



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 15 November 2017 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:39 P.M., 15 November 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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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Charities: Living Wage

**Mr Steve Reed:**

[\[112137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that charity staff are paid at least the living wage.

**Margot James:**

The National Living Wage is the minimum rate of hourly pay workers aged 25 and over are entitled to by law. Workers younger than 25 should receive at least the National Minimum Wage rate, which varies according to their age and whether they are an apprentice or not.

Everyone who is entitled to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or National Living Wage (NLW) should receive it. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) investigates every complaint it receives and workers can call the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) Helpline (on 0300 123 1100) for information and guidance about the NMW, or visit their website ( [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk) ).

The Government continues to invest heavily in minimum wage enforcement, increasing the budget to £25.3 million for 2017/18, up from £13 million in 2015/16 and is committed to driving compliance across all sectors of the economy.

#### ■ Consumers

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[112225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the level of consumer detriment in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

**Margot James:**

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills published an assessment of Consumer Detriment in 2014. The Government works with key stakeholders in the consumer landscape through the Consumer Protection Partnership<sup>[1]</sup> to better identify, prioritise and coordinate collective action to tackle the issues causing greatest harm to consumers.

Individual partners have produced assessments of consumer detriment such as the "Consumer Detriment" report published by Citizens Advice in September 2016.

The Government is committed to tackling consumer detriment and will be publishing a consumer green paper.

[1] Members of the CPP are as follows: National Trading Standards (NTS), Citizens Advice, Citizens Advice Scotland, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Department for the Economy

in Northern Ireland (DfE), the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI), the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (CCNI), and the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA).

## ■ Consumers: Artificial Intelligence

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[112379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2017 to Question 8812, if he will make an assessment of the effect of artificial intelligence on consumer rights.

**Margot James:**

The Government will issue a Consumer Green Paper in due course that will tackle areas where markets are not working for consumers and businesses.

## ■ EU Grants and Loans

**Kate Green:** [\[112113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 6 November 2017 to Question 110674, what the deadline is for making a decision on whether EU Structural and Investment projects that have been signed since the Autumn Statement 2016 meet the criteria for providing strong value for money and are in line with domestic strategic priorities.

**Kate Green:** [\[112114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and which of the EU Structural and Investment projects that have been signed since the Autumn Statement 2016 will be guaranteed by the Government on the grounds that they provide strong value for money and are in line with domestic strategic priorities.

**Margot James:**

Government departments responsible for EU Structural and Investment Funds assess whether projects provide strong value for money and are in line with domestic strategic priorities as part of their processes for approving projects. Therefore, all EU Structural and Investment Funds projects signed to date, including those signed after Autumn Statement 2016, will be guaranteed by the Government after the UK leaves the EU.

## ■ Intellectual Property: Social Media

**Pete Wishart:** [\[111957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Intellectual Property Office report, Share and share alike, published on 20 July 2017, what steps are being taken to address intellectual priority infringement through social media.

**Joseph Johnson:**

Operation Jasper is an initiative that is led by National Trading Standards E Crime Unit and supported by industry, law enforcement and Government to reduce the availability of counterfeit and pirated goods on offer via social media. Jasper has been running since 2015 and has delivered over 12,000 de-listings, the removal of over 75 full profiles and over 100 raid actions. As a result of this work several thousand counterfeit and pirated products have been seized.

**■ Minimum Wage: Enforcement****Grahame Morris:****[111716]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will place a copy in the Library of the service level agreement between his Department and the HM Revenue and Customs National Minimum Wage Enforcement Team.

**Margot James:**

The Government publishes detail on the enforcement policy HMRC delivers here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enforcing-national-minimum-wage-law>.

The Government has also published detail on HMRC's work in enforcing the NMW here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-minimum-wage-government-evidence-to-the-low-pay-commission-on-compliance-and-enforcement-2017>.

**■ Nuclear Power****Sammy Wilson:****[111549]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits of small-scale nuclear reactors to the provision of electricity in the UK.

**Richard Harrington:**

Government recognises the potential long-term value of small modular reactor (SMR) technology. To explore this potential Government commissioned a feasibility study to assess the technical, economic and commercial case for SMRs. This study, led by National Nuclear Laboratory, was published in December 2014.

In order to further assess the benefits and risks of SMR deployment a more detailed techno-economic assessment of SMRs was commissioned in 2015. The techno-economic assessment of SMRs, alongside engagement with industry, is being used to inform policy development.

In addition BEIS commissioned a study on micro reactors (2016) and a SMR cost reduction study (2017).

Government expects to make further announcements on the next steps for SMRs, including publication of the techno-economic assessment, in the coming months.

**■ Nuclear Power: Small Businesses****Chi Onwurah:** [\[112441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with small businesses in the nuclear sector on his Department's sector deal for the nuclear industry.

**Richard Harrington:**

Work on proposals for a Nuclear Sector Deal has been led by Lord Hutton, as chair of the Nuclear Industry Association (NIA) and co-chair of the Nuclear Industry Council, on which small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are represented. The NIA informs us it has hosted a series of engagement workshops across the country in the development of the potential deal, including with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), and these were well attended by several SMEs.

**■ Nuclear Reactors: Research****Sammy Wilson:** [\[111615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what funding his Department has allocated to research into the development of small-scale nuclear reactors in each of the last five years.

**Richard Harrington:**

Government funding for small modular reactors (SMRs) should be seen in the context of the wider nuclear innovation programme where Government, Innovate UK, Research Councils and BEIS expect to invest £460m in nuclear research and development. As part of this commitment the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will allocate £180m to nuclear innovation.

An initial £20m of funding was announced in 2016 to support the development of a range of technology options including small scale nuclear. Funding of £7m for regulators to support industry as well as advance their knowledge of smaller nuclear reactors has also been announced (2017).

In addition the Department has also funded a number of studies including £400k for the National Nuclear Laboratory Small Modular Reactor (SMR) Feasibility Report (2014), £4.5m for the Techno-Economic Assessment of SMRs (2015/16), £40k for a micro reactor study (2016) and £30k for an SMR cost reduction study (2017).

**■ Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit: Finance****Pete Wishart:** [\[112106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to ensure sustainable, long-term funding for the Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit.

**Joseph Johnson:**

Earlier this year the Government confirmed further funding for the Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit up to 2019. Discussions are currently underway on options to ensure the future sustainability of the Unit beyond that date.

**Productivity****Chi Onwurah:**[\[112442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits to productivity of increased (a) use of artificial intelligence and (b) machine learning.

**Claire Perry:**

The earliest adopters of new technologies can gain a first-mover advantage, allowing them to reap rewards in terms of additional jobs and increased revenue.

Artificial intelligence and machine learning are distinct technologies. 'AI' describes where computers are able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as visual perception, decision-making and translation between languages; 'machine learning' comprises deeper learning where computers are able to learn without external programming, building on algorithms that can make predictions using data. However, for the purposes of identifying support for and development in the sector, it is useful to treat them as a group.

Government welcomes the independent review of Artificial Intelligence, "Growing the Artificial Intelligence Industry in the UK", published on 15 October. The report highlights how AI can boost UK productivity, and has the potential to add £630 billion to the UK economy by 2035.

The Industrial Strategy Green Paper, published in January, also identified AI as a major, high-potential opportunity for the UK to build a world-leading future sector of our economy.

**Redundancy****Bill Esterson:**[\[112363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2017 to Question 111066, on Britvic: Norwich, whether employers are required to issue form HR1 when they are considering significant job losses; and whether they are required to notify recognised trade unions when that form is issued.

**Margot James:**

Under Section 193 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (TULRCA), an employer should notify my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State where it is proposed to dismiss as redundant 20 or more employees from one establishment in 90 days or fewer. The Insolvency Service receives advanced notification of redundancies on behalf of the Secretary of State on form HR1.

There are set notification periods that a company needs to comply with. These are:

- 45 days for 100 or more redundancies, or
- 30 days for 20 to 99 redundancies

The information provided to the Secretary of State is commercially confidential and for the purpose of providing those facing redundancy with assistance such as training and job seeking advice. It is therefore shared with other Government Departments and Agencies, such as Job Centre Plus, who provide these services.

At the same time, Section 188 TULRCA requires that where there is a proposal to dismiss as redundant 20 or more employees from one establishment in 90 days or less there is also a need for the employer to commence consultation about the dismissals with all persons who are appropriate representatives of any of the employees who may be affected by the proposed dismissals or may be affected by measures taken in connection with those dismissals. This would include any recognised trade unions.

The employer is also obliged to provide a copy of the advance notification provided to the Secretary of State to the appropriate representatives with whom they are consulting.

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[112364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2017 to Question 111066, on Britvic: Norwich, what advice the Insolvency Service provides to companies in the event that they are considering significant job losses.

