzerland are commonly referred to as the Lugano States).

The negotiating mandates set out the position of the EU in discussions on the prospects for agreements between those States in the areas of cross-border service of judicial and non-judicial documents and taking of evidence in civil and commercial proceedings.

There have been three rounds of discussions so far, and final agreements have yet to be reached. The decision of the then Government in 2013 to opt in to the negotiating mandates does not commit this Government to opt in to future EU agreements in these spheres. I will update the House as further information becomes available.

(ii) Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations on a Convention on the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (the Judgments Convention) in the framework of the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

The negotiating mandate of May 2016 sets out the position of the EU in discussions at a Hague Conference level on the prospects for an international Convention which would set out rules for the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters, delivered by foreign courts.

Detailed discussions on the form of a Convention text began in June 2016 and will continue among EU Member States and at Hague Conference level for some time to come. The next Hague Conference Special Commission to discuss the project will take place in November 2017.

Opting in to the EU negotiating mandate does not commit the UK Government to accede to any future Convention.

Due to an oversight, a Written Ministerial Statement on these Council Decisions has not thus far been placed before both Houses, for which I apologise”.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Machinery of Government Changes: Home Buying Policy, Commonhold Law, and Protected Persons

Prime Minister (Mrs Theresa May):

[\[HCWS88\]](#)

This written statement confirms three machinery of Government changes

Responsibility for home buying policy, including estate agent regulation, will transfer from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to the Department for Communities and Local Government. Responsibility for commonhold law will transfer from the Ministry of Justice to the Department for Communities and Local Government. These changes will be effective immediately

Responsibility for protected persons policy will transfer from the Ministry of Justice to the Home Office. This change will be effective immediately.

SCOTLAND

■ Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal

Secretary of State for Scotland (David Mundell):

[\[HCWS103\]](#)

In March 2016, the Government announced their intention to negotiate a city region deal for Edinburgh and South East Scotland. As well as deals across England and Wales, this follows the successful agreement of city region deals for Glasgow and Clyde Valley, Inverness and the Highlands and Aberdeen City Region.

I can today inform the House that the Government has reached agreement with the Scottish Government and regional partners on a Heads of Terms for a City Region Deal for Edinburgh and South East Scotland.

This deal will bring in excess of £1 billion of investment into the Scottish capital city region. Local partners’ aspirations are that this investment will create in excess of 21,000 good quality jobs.

Central to the investment is the UK Government contribution of up to £300 million, which is being matched by Scottish Government. This investment is expected to unlock a

considerable further investment from the city-region's universities, higher education sector and the private sector.

UK Government investment will support local partners in delivering their ambition to make Edinburgh a leader in data-driven innovation. Building on existing regional excellence in R&D and innovation, the investment will see significant investments in digital infrastructure and data storage as well as the development of five R&D hubs across the city-region. These hubs will focus on growth in key sectors of the local economy such as data science, robotics, financial services, creative tech and agri-tech.

We will also deliver our manifesto commitment to support a new concert hall in Edinburgh, meeting the need for a mid-sized venue in the city.

Projects and programmes announced in the Heads of Terms document will be subject to the development and approval of business cases. Moving forward, the Government will work with the Scottish Government and the civic, academic and business leaders of Edinburgh and South East Scotland to ensure the successful implementation of the deal.

This represents an important step in delivering the UK Government's commitment to a city deal for each of Scotland's cities, as we work to strengthen the Union and build a United Kingdom that works for everyone.

TRANSPORT

■ High Level Output Specification

Secretary of State for Transport (Chris Grayling):

[[HCWS86](#)]

I am today publishing my High Level Output Specification (HLOS) and initial Statement of Funds Available (SOFA) for the railway for Control Period 6, which covers the years 2019 to 2024.

The Government is determined that the railway becomes more focused on issues that matter most to passengers – such as punctuality and reliability. A more reliable railway also plays a critical role in underpinning economic growth and bringing the country together. The Government is committed to taking action to achieve these outcomes.