**Margot James:**

The Insolvency Service does not provide advice to employers. However if approached will provide information to both employers and employees about statutory entitlements and obligations.

If the employer is in formal insolvency, and significant job losses are to occur, the Insolvency Service will provide advice to the affected employees about how they may claim for redundancy and other employment related money owed.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Brexit

**Tommy Sheppard:**

[\[105335\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many full-time equivalent civil servants have been assigned work on the UK leaving the EU in the last 12 months; and what estimate he has made of the cost of that work.

**Caroline Nokes:**

Workforce planning is primarily the responsibility of each department. The Civil Service constantly reviews its capabilities in order to deliver the Government's

commitment to leave the EU and get the best deal for the UK. Civil Service HR is working with all departments across the Civil Service to better understand their capacity and capability requirements.

#### ■ **Cancer: Death**

**Henry Smith:** [\[111847\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many deaths resulted from (a) breast, (b) cervical and (c) prostate cancer in (i) 2015-16 and (ii) 2016-17.

**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 [PQ111847 (1).pdf]

#### ■ **Childbirth**

**Eddie Hughes:** [\[112439\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many babies have been born in NHS hospitals in each region of the UK in each of the last five years.

**Chris Skidmore:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA response [PQ112439 final.pdf]

#### ■ **Death: Babies**

**Eddie Hughes:** [\[112438\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many babies have died as a result of neonatal (a) sepsis, (b) meningitis and (c) pneumonia in NHS hospitals in each region of the UK in each of the last five years.

**Chris Skidmore:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA response [PQ112438.pdf]

#### ■ **Immigration: Kuwait**

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[112005\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of Kuwaiti Bidoons resident in the UK.

**Chris Skidmore:**

*[Holding answer 13 November 2017]:* The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA response [PQ112005.pdf]

**TREASURY**■ **Administration of Estates**

**Jessica Morden:** [\[112369\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many properties have been subject to escheat under the Crown Estate in each of the last five years.

**Jessica Morden:** [\[112370\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the amount of land covered by properties escheating to the Crown Estate.

**Jessica Morden:** [\[112371\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many properties escheating to the Crown Estate were disposed of in each year since 2000.

**Jessica Morden:** [\[112372\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the (a) total and (b) average value of properties escheated to the Crown Estate has been in each of the last five years.

**Jessica Morden:** [\[112373\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the average length of time is for properties to remain subject to escheat under the Crown Estate.

**Andrew Jones:**

It is not possible to identify the number of properties that have become subject to escheat over the last five years, as The Crown Estate is reliant upon third parties notifying it of the events which may lead to escheat. However, I can provide the below information on the number of properties notified to The Crown Estate as escheat and the number of properties sold in the given years. The figures for total number of properties sold between 2000 and 2006 are not immediately available.

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROPERTIES NOTIFIED TO THE CROWN ESTATE	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROPERTIES SOLD
2007/8	220	50
2008/9	412	37
2009/10	410	37

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YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROPERTIES NOTIFIED TO THE CROWN ESTATE	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROPERTIES SOLD
2010/11	465	38
2011/12	577	38
2012/13	776	40
2013/14	1,060	33
2014/15	824	34
2015/16	708	21
2016/17	779	37

A wide range of properties can become subject to escheat, from a strip of land following road works to the assets of a lapsed property management company. More substantive properties represent a small proportion of all escheat properties. Properties usually become subject to escheat as they have been renounced, and they therefore tend to be low value or subject to liabilities.

The value of all properties which may be subject to escheat and which have been notified to The Crown Estate is not known, as no such valuation is undertaken.

The average length of time for properties to remain subject to escheat is not readily available. Only a small proportion of properties subject to escheat is sold, and it is possible for properties to remain subject to escheat indefinitely.

It is not possible to estimate the amount of land covered by escheat properties because (a) the exact number of properties which have become subject to escheat is not known and (b) The Crown Estate does not, in its constitutional role, make enquiries in relation to properties which are subject to escheat.

## ■ Agriculture

**Mary Creagh:**

[\[111738\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has estimated the level of financial support that will be available to agriculture after 2022.

**Elizabeth Truss:**

Leaving the EU means, in future, we can take our own decisions about how to support an economy that works for everyone.

The government has promised to continue to commit the same cash total in funds for farm support until the end of the parliament. It will work with stakeholders to understand the value of EU funded programmes, including agriculture and to ensure that any ongoing funding commitments best serve the UK's national interest.

**■ Apprentices: NHS Trusts****Gareth Snell:****[111837]**

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, which NHS trusts have made apprenticeship levy payments since 6 April 2017; and how much has been paid since that date (a) by each NHS trust and (b) in total by all NHS trusts.

**Elizabeth Truss:**

Levy information of individual NHS trusts is not available due to HMRC's duty to maintain taxpayer confidentiality.

In 2016, the then Chancellor, in a letter to the Treasury Select Committee, set out an estimate of the impact of the apprenticeship levy on public sector bodies including the NHS Hospital and Community Health Service (which includes NHS Trusts) in England. This was published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-chancellor-to-chairman-of-treasury-select-committee-on-the-apprenticeship-levy>

It is only possible to accurately determine the total levy payments made by all NHS trusts at disproportionate costs. This is because HMRC administrative data is not produced in a form where NHS trusts and their associated PAYE schemes are easily identifiable.

**■ Business: Loans****Bill Esterson:****[112353]**

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2017 to Question 111359, what representations he has received from business organisations on extending the regulatory perimeter of the Financial Conduct Authority insofar as it relates to business lending.

**Stephen Barclay:**

The Chancellor receives representations from 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:

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

**■ Customs****Bill Esterson:****[112354]**

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2017 to Question 110710, what representations he has received from business organisations on the adequacy of capacity and capability of UK customs arrangements after the UK leaves the EU.

**Stephen Barclay:**

Since the referendum, the Government has undertaken a comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement throughout the UK. This engagement will help to inform effective policy development, and to deepen understanding of the impact of customs procedures on businesses.

The content of the recent Customs White Paper reflects much of the feedback that stakeholders have provided.

**■ Customs: Northern Ireland****Bill Esterson:**[\[112352\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2017 to Question 110573, what representations he has received from business organisations in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic on the adequacy of future customs arrangements in Northern Ireland after the UK leaves the EU.

**Mel Stride:**

The Government is undertaking a comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement throughout the UK, including Northern Ireland. During summer and autumn 2017 the Government has engaged with businesses and associations from across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The Government recognises the unique case of the Northern Ireland – Ireland land border, and the UK and Irish Governments, and EU Institutions, are all clear that we need to avoid a hard border. Feedback from business engagement supports this view.

**■ European Investment Bank****Chi Onwurah:**[\[112440\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on access to European Investment Bank funds by UK businesses.

**Stephen Barclay:**

The EIB has operations both in EU Member States and third countries. The future relationship between the UK and the European Investment Bank (EIB) will be determined as part of the negotiations on the UK's exit from the EU and the government will not be giving a running commentary on these negotiations.

However, in his Mansion House speech on 20 June the Chancellor said that; "In the long-term, it may be mutually beneficial to maintain a relationship between the UK and the EIB after we leave the EU." The government is looking to explore these options with the EU as part of the negotiations.

## ■ Income Tax: Tax Rates and Bands

**Bim Afolami:** [\[111774\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what effect reducing the top rate of tax from 50 per cent to 45 per cent has had on total tax receipts since 2012.

**Andrew Jones:**

HMRC does not routinely evaluate the effects of specific policies on tax receipts. The estimated cost of reducing the additional rate of income tax to 45 per cent is available on the government website, Budget 2013, page 66, table 2.2:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/budget-2013-documents>

HMRC published a detailed evaluation of the impact of the 50 per cent tax rate on the Exchequer in 2012 'The Exchequer effect of the 50 per cent additional rate of income tax'. This report contains more information on the methodology for estimating the impact of the policy, specifically in annex A:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130127161217/http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/budget2012/excheq-income-tax-2042.pdf>

## ■ Living Wage

**Mike Amesbury:** [\[112206\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to encourage businesses to pay the voluntary living wage.

**Elizabeth Truss:**

The National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage rates are the legal minimums that employers must pay their workers. The government welcomes employers opting to pay more than this when they can afford to do so, including the Living Wage Foundation's voluntary rate.

The key thing we can do as a country to increase the average wages of employees, and to ensure more businesses can pay higher wages, is to increase productivity. To address this the government is investing in infrastructure, Research & Development and skills, including the £23bn National Productivity Investment Fund.

## ■ Local Growth Deals: Scottish Borders

**John Lamont:** [\[111866\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the proposed Borderlands Growth Deal on the economies of (a) the Borderlands area, including Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk constituency, (b) Scotland and (c) the UK.

**Andrew Jones:**

The UK Government has invested almost £1 billion in City Deals in Scotland to date in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Inverness and Edinburgh. We will continue to work with the Scottish Government and local authorities to identify deals that support the economy of Scotland and the UK as whole.

## ■ Mersey Gateway Bridge: Tolls

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[112456\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what powers his Department has to direct Mersey Gateway Crossings Board on the imposition of (a) tolls and (b) Penalty Charge Notices over a defined period including 24 to 26 December 2017; and if he will make a statement.

**Elizabeth Truss:**

The administration and imposition of tolls and penalty charge notices are a matter for Halton Borough Council to decide. The powers under which the Mersey Gateway tolling regime was established gives no locus to the Government or HM Treasury to intervene.

## ■ Small Businesses: Insurance Premium Tax

**Mr Nigel Evans:**

[\[112365\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of a rise in insurance premium tax on small and medium-sized enterprises.

**Mr Nigel Evans:**

[\[112366\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of a rise in insurance premium tax on the (a) private medical insurance market and (b) NHS.

**Mr Nigel Evans:**

[\[112367\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of a rise in insurance premium tax on the affordability of motor insurance for young drivers.

**Mr Nigel Evans:**

[\[112368\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of a rise in insurance premium tax on the affordability of flood insurance for people living in areas of high flood risk.

**Mel Stride:**

Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) is a tax accounted for and paid by insurers based on the insurance premiums they receive. Pricing is a commercial decision for insurers, affected by a wide range of factors, such as repair costs, investment returns and risks posed. The taxes that they pay are only one of these factors.

## ■ Social Services: Finance

**Emma Reynolds:**

[\[112445\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to increase Government funding for adult social care.

**Elizabeth Truss:**

At Spring Budget 2017 we gave councils an additional £2 billion to fund adult social care. As a result, local government will be able to increase spending on social care in real terms this year and in each of the next two years of the Parliament.

■ **Spirits: Excise Duties**

**Christine Jardine:** [112267]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how the rate of excise duty per litre of pure alcohol on spirits in the UK compares with that of other EU countries.

**Andrew Jones:**

Information about alcohol duty rates by EU countries can be found in the "EXCISE DUTY TABLES (Alcoholic beverages)." document published online at:

[https://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/sites/taxation/files/resources/documents/taxation/excise\\_duties/alcoholic\\_beverages/rates/excise\\_duties-part\\_i\\_alcohol\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/sites/taxation/files/resources/documents/taxation/excise_duties/alcoholic_beverages/rates/excise_duties-part_i_alcohol_en.pdf)

■ **Tax Avoidance: Disclosure of Information**

**John McDonnell:** [112080]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether any of the skilled persons reports submitted under section 166 of Financial Services and Markets Authority Act were prepared by a party engaged in tax avoidance schemes rejected by tax courts and tribunals.

**John McDonnell:** [112081]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward legislative proposals so that a person engaged in tax avoidance is prohibited from preparing the skilled persons report under section 166 of the Financial Services and Markets Authority Act.

**Stephen Barclay:**

The selection of a party to conduct a skilled person review under section 166 of the Financial Services and Markets Act (2000), as amended by the Financial Services Act (2012), is a matter for the independent regulators. To enable the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) to contract directly with the skilled person firm, the FCA and the PRA have developed a Skilled Person Panel in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

■ **Treasury: Telephone Services**

**Jon Trickett:** [111487]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, which public telephone lines for his Department's services are charged at higher rates; and how much was taken by each such telephone line in the last 12 months.

**Andrew Jones:**

Public telephone lines used by the Department do not incur higher rate charges.

There were no associated funds for calls received from the public telephone lines by the Department over the last 12 months.

**Valuation Office Agency: Complaints****Chris Ruane:**[\[111706\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many complaints have been received in relation to the Valuation Office's online system in the last 12 months.

**Mel Stride:**

I refer the honourable member to the answer provided at UIN HC111194 on numbers of complaints about the Check, Challenge, Appeal system.

**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****Department for Communities and Local Government: Staff****Ian C. Lucas:**[\[111792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many staff appointed after 24 June 2016 in his Department hold a post that includes work on the UK leaving the EU.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

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 coordinating planning. Within the Department for Communities and Local Government, staff within the EU Exit Team lead on providing advice to Ministers on EU exit and exit-related issues. Members of staff across the Department also provide advice and analysis on EU Exit issues as required. Given the interactions between EU exit work and the Department's other priorities, it would not be possible to give an accurate figure.

**Fracking: Planning Permission****Justin Madders:**[\[111182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November 2017 to Question 109056, on Fracking: planning permission, whether he intends to make those changes to planning law through the use of primary or secondary legislation; and when he intends to bring forward that legislation.

**Alok Sharma:**

The Government is considering how it will bring major shale planning decisions under the National Planning Regime and will announce our preferred way forward in due course.

**■ Gazumping**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[111624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will introduce legislative proposals to prevent gazumping by compelling vendors to sell their properties to accepted bidders.

**Alok Sharma:**

On 22 October my Department launched a Call for Evidence on the home buying and selling process. We have asked how we should best tackle gazumping, and will develop plans in the light of this feedback.

**■ Landlord and Tenant**

**Shabana Mahmood:** [\[111820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of existing legislation to allow landlords to access let properties to rectify problems that threaten the safety of other residents and the wider community.

**Alok Sharma:**

The Housing Act 1988 provides that it is an implied term of every assured tenancy that a tenant shall give the landlord access to the property in order to carry out any necessary repairs. This approach strikes a reasonable balance between the tenant's right to peaceful enjoyment of their home and the landlord's ability to gain access to their property when a repair needs to be carried out.

**■ Private Rented Housing: Safety**

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[111496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2017 to Question 109734, on private rented housing: safety, if he will place in the Library a copy of the report and recommendations from the working group.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[111500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2017 to Question 109734, on private rented housing: safety, whether he plans to undertake a consultation on the report and recommendations of the working group.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[111501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2017 to Question 109734, on private rented housing: safety, if he will place in the Library a copy of the minutes of the four meetings of the working group.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

**[111502]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2017 to Question 109734, on private rented housing: safety, who the members of the working group are.

**Alok Sharma:**

The report and recommendations of the Private Rented Sector Electrical Safety Standards Working Group has been published online at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electrical-safety-standards-in-the-private-rented-sector-working-group-report>

Members of the Working Group are listed in annex B of the report.

The Government will engage further with the sector to test the recommendations of the Working Group and ensure that any regulation introduced is balanced and works for both landlords and tenants, The Government plans to consult in the new year.

A copy of the report will be placed in the Library of the House.

## ■ Supported Housing: Learning Disability

**Sandy Martin:**

**[111933]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to provide supportive housing for adults with learning disabilities whose parents have died or who are unable to care for their children on account of age or infirmity.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

Supported housing plays an invaluable role in our society, helping some of our country's most vulnerable people, including many adults with learning disabilities, to live as independently as possible. Since 2011, we have delivered 27,000 supported housing units for disabled, vulnerable and older people. At the Autumn Statement 2015, we announced £400 million of new specialist affordable homes for the vulnerable, elderly or those with disabilities.

In addition to the work of my Department, the Department of Health has made available, through the Care and Support Specialised (CASSH) Fund, approximately £200 million to fund about 6,000 new homes, including for older people; those with learning and physical disabilities; and mental ill health.

The Department of Health is also working with colleagues in NHS England on the Transforming Care Programme. The programme aims to ensure that people with learning disabilities and/or autism, mental illness or challenging behaviour are not kept in hospitals but are cared for in line with best practice, based on their individual needs. This is in addition to the £25 million capital fund for housing and technology to support people with a learning disability to live independently. Funding has been awarded to 52 separate projects in the 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years.

Government is also helping older and disabled people to live independently and safely at home through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), which can contribute towards meeting the cost of adapting an older or disabled person's property, including people with learning disabilities. In the 2015 Spending Review DFG funding received year-on-year increases and will more than double from £220 million in 2015-16 to over £500 million by 2020.

## ■ Temporary Accommodation

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[112099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he plans to take to ensure that people are not placed in temporary accommodation for more than the legal six weeks limit.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

Time spent in temporary accommodation means people are getting help and it ensures no family is without a roof over their head. The six week limit applies to Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The law is clear that households with dependent children should only be accommodated in B&Bs in an emergency, and then no longer than six weeks.

The Government is assisting areas to ensure that families spend no longer than 6 weeks in B&Bs, which includes protecting and maintaining homelessness prevention funding at £315 million as well as providing providing extra funding to 25 areas most in need.

We are also implementing the most ambitious legislative reform in decades, the Homelessness Reduction Act, in April 2018, which will ensure that more people get help earlier to prevent them from becoming homeless in the first place.