The HLOS is therefore focussed on the operation, maintenance and renewal of the existing railway – the areas of activity that will deliver a more reliable railway for passengers. The Government is already delivering significant enhancements to the railway, including High Speed 2 and Crossrail and it expects to continue to invest in the enhancement to the wider rail network in the next Control Period. In light of the findings of the Bowe Review, which emphasised the need to enable better planning, cost control and alignment with the needs of users of the railway Government will take forward the funding of these enhancements separately. The Government is developing a new process for delivering enhancements and intends to publish more information on this in the Autumn.

On the basis of independent advice from the Office of Rail and Road, as well as from the rail industry, the Government has agreed that an increased volume of renewals activity will be needed over the course of Control Period 6, to maintain safety and improve on

current levels of reliability and punctuality, which in places fall short of the levels that passengers rightly expect. This enhanced programme of renewals will be supported by appropriate volumes of operations and maintenance activity required to maintain safety and improve the reliability and punctuality of train services.

Before committing to the specific levels of funding required, I have decided that the Government requires more assurance on the likely costs of the work programme. Network Rail's progress on improving its efficiency in recent years has fallen short of my expectations. Improving efficiency is vital if we are to maximise the value of taxpayer spending on the railway in driving improvements for passengers and freight shippers.

The Government will therefore carry out further work to examine the approach to setting appropriate levels of maintenance and renewals activity for Control Period 6 and to improving Network Rail's efficiency. This will enable me to confirm the extent of Government's funding envelope through the publication of a Statement of Funds Available by 13 October 2017. This work will draw on a number of sources, including the new independent review of progress on efficiency planning which the regulator has commissioned

Alongside the publication of the HLOS, I am issuing new statutory guidance to the independent Office of Rail and Road. This sets out my priorities for rail regulation. These include supporting the ORR's work to improve Network Rail's efficiency and improving the experience of users of the railway.

I am placing copies of the HLOS and SOFA, and of the statutory guidance to the Office of Rail and Road, to be placed in the libraries of the House.

Attachments:

1. HLOS [170720 - High Level Output Specification.pdf]
2. Office of Rail and Road guidance [170720 - ORR guidance.pdf]

■ **Rail update**

Secretary of State for Transport (Chris Grayling):

[[HCWS85](#)]

I wish to inform the House about some important developments regarding the rail networks of the Midland Main Line, South Wales and the North of England.

Passenger numbers on the UK rail network have more than doubled since privatisation 20 years ago and our country's railways need to adapt and change to be able to meet current and future demand. Therefore we are delivering the largest upgrade of the rail network since Victorian times, including modernising rail services and infrastructure on the Great Western Main Line, Midland Main Line and in the North.

Technology is advancing quickly, and this Government is committed to using the best available technologies to improve each part of the network. New bi-mode train technology offers seamless transfer from diesel power to electric that is undetectable to passengers. The industry is also developing alternative fuel trains, using battery and hydrogen power. This means that we no longer need to electrify every line to achieve the same significant improvements to journeys, and we will only electrify lines where it delivers a genuine benefit to passengers.

These new technologies mean that we can improve journeys for passengers on the Great Western Main Line in South Wales, the Midland Main Line, and on the Lakes Line between Windermere and Oxenholme sooner than expected with state of the art trains, instead of carrying out disruptive electrification works along the whole of these routes.

Midlands

The competition to find the next operator for the Midland Main Line is underway. Our goals for the next East Midlands franchise are to improve journeys for passengers, drive even stronger economic growth and support investment across the whole region. We want to hear from passengers and local communities about the next rail franchise to ensure it delivers the services that passengers want. I am therefore pleased to inform the House that my Department is today launching a public consultation on the next franchise. The consultation, which will run for 12 weeks from today, will help to inform and develop the franchise specification for inclusion in the Invitation to Tender. The consultation is available online and will also include a number of local stakeholder events.