Our new Homelessness Advice and Support Team, drawn from local authorities and the homelessness sector, will provide support leading up to and following the commencement of the Act.

In addition, we have replaced DWP's Temporary Accommodation Management Fee with a Flexible Homelessness Support Grant which local authorities can use more strategically to prevent and tackle homelessness. This amounts to £402 million over the two years from 2017/18.

Devolving the funding to local authorities will improve incentives to move families out of temporary accommodation and into settled accommodation more quickly. With more certain upfront funding local authorities will be able to tackle homelessness more pro-actively, pushing the balance of the investment away from crisis intervention and towards prevention.

## ■ Temporary Accommodation: Children

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[111516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the number of children in temporary accommodation.

**Mr Marcus Jones:**

Temporary accommodation ensures that no child is left without a roof over their head.

My Department publishes regular statistics on rough sleeping, statutory homelessness and homelessness prevention and relief in England. These are published at a local authority level. The latest statistics can be found at:

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

## DEFENCE

### ■ Navy: Northern Ireland

**Gavin Robinson:**

[\[112447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many naval assets have visited Northern Ireland in each of the last five years.

**Mark Lancaster:**

From the information held the number of naval assets that have visited Northern Ireland in each of the last five years is shown in the list below.

YEAR	NUMBER OF NAVAL ASSETS
2013	9
2014	16
2015	12
2016	14
2017 to July	10

Note: An asset may have made more than one visit to Northern Ireland in any year.

### ■ Reserve Forces

**Gavin Robinson:**

[\[112448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the budget was for each University Service Unit in each of the last five years.

**Mark Lancaster:**

The requested information for the Royal Navy and Army is provided in the attached tables.

Information on budgets for Royal Air Force University Air Squadrons and for the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme Squadrons could not be collated in the time available. I will write to the hon. Member with details as soon as possible.

**Attachments:**

1. 112448 - Royal Navy and Army UTC Budgets [20171115-112448-Gavin Robinson-UTC budgets-TABLES-SUBMITTED (2).xlsx]

**Gavin Robinson:** [\[112449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many University Service Units there are in the UK by service.

**Gavin Robinson:** [\[112450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, where each University Service Unit is in the UK.

**Mark Lancaster:**

The requested information is provided below:

**Royal Navy**

There are 15 University Royal Naval Units:

BIRMINGHAM	HMS FORWARD, BIRMINGHAM
Bristol	HMS FLYING FOX, Bristol
Cambridge	Cambridge
Devon	HMS VIVID, Plymouth
Edinburgh	Hepburn House, Edinburgh
Glasgow	University of Glasgow, Glasgow
Liverpool	HMS EAGLET, Liverpool
London	HMS PRESIDENT, London
Manchester	University Barracks, Manchester
Northumbrian	HMS Calliope, Gateshead
Oxford	Falklands House, Oxford
Southampton	National Oceanographic Centre, Southampton
Sussex	Brighton University, Brighton
Wales	HMS CAMBRIA, Sully, South Glamorgan
Yorkshire	Carlton Barracks, Leeds

**Army**

There are 15 University Officer Training Corps (UOTCs) and two Officer Training Regiments (OTRs):

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ABERDEEN UOTC	ABERDEEN UOTC, ABERDEEN.
Queen's UOTC	Queen's UOTC, Belfast
Birmingham UOTC	Birmingham UOTC, Birmingham
Bristol UOTC	Bristol UOTC, Bristol
Cambridge UOTC	Cambridge University Officers' Training Corps, Cambridge
Cambridge UOTC	UEA Detachment, Norwich
East Midlands UOTC	East Midlands UOTC, Nottingham
Edinburgh UOTC	Edinburgh UOTC, Edinburgh
Exeter UOTC	Exeter UOTC, Exeter
Glasgow and Strathclyde UOTC	Glasgow and Strathclyde UOTC, Glasgow
London UOTC	London UOTC, London
London UOTC	UOTC, Canterbury Detachment, Canterbury
Northumbrian UOTC	Northumbrian UOTC, Newcastle
North West OTR	HQ and Manchester Detachment, Manchester
North West OTR	Liverpool Detachment, Liverpool
North West OTR	Lancaster Detachment, Lancaster
Oxford UOTC	Oxford UOTC, Oxford
Southampton UOTC	Southampton UOTC, Southampton
Southampton UOTC	Brighton Detachment, Brighton
Tayforth UOTC	Tayforth UOTC, Tayforth
Tayforth UOTC	Stirling Detachment, Stirling
Tayforth UOTC	St Andrews Detachment, St Andrews
Yorkshire UOTC	HQ and Leeds Detachment, Leeds
Yorkshire UOTC	York Detachment, York
Yorkshire UOTC	Sheffield Detachment, Sheffield

ABERDEEN UOTC	ABERDEEN UOTC, ABERDEEN.
Wales UOTC	HQ and Cardiff Detachment, Cardiff
Wales UOTC	Aberystwyth Detachment, Aberystwyth
Wales UOTC	Bangor Detachment, Caernarfon
Wales UOTC	Swansea Detachment, Swansea
Wales UOTC	Wrexham Detachment, Wrexham

### Royal Air Force

There are 15 RAF University Air Squadrons (UAS's):

EAST OF SCOTLAND UAS	LEUCHARS
Glasgow and Strathclyde UAS	Glasgow
Northumbria UAS	RAF Leeming
Yorkshire UAS	RAF Linton on Ouse
Bristol UAS	RAF Colerne (currently flying from Boscombe Down)
Cambridge UAS	Cambridge
Southampton UAS	RAF Boscombe Down
Birmingham UAS	RAF Cosford
London UAS	RAF Northolt
Wales UAS	RAF St Athan
East Midlands UAS	Nottingham
Liverpool UAS	RAF Woodvale
Oxford UAS	Oxford
Manchester & Salford UAS	RAF Woodvale
Northern Ireland UAS	Aldergrove - recently reformed and not yet up to full capability.

### Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS)

In addition to the single Service units listed above, the joint Service Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme consists of four Squadrons based at Birmingham, Loughborough, Newcastle and Southampton.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Government Art Collection****Kevin Brennan:****[112462]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will list all the items obtained by the Government Art Collection in the last 10 years.

**John Glen:**

Information concerning items obtained by the Government Art Collection from 2007-2016 can be found in the annual reports, which are available here:

<http://www.gac.culture.gov.uk/reports.html>.

The 2016/17 annual report will be published shortly.

**EDUCATION****■ Children's Centres****Tracy Brabin:****[112453]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many Sure Start centres there are; and how many of those centres there were in each of the last three years.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

Since 18 September 2017, real-time data on Sure Start children's centres and children's centre linked sites has been supplied by local councils via the department's Get Information about schools (GIAS) database portal at: <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>.

Based on information supplied by local councils, there were 3,130 children's centres and sites as at 18 November 2017; 3,205 children's centres and sites at the beginning of the 2017 calendar year; 3,272 children's centres and sites at the start of the 2016 calendar year; and 3,431 children's centres and sites at the start of the 2015 calendar year.

The number of children's centres and sites is based on information supplied to the GIAS database, as at 18 November 2017. These figures may be different to previous answers, and could change again in future, since local councils may update previous entries to the database at any time.

Councils are reconfiguring services to deliver them more efficiently. Where they decide to close a children's centre, councils must demonstrate that children and families, particularly the most disadvantaged, will not be adversely affected and that they will not compromise their duty to have sufficient children's centres to meet local need.

## ■ Swimming: Special Educational Needs

**Catherine West:** [\[112355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to promote swimming for students with special needs.

**Catherine West:** [\[112356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she has taken to provide affordable access to swimming pools for students with special needs.

**Mr Robert Goodwill:**

The government's sports strategy, *Sporting Future*, published in December 2015, included a commitment to establish a working group "to advise on how to ensure no child leaves school unable to meet a minimum standard of capability and confidence in swimming, including disabled young people and those with Special Educational Needs".

In response, the Swim Group has published an independent report setting out recommendations on curriculum swimming. They investigated current provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and are conducting further research to understand the current situation.

Government has formed an implementation group to review the recommendations and work to support opportunities for all children to swim, including those with SEND.

Sport England work through Swim England to help leisure operators maximise pool usage, through pool scheduling and general management. This should support secure income streams and thereby maintain fair pricing for all users.

Sport England has invested over £5 million over the last two years in piloting ways to address some of the challenges that are commonly experienced by people who want to swim more, but feel that there are too many barriers.

## ■ Teachers: Recruitment

**Sir Edward Davey:** [\[112288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support her Department has provided to local authorities to aid recruitment of teachers and temporary supply teachers.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is in the planning stage of a new commercial framework designed to help schools with the sourcing of supply teachers. The framework will be aimed at providing improved terms and conditions, promoting better agency conduct and offering improved pricing for schools. As part of the development of the framework we have engaged with a variety of stakeholders, including schools and local authorities. It is anticipated that the new supply teacher framework will be available in September 2018.

**Sir Edward Davey:**

[\[112289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much schools have spent on advertising for teacher posts in each of the last five years.

**Sir Edward Davey:**

[\[112290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much (a) schools and (b) colleges have spent on private sector recruitment and search agencies for teacher recruitment in each in each of the last five years.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department does not have the specific data requested but it is committed to helping schools recruit teachers as efficiently as possible. We have therefore begun to develop a teacher vacancy site that will enable schools to recruit teachers without paying for advertising.

**Sir Edward Davey:**

[\[112377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the White Paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere, published in March 2016, what the timetable is for the launch of the national teacher vacancy website; and if she will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is undertaking user research with head teachers, school business managers and recruitment staff as well as returning, aspiring and newly qualified teachers, to strengthen its understanding of the issues schools face when advertising teacher vacancies and the challenges teachers have finding and applying for jobs. The Department is using this information in the development and design of a new national teacher vacancy service. We are currently at an early stage of prototyping the new service and testing, to ensure the service meets the needs of users. Depending on the outcome of this development phase, we could expect to start building a service early in 2018. We will provide further details in due course.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Animal Welfare Act 2006

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[112374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many people were (a) charged and (b) convicted of an offence under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 in each police force area, broken down by type of offences in 2016.

**George Eustice:**

The number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts and found guilty of offences under the specific sections of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 for which data

was reported, by police force area, in 2016, can be viewed in the attached table. Charging data is not held by the Ministry of Justice.

**Attachments:**

1. Offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 [Defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.docx]

■ **Environment Protection**

**Sandy Martin:**

[\[111937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to identify environmental protections which may require additional legislation when the UK leaves the EU.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

The Withdrawal Bill will make sure the whole body of existing EU environmental law continues to have effect in UK law, providing businesses and stakeholders with maximum certainty as we leave the EU.

Defra has identified where SIs or other legislative action may be needed, but this is contingent on the outcome of negotiations and implementation of legislation.

The Secretary of State has also announced that we will consult on creating a new, statutory, independent body to uphold environmental standards, and a new policy statement setting out environmental principles.

■ **Glyphosate: EU Action**

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**

[\[112358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his Department's policy is on the use of glyphosate, with particular reference to the EU's position.

**George Eustice:**

Pesticides are highly regulated in the UK and can only be used if scientific assessment establishes that they pose no unacceptable risks to people or the environment.

UK specialists participated in the European Food Safety Authority's assessment of glyphosate and support its conclusions that glyphosate meets the safety requirements for approval. The Government therefore supports the continuing approval of glyphosate.

If glyphosate is approved, we will review the authorisations of glyphosate products to ensure they meet current standards.

## ■ Meat Products: Labelling

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**

[\[112359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his Department's policy is on supermarkets and food producers being required to display methods of slaughter on meat products; and if he will make a statement.

**George Eustice:**

There is no national or EU requirement to display the method of slaughter on meat products but where this is included it must be accurate. The Government believes that consumers should have the necessary information available to them to make an informed choice about their food, and this is something we can consider in the context of leaving the EU.

## ■ Rivers: Sewage

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[111641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the level of sewage in rivers and to maintain habitat and species in and around rivers.

**Dr Thérèse Coffey:**

Protecting and improving water quality is a devolved matter and in England is the responsibility of the Environment Agency.

In the period 2015 to 2020, the water industry in England will be investing about £3.5 billion in environmental improvements. Many of these improvements are targeted at improving river water quality to support fisheries and improved habitats for wildlife. This work is a key component of River Basin Management Plans that provide the framework for protecting and improving the water environment.

Since privatisation £25 billion has been invested by the water industry in sewerage infrastructure to achieve environmental improvements. Pollutant loads to rivers from water industry discharges have declined in recent years resulting in over 10,000km of rivers that have been maintained or improved in quality.

The water industry in conjunction with the Environment Agency and Ofwat are now planning for the next investment period 2020 to 2025.

## EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

### ■ UK Delegations

**Tommy Sheppard:**

[\[111416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether the Legatum Institute, or any representative from that Institute, has taken part in any meetings in Brussels as part of a UK Government delegation in the last two years.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

I can confirm that in respect of the Department for Exiting the European Union, neither the Legatum Institute nor representatives of that organisation have taken part in meetings in Brussels as part of a UK Government Delegation.

**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE****■ British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies: Sanctions****Emily Thornberry:**[\[111740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to paragraph 1.9 of his Department's consultation response, Public consultation on the United Kingdom's future legal framework for imposing and implementing sanctions: government response, published in August 2017, under what circumstances the Government would consider it appropriate to legislate directly for UK Overseas Territories and Crown dependencies on implementing sanctions in those territories and dependencies; and if he will make a statement.

**Boris Johnson:**

The UK is responsible for the international relations of the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, and for their compliance with international obligations. Several of these jurisdictions currently choose to meet these sanctions obligations through their own legislation. The UK legislates directly for those jurisdictions which do not choose to have domestic sanctions legislation in place, in consultation with them.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[111745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to paragraph 1.9 of his Department's consultation response, Public consultation on the United Kingdom's future legal framework for imposing and implementing sanctions: government response, published in August 2017, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of implementation of sanctions in UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

**Boris Johnson:**

We work continuously with the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies to ensure they implement sanctions in line with international obligations. We also work closely with the UN, the Financial Action Task Force and other international bodies to promote effective global compliance. As part of our consultation on a future sanctions framework for the UK, we consulted with the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies and we remain in regular contact with them about the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Bill.

## ■ **British Overseas Territories: Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting**

**Conor McGinn:**

[\[112378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to provide observer status for British Overseas Territories at the Commonwealth Summit in London in April 2018; and if he will make a statement.

**Alistair Burt:**

The UK is committed to strengthening the links between Commonwealth countries. However, the only category of Commonwealth membership is that of sovereign states. Any decision to create a new membership status would need to be agreed by consensus of Commonwealth Heads of Government.

Accordingly, whilst the Overseas Territories are unable to attend the Heads of Government Meeting in their own right, their interests will be represented by Her Majesty's Government at the Summit next April. My hon. Friend Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the UN will be discussing a range of issues, including the Commonwealth Summit, with Overseas Territories' leaders at the Joint Ministerial Council at the end of this month.

## ■ **Counter Proliferation and Arms Control Centre**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[111749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to paragraph 7.17 of the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Counter Proliferation and Arms Control Centre in consolidating expertise and decision-making on international counter-proliferation and arms control issues from across government.

**Boris Johnson:**

The Counter Proliferation and Arms Control Centre was established in July 2016. It has brought more effective co-ordination between the departments involved and been particularly valuable where there have been specific objectives which cut across departments - for example, our successful effort to remove chemical weapons precursors from Libya last year and the effort this year to hold Daesh and the Syrian regime accountable for chemical weapons use in Syria. We continue to work to maximise the benefits from the Centre.

## ■ **Eritrea: Protest**

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[111635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made representations to the Eritrean Government on reports that several protestors were killed by security services in Asmara on 31 October 2017.

**Rory Stewart:**

I am aware of reports that there were deaths and injuries amongst protestors in Asmara on 31 October. Our Embassy in Asmara, along with international partners,

are monitoring the situation closely but have been unable to verify reports of deaths. Officials from the Embassy made representations to Eritrean authorities with regards to one British dual-national who was arrested following the protest, who has since been released. Foreign and Commonwealth Officials also raised the importance of the right to peaceful protest in a meeting with the Eritrean Ambassador in London on 8 November.

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[111636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage the Eritrean Government to respect the right to peaceful protest in that country.

**Rory Stewart:**

The Government remains concerned about the human rights record of the Government of Eritrea, including on Freedom of Expression. My officials raised the importance of the right to peaceful protest in a meeting with the Eritrean Ambassador in London on 8 November. We have also raised concerns on Eritrea's human rights record in international fora, including during the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea both at the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 16 June 2017 and at the UN General Assembly on 26 October 2017.

#### ■ **Europol: Sanctions**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[111750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the work of Europol in assisting with the implementation of multilateral sanctions; and what plans the Government has to continue working with that organisation on implementing sanctions after the UK has left the EU.

**Boris Johnson:**

The responsibility for implementing UN and EU sanctions rests primarily at national level. In the UK the relevant bodies include HM Treasury's Office for Financial Sanctions Implementation, the National Crime Agency and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. In serious criminal cases requiring cooperation across international jurisdictions there may be a role for Europol, although sanctions implementation is not specifically referred to in Europol's mandate. The future relationship between the UK and Europol is part of the ongoing negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

#### ■ **Minatu Ahl Shikh**

**Alan Brown:**

[\[111836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will raise with the Moroccan Ambassador to the UK the need for an independent investigation into the death of Minatu Ahl Shikh.