The next East Midlands franchise will help drive the Midlands Engine and improve passenger journeys by maximising the passenger benefits of the significant upgrade of the Midland Main Line, the biggest investment in the route since it was completed in 1870. The upgrade will enable reduced journey times and more seats for long distance passengers during the peaks, as well as more capacity for commuters with dedicated services with longer trains. Journeys will improve from 2020 and, once the full benefits are realised, there will be almost twice as many seats into London St Pancras in the peak compared to today.

The next operator will be required to deliver modern, fast and efficient trains. This includes a brand new fleet of bi-mode intercity trains from 2022, delivering more seats and comfort for long-distance passengers. The provision of these trains will replace plans to electrify the line north of Kettering to Sheffield and Nottingham, improving journeys sooner, without the need for wires and masts on the whole route, and causing less disruption to services. We do not intend to proceed with plans to electrify the line from Kettering to Sheffield and Nottingham, and there will be further investment to come to ensure Sheffield is HS2-ready.

Wales

From Autumn 2017, passengers in Wales will benefit from new Intercity Express trains which will each deliver over 130 more seats, faster journey times and improved connectivity for South Wales to London with 40% more seats in the morning peak once the full fleet is in service.

These innovative new trains switch seamlessly between electric and diesel power, delivering faster journeys and more seats for passengers without disruptive work to put up wires and masts along routes where they are no longer required.

Rapid delivery of passenger benefits, minimising disruption and engineering work should always be our priority and as technology changes we must we must reconsider our

approach to modernising the railways. We will only electrify lines where it provides a genuine benefit to passengers which cannot be achieved through other technologies.

As a result, we no longer need to electrify the Great Western route west of Cardiff. In addition to the new trains, Network Rail will develop further options to improve journeys for passengers in Wales. These will include, but not be limited to:

- Improving journeys times and connections between Swansea and Cardiff, and South Wales, Bristol and London
- Improving journeys times and connections across North Wales
- Direct services from Pembroke Dock to London via Carmarthen on new, state of the art Intercity Express trains
- Station improvements at Cardiff Station
- Station improvements in and around Swansea including looking at the case for additional provision

I also support a proposal for Wales' first privately funded railway station at St Mellons. My Department will work with the promoters of the scheme as they develop their plans to the next stage.

The first new Intercity Express trains will enter service from this October and once the whole fleet is introduced and electrification to Cardiff is complete journey times between Swansea, London and other stations along the route will be approximately 15 minutes shorter.

The North

We are investing in the Northern Powerhouse, upgrading rail services across one of the country's largest networks to improve connections between towns and cities. Passengers in the Lake District will benefit from double the number of direct services to Manchester Airport from May 2018. From 2019, there will be brand new trains with more seats and better on-board facilities including air conditioning, toilets, free wi-fi and plug sockets, subject to business case.

We have listened to concerns about electrification gantries spoiling protected landscapes. Northern, the train operator, will therefore begin work to explore the possibility of deploying alternative-fuel trains on the route by 2021, improving comfort and on-board facilities for passengers whilst protecting the sensitive environment of this World Heritage Site. This trial will pilot an alternative-fuelled train, removing the need to construct intrusive wires and masts in this National Park. Journeys between Windermere and Manchester Airport will be improved sooner and with less disruption to services and local communities. This replaces plans to electrify the line between Windermere and Oxenholme.

This investment is a part of the Great North Rail Project, which will deliver more frequent trains and new direct services on the West Coast Main Line, with faster journeys and increased frequency into and through Manchester from across the North West. It will boost access to jobs and new opportunities, growing the Northern Powerhouse by

improving connections between the Lake District and the Manchester Airport international gateway.

Train operators and Network Rail will need to work as one to deliver these upgrades and introduce the new fleets in a way which ensures passengers experience better journeys as soon as possible.

Rail Franchise Schedule

The Government has also today published the updated Rail Franchise Schedule, which includes changes to the timescales for the East Midlands, Cross Country and West Midlands rail franchises. A copy of the schedule will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Attachments:

1. Rail Franchise Schedule [170720 Rail Franchise Schedule.pdf]