**Alistair Burt:**

We are aware of the death of Minatu Ahl Shikh. The local public prosecutor issued a statement confirming the conclusions of a private autopsy that she had drowned and that there was no evidence of physical or sexual violence.

**Sanctions****Emily Thornberry:**[\[111741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to his oral contribution of 28 March 2017, Official Report column 117, and page 5 of his Department's consultation paper, Public consultation on the United Kingdom's future legal framework for imposing and implementing sanctions, published in April 2017, for what reasons the Government did not consult on how future UK sanctions policy will be aligned with that of the EU before publication of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Bill.

**Boris Johnson:**

The Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Bill ensures the UK will have the powers in place to continue to implement sanctions and anti-money laundering regimes after our withdrawal from the EU. This primary legislation will allow us to maintain close cooperation with a range of international partners. The Government has set out its vision for a strong Future Partnership with the EU on foreign and security policy including sanctions. This is subject to further discussion with the EU and we cannot prejudge the conclusion of those negotiations.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[111742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to page 18 of his Department's consultation paper, Public consultation on the United Kingdom's future legal framework for imposing and implementing sanctions, published in April 2017, and subsection 2 of Clause 1 of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Bill, for what reasons the Government did not consult in public on the purposes for which sanctions may be used before the publication of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Bill.

**Boris Johnson:**

The purposes set out in the Bill are intended to enable the UK to continue implementing, after we leave the EU, the full range of current UN and EU sanctions. The consultation paper was clear on this point. We received a wide range of views in response, including on the purposes for which sanctions may be imposed. These views are reflected in the Government's consultation response which was published on 2 August.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[111744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to paragraph 4.5 of his Department's consultation response, Public consultation on the United Kingdom's future legal framework for imposing and implementing sanctions: government response, published in August 2017, if he will make it his policy to publish

annual reviews of autonomous UK sanctions regimes after the provisions of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Bill come into force.

**Boris Johnson:**

We fully appreciate the importance of effective scrutiny of sanctions policy. The Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Bill requires any adoption or amendment of sanctions regulations to be scrutinised by Parliament. As set out in our response to the consultation, and in clause 26 of the Bill, the Government will conduct an annual review of whether each UK autonomous sanctions regime remains appropriate for its purpose. We envisage this as an internal policy review rather than a report for external publication.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[111747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make it his policy to subject autonomous UK sanctions regimes to periodic independent review after the provisions of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Bill come into force.

**Boris Johnson:**

The Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Bill includes a range of safeguards, including the obligation for the Government to undertake periodic reviews of sanctions regulations and to reassess designations on request. The Bill also provides for the High Court (or Court of Session in Scotland) to consider legal challenges against designations. These safeguards are explained in more detail in the memorandum which the Government submitted to the newly reconstituted Joint Committee on Human Rights on Monday 6 November 2017.

■ **Syria: Human Rights**

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[111572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation in Syria.

**Alistair Burt:**

With the conflict now in its seventh year, the human rights situation in Syria remains dire. Human rights abuses especially by the Asad regime and Daesh are widespread. Although there has been a reduction in levels of violence in recent months, there are continued reports of pro-regime forces' bombardment of civilian areas and infrastructure. The regime has used chemical weapons with devastating consequences, as confirmed in the most recent report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. The regime also continues to deny humanitarian access to besieged populations. The UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on Syria has documented the regime's use of 'massive and systematised' violence against political detainees, and stated that the regime's use of disappearance, torture, rape and sexual violence amount to crimes against humanity. Earlier this year Amnesty International reported that the regime had killed up to 13,000 people in just one prison. Daesh also arbitrarily continue to detain people, carry out summary executions and impose

severe corporal punishments against those perceived to transgress its rules, and to use civilians as human shields.

## ■ Syria: Humanitarian Aid

**Stephen Gethins:**

[\[111816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Russian counterpart on the ability of aid convoys to enter the Eastern Ghouta region in Syria.

**Alistair Burt:**

The UK continues to demand full and sustained humanitarian access to besieged communities in Syria, including Eastern Ghouta, at the UN and at every opportunity. I raised the situation in Eastern Ghouta with the Russian Ambassador to the UK, His Excellency Alexander Yakovenko, during our meeting on 31 October. The UK's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York also raised this issue in the UN Security Council on 30 October.

**Stephen Gethins:**

[\[111818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of recent reports of aerial bombardments, including against schools, on the humanitarian situation in the Eastern Ghouta region in Syria.

**Alistair Burt:**

We remain deeply concerned by reports of attacks by pro-regime forces on civilians and civilian infrastructures, including on healthcare facilities and schools. This, alongside continued obstruction of humanitarian access by the regime, is contributing to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Eastern Ghouta. The Department for International Development (DFID) has supported the UN and international non-governmental organisations to deliver aid to hard-to-reach and besieged areas, including Eastern Ghouta. DFID's humanitarian partners are on the ground in Eastern Ghouta providing life-saving healthcare, food, and protection, but humanitarian access remains severely constrained. We continue to use our position in the UN Security Council and the International Syria Support Group to press the regime and its backers to allow unfettered access so that aid can reach those in desperate need. We call on all parties to adhere to agreed ceasefires in order to bring about the conditions for a political settlement that will end the suffering of the Syrian people.

## ■ Turks and Caicos Islands: Companies

**Catherine West:**

[\[112357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Turks and Caicos on (a) automatic exchange of beneficial ownership information with HM Revenue and Customs and UK law enforcement agencies and (b) the introduction of a public central register for beneficial ownership.

**Sir Alan Duncan:**

The Foreign Secretary has not held any discussions with the Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands on the systematic exchange of beneficial ownership information with HM Revenue and Customs and UK law enforcement agencies, or on a public central register of beneficial ownership.

Legislation establishing a central register came into force on 26 June. The register is expected to be in place shortly.

■ **Weapons: Proliferation****Emily Thornberry:**[\[111752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the total budget allocated by his Department for projects under the Government's counter-proliferation programme was in (a) 2016-17 and (b) 2017-18.

**Boris Johnson:**

The total budget allocated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for projects under the Government's Counter Proliferation Programme was £2,785,000 in 2016/17 and is currently £1,725,000 for 2017/18.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[111753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the total budget allocated by the Government for projects under the (a) Global Threat Reduction Programme and (b) International Biological Security Programme was in (i) 2015-16, (ii) 2016-17 and (iii) 2017-18.

**Boris Johnson:**

The total amount of UK financial support for projects established under the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Material of Mass Destruction comprises the Government's Global Threat Reduction Programme (GTRP – nuclear and radiological projects) and the International Biological Security Programme (IBSP). These are set out below. The 2017/18 figures are estimates.

FINANCIAL YEAR	MOD EXPENDITURE	DECC/BEIS	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
	BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL SECURITY	EXPENDITURE NUCLEAR AND RADIOLOGICAL SECURITY	
2011/12	£4.0 million	£18.5 million	£22.5 million
2012/13	£6.3 million	£13.1 million	£19.4 million
2013/14	£4.8 million	£10.4 million	£15.2 million
2014/15	£3.6 million	£10.5 million	£14.1 million
2015/16	£1.2 million	£11.5 million	£12.7 million

FINANCIAL YEAR	MOD EXPENDITURE	DECC/BEIS	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
	BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL SECURITY	EXPENDITURE NUCLEAR AND RADIOLOGICAL SECURITY	
2016/17	£0.5 million	£11.6 million	£12.1 million
2017/18	£0.3 million	£10.2 million	£10.5 million

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[111754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the total amount of Government financial support for projects established under the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Material of Mass Destruction has been in each financial year since 2010-11.

**Boris Johnson:**

The total amount of UK financial support for projects established under the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Material of Mass Destruction comprises the Government's Global Threat Reduction Programme (GTRP – nuclear and radiological projects) and the International Biological Security Programme (IBSP). These are set out below. The 2017/18 figures are estimates.

FINANCIAL YEAR	MOD EXPENDITURE	DECC/BEIS	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
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2013/14	£4.8 million	£10.4 million	£15.2 million
2014/15	£3.6 million	£10.5 million	£14.1 million
2015/16	£1.2 million	£11.5 million	£12.7 million
2016/17	£0.5 million	£11.6 million	£12.1 million
2017/18	£0.3 million	£10.2 million	£10.5 million

## ■ Yemen: Diplomatic Service

**Keith Vaz:**

[\[111491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many members of staff are employed to support the UK Ambassador to Yemen in Ridyah.

**Alistair Burt:**

There are 11 staff employed as part of the Yemen Office Network based at the British Embassy in Riyadh.

**HEALTH****■ Cervical Cancer: Screening****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[112224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of Capita's ability to deliver the contract to launch new systems for (a) cervical screening and (b) GP payments and pensions from July 2018.

**Steve Brine:**

NHS England has commissioned Capita to deliver a transformation programme to improve delivery of primary care support services; including the development of new IT systems for cervical screening call-recall, and general practitioner payments and pensions. NHS England's assessment is that Capita is making steady progress on the development of these systems for introduction in 2018. NHS England will be ensuring that all transformation activity is planned and delivered with minimal disruption to service delivery and is developed with significant input from service users.

For the changes planned to cervical screening call and recall, Public Health England is actively involved in assessing the design of the new system and ensuring it supports the overall direction of the service to HPV as the primary test.

**■ Department of Health: Staff****Ian C. Lucas:**[\[111799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many staff appointed after 24 June 2016 in his Department hold a post that includes work on the UK leaving the EU.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

Exiting the European Union is a cross-Government operation. The Department for Exiting the European Union is working closely with all Departments to prepare for negotiations by understanding the risks and opportunities of leaving the EU and coordinating planning.

A central team within the Global and Public Health Directorate of this Department coordinates the provision of advice to Ministers on EU Exit and exit-related issues. All affected policy teams within the Department are involved with this work and they are assessing the implications of the United Kingdom leaving the EU on their policy area.

Given the interactions between EU exit work and the Department's other priorities, it would not be possible to give an accurate figure.

The resources available are kept under constant review and the Department is equipping itself with the resources it needs to get the best deal for the UK.

## ■ Department of Health: Telephone Services

**Jon Trickett:** [\[111480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, which public telephone lines for his Department's services are charged at higher rates; and how much was taken by each such telephone line in the last 12 months.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

All public calls to the Department are at Standard Geographic rates. No premium rate/revenue generating numbers are used on numbers which are used by members of the public.

## ■ Endoscopy: Training

**Andrew Bridgen:** [\[111943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of additional NHS endoscopies that will be performed annually by 2020 as a result of the additional number of clinical endoscopists in training under the accelerated training programme.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

Health Education England estimates that the additional 200 clinical endoscopists being training through the accelerated training programme will result in approximately 225,000 additional procedures a year.

## ■ Glaucoma

**Chris Ruane:** [\[111637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of people living with glaucoma; and what steps his Department is taking to reduce their sight loss.

**Steve Brine:**

Data is not collected centrally showing the total numbers of people living with glaucoma.

For individuals at risk of glaucoma, early detection is key. Free National Health Service sight tests are available for individuals at risk of, or diagnosed with, glaucoma. The NHS also continues to provide successful treatments for a range of eye conditions, including glaucoma.

## ■ Health Services

**Sir Kevin Barron:** [\[112284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps the Government is taking to encourage clinical commissioning groups and local authorities to participate in national Self Care Week 2017 in order to empower people to look after their own health better.

**Steve Brine:**

NHS England has worked alongside the Self Care Forum to promote Self Care Week across the National Health Service, including showcasing best practice on social media. References can be found to the campaign both via NHS Choices and on NHS England's on-going winter campaign, Stay Well this Winter. Links can be found below:

[www.nhs.uk/selfcare/Pages/self-care-week-2017.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/selfcare/Pages/self-care-week-2017.aspx)

[www.nhs.uk/staywell/#SoKX6vqcUb035h8m.97](http://www.nhs.uk/staywell/#SoKX6vqcUb035h8m.97)

**Sir Kevin Barron:****[112285]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the potential savings that self care for self-treatable conditions can achieve in (a) general practice and (b) A&E.

**Steve Brine:**

There is a growing body of evidence for the benefits of self-care both in improved patient outcomes and reductions in demand on the National Health Service. 'Self-care' covers a broad spectrum of interventions and is defined in different ways in different situations. We do not hold national data on the potential savings linked directly to self-care.

**Sir Kevin Barron:****[112286]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what proportion of visits to (a) A&E and (b) general practice were type three attendances in (i) England, (ii) each NHS trust and (iii) each clinical commissioning Group in each of the last two years.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

Information is not available in the format requested. However, the attached table provides the total number of accident and emergency attendances and the proportion of those at 'type 3'<sup>1</sup> sites, for England and by provider for the period November 2015 to October 2017. These data are not broken down at general practice or clinical commissioning group level.

**Note:**

<sup>1</sup> 'Type 3' sites include a range of facilities such as hospitals and other sites, including walk-in centres and urgent care centres, that can be general practitioner-led.

**Attachments:**

1. PQ112286 attached table [Data for PQ 112286 Prop Attends at Type 3 A%26E.xlsx]

**■ HIV Infection: Southwark****Ms Harriet Harman:****[112376]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much money has been spent from the public purse on HIV/Aids treatment in (a) Camberwell and Peckham constituency and (b) the London Borough of Southwark in each of the last five years.

**Steve Brine:**

Data on expenditure on HIV and AIDS treatment and care is not collected by Parliamentary constituency or by local authority area.

**Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination****Mr John Baron:**[\[112455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if his Department will publish (a) an assessment and (b) data supporting the responses to the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisation's consultation on extending HPV vaccination to boys; and how many and what proportion of submissions reported that vaccination.

**Steve Brine:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) met on 4 October 2017 and discussed the responses from stakeholders to JCVI's interim advice on whether to extend the human papilloma virus vaccination to boys. The minutes of 4 October JCVI meeting will be published on 15 November 2017 at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation#publications-and-statements>

**In Vitro Fertilisation****Norman Lamb:**[\[111528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to reduce regional variation in the commissioning of IVF services in the NHS.

**Norman Lamb:**[\[111529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the Answer of 30 January 2017 to Question 61799, on in vitro fertilisation, what the timetable is for the implementation of the benchmark price for IVF.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

NHS England and the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, together with professional and stakeholder groups, are working together to see how commissioning of fertility services could be improved. This includes ongoing work to develop a benchmark price to inform what the National Health Service would pay for in-vitro fertilisation treatments. Commissioning guidance, which aims to improve the quality of commissioning and further encourage the implementation of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence fertility guideline, is also being developed and will be disseminated by NHS England to all clinical commissioning groups in England.

The intention is that both of these products this will be ready for use by the NHS in 2018/19 financial year.

The Department strongly supports this programme of work.

■ **Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust**

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[112461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what additional support his Department is planning to provide to Mid Yorkshire NHS Trust during winter 2017.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

NHS Improvement and NHS England are working closely with Mid Yorkshire NHS Trust to ensure it is best placed to deal with challenges this winter. This includes working together with local commissioners within the Accident and Emergency Delivery Board to ensure services are responsive to patient need, and providing support should specific services experience particular pressure. To this end, NHS England and NHS Improvement lead a regular joint meeting with local system partners.

In addition, and in agreement with local organisations, the Emergency Care Improvement Programme team works to support the local health economy. This support is currently deployed on two fronts: one across the system, looking at frailty and discharge, and another focusing on optimising working models of hospital care within the trust itself.

■ **Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust: Staff**

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[112460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of staffing levels at Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

NHS Digital publishes workforce statistics and the following table shows the staffing levels at Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust as at 31 May 2010 and 30 July 2017.

Change in staffing levels in full time equivalent (FTE) by several staff groups at Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust from May 2010 to July 2017.

STAFF GROUP IN FTE	SUM OF MAY-2010	SUM OF JULY-2017	CHANGE FROM MAY-2010 TO JULY-2017	PERCENTAGE CHANGE FROM MAY-2010 TO JULY-2017
Professionally qualified clinical staff	4,834	5,142	308	6.4%
Doctors	680	722	42	6.2%
Nurses and health visitors	1,550	1,606	56	3.6%

Source: NHS Digital, NHS Hospital and Community Health Service workforce statistics.

Staffing is the responsibility of individual trusts.

In October 2016 we announced an additional 1,500 medical school places to be available for domestic students at English universities. 500 places have been allocated to existing medical schools and will be available to students in September 2018.

In order to meet the growing need to increase the future supply of registered nurses, we announced additional clinical placement funding in August and October 2017. This enables around 5,000 more nursing students to enter training each year to 2020/21.

## ■ Midwives

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[112134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many births per full time equivalent NHS midwife there were in each region of England in each of the last three years.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

NHS Digital publishes workforce statistics and the Office for National Statistics publishes annual birth statistics. The attached table shows the number of births per full time equivalent midwife that have occurred between the years of 2014-16.

### Attachments:

1. PQ112134 attached table [ellie Reeves PQ112134 DATA.xlsx]

## ■ Midwives: Graduates

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[112136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many midwifery graduates there were in each year since 2010-11.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The following table shows the number of midwives who graduated in England in each academic year, for the period 2010-11 to 2015-16. Data on the number of graduates in 2016-17 will be available from January 2018.

ACADEMIC YEAR	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Midwifery graduates	1,412	1,366	1,486	1,570	1,810	1,933

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency Student Record

There were 6,802 midwives in training as at 31 March 2017.

## ■ Midwives: Training

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[112135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the cost to the public purse was of training (a) one midwife and (b) all student midwives in each of the last three years.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

This data is not collected by the Department.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:** [\[112152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many training places for midwifery were (a) commissioned and (b) filled in each of the last five years.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The following table shows the number of commissioned midwifery training places in England by year, for the period 2012-13 to 2016-17 and the actual take up of those places.

COURSE	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Midwifery (Commissioned)	2,578	2,588	2,899	2,605	2,605
Midwifery (filled)	2,580	2,540	2,535	2,580	2,602

Source: Health Education England since 2013

Financial Information Management System prior to 2013

The reforms for healthcare education funding from August 2017 will mean students will move onto the student loans system; giving universities the flexibility to provide additional places, based on local need and National Health Service clinical capacity. Health Education England will continue to fund the required number of clinical placements to meet the longer-term NHS workforce needs.

## ■ Neurology

**Alex Sobel:** [\[112350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that people with functional neurological disorder have adequate access to physiotherapy and counselling in the NHS.

**Steve Brine:**

Decisions about treatment for patients with functional neurological disorder should be made on a case by case basis by clinicians in discussions with their patients; this would include referrals to physiotherapy or counselling services if appropriate.

**■ NHS: Cybercrime****Bridget Phillipson:**[\[112221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that patients are able to receive treatment in (a) hospitals and (b) primary care settings in the event of a cyber attack.

**Jackie Doyle-Price:**

The Department is working with the National Cyber Security Centre, NHS England NHS Digital and NHS Improvement to prepare and rehearse incident response plans and take action to strengthen communications when core computer systems are affected by cyber security incidents.

A number of changes have been made that aim to make sure that the National Health Service and its systems are as resilient as possible, protecting patient data, ensuring safe patient care, and reducing the impact of cyber-attacks when they next occur.

To improve resilience in hospitals, £21 million of funding has been allocated to addressing key infrastructure vulnerabilities in major trauma centres and ambulance trusts to reduce the impact on patient access in the event of future cyber-attacks.

**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[112222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps have been taken (a) since the WannaCry cyberattack in May 2017 to improve IT security in NHS organisations and (b) to ensure that NHS organisations update their IT systems.

**Sir David Crausby:**[\[112274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what changes have been made to NHS IT systems and cyber security since the cyber attack in May 2017.

**Jackie Doyle-Price:**

The National Health Service has robust measures in place to protect against cyberattacks, and since May we have taken further action to strengthen resilience and guard against future attack, including new, unannounced cyber security inspections by the Care Quality Commission, £21 million in funding to improve resilience in trauma centres, and enhanced guidance for trusts.

Work is underway to determine the fastest and most cost effective way to move the NHS off unsupported operating systems, and we are working with the NHS to ensure unsupported systems are urgently upgraded, removed or isolated. The Department has also signed a Customer Support Agreement with Microsoft that will issue regular patches and updates for all existing Windows devices operating with Windows XP, Windows Server 2003, and SQL 2005.

**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[112223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps have been taken to educate NHS staff on how to minimise vulnerability to cyberattacks.

**Jackie Doyle-Price:**

A new e-learning package has been produced for staff in the health and care system, with sections covering risks and responsibilities with regards to cyber security.

The Department is working with the National Cyber Security Centre, NHS England, NHS Digital and NHS Improvement to prepare and rehearse incident response plans and take action to strengthen communications when core computer systems are affected by cyber security incidents.

**■ NHS: Migrant Workers****Martyn Day:**[\[112107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union on future immigration policy for nurses, midwives and other essential health workers.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The Secretary of State meets cabinet colleagues regularly to discuss numerous topics, including our exit from the European Union. The future of EU nationals is a top priority in the Brexit negotiations and we want their valued contribution to the National Health Service to continue.

The Secretary of State has made it clear that after the United Kingdom's exit from the EU, we will have an immigration system that means the NHS and social care system are able to get the number of people they need, not just from the EU, but from all over the world.

**■ NHS: Recruitment****Martyn Day:**[\[112105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans he has to ensure that adequate numbers of essential healthcare staff will continue to be recruited after the UK has left the EU.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The Department continues to closely monitor the overall staffing levels across the National Health Service and social care and are working closely with Health Education England, NHS England and others in the health and care system to understand the impact of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union on the health and care workforce.

The Department has set out a plan to attract and retain talented staff, backed by an additional £2 billion investment in the sector over the next three years, including initiatives to increase domestic training places for doctors and nurses.

The Secretary of State for Health has also made it clear that we will have an immigration system that means the NHS and social care system are able to get the number of people they need, from not just the EU, but from all over the world

## ■ NHS: Staff

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[112112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the Answer of 20 April 2017 to Question 71524, on NHS staff, what estimate he has made of the average cost to the NHS of employing one (a) nurse, (b) midwife, (c) doctor and (d) GP in 2016-17.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The Department's estimates of the average cost to the National Health Service employing one nurse, midwife, doctor and general practitioner (GP) at a full-time equivalent are set out in the table below. These costs include total earnings, national insurance and pension contributions. The latest data available is for 2016/17. Latest GP data available is for 2015/16.

STAFF GROUP	ESTIMATED AVERAGE PAYBILL PER FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT, 2016/17 <sup>1 2</sup>
Qualified nurses, midwives and health visitors	£43,228
Midwives	£47,233
All hospital and community health services doctors	£100,788
GP (Contractor)	£104,900
GP (Salaried) <sup>3</sup>	£55,900

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> <https://digital.nhs.uk/article/6742/Staff-earnings>

<sup>2</sup> <https://digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB30072>

<sup>3</sup> A proportion of salaried GPs are employed on a part-time basis which accounts for the lower average income of £55,900.

## ■ Patients: Transport

**Jared O'Mara:**

[\[111734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has altered the eligibility for patients receiving free transport to hospital.

**Jared O'Mara:**

[\[111737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department has taken to assess the quality of hospital-provided patient transport services.

**Steve Brine:**

The eligibility criteria to receive patient transport services is set out in Eligibility Criteria for Patient Transport Services (2007). The Department has not altered these criteria.

The provision of appropriate patient transport services is a matter for local National Health Service commissioners. Patient transport services are regulated by the Care Quality Commission.

**■ Pharmacy: Health Services****Sir Kevin Barron:**[\[112287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the effect of minor ailment schemes in community pharmacies on the costs associated with a reduction in the number of GP consultations as a result of those schemes; and if he will make a statement.

**Steve Brine:**

NHS England and clinical commissioning groups commission minor ailment services from community pharmacies to meet local need. These services have been developed in areas of high demand on general practices, to treat minor illnesses and are reviewed locally by the commissioner of the service.

Whilst the Government has not made an assessment of the impact of the costs associated with a reduction in the number of general practitioners consultations, Monitor in its publication in 2013 "Closing the NHS Funding Gap – How to get Better Value Healthcare for Patients" estimated that with a 1% uptake of pharmacy-led minor ailments schemes nationally, £64 million could be saved.

**■ Prescriptions: Universal Credit****Frank Field:**[\[112444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will take steps to ensure that there is a box on prescription forms to indicate that the recipient is eligible for universal credit.

**Steve Brine:**

National Health Service prescription forms (FP10) and claims for NHS funded sight tests (GOS 1) and for vouchers for glasses or contact lenses (GOS 3) will be amended to include a Universal Credit box in due course. Some NHS Help with Health Costs claim forms, for example HC5 refund claim forms, have already been amended to include a specific tick box to enable Universal Credit recipients to claim entitlement. All versions of dentistry claim forms were updated on 1 April 2016, to include a tick box for Universal Credit.

A patient can currently make a claim for entitlement if in receipt of Universal Credit by ticking the "gets income based Jobseekers Allowance" on relevant forms. Guidance for both the public and healthcare practitioners (such as pharmacists, dentists and, opticians) has been included on NHS Choices with links from the Universal Credit webpages on Gov.uk.

## ■ Vitamin D: Pregnancy

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[111555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many pregnant women were admitted to hospital with vitamin D deficiency in each (a) English region and (b) parliamentary constituency in each of the last 10 years.

**Mr Philip Dunne:**

The table below provides a count of finished admission episodes with a primary or secondary diagnosis of vitamin D deficiency complicating pregnancy, by Government Office region of residence, 2007-08 to 2016-17. Data is not reported by parliamentary constituency due to small numbers.

GOVERNMENT OFFICE REGION OF RESIDENCE	2007- 08	2008- 09	2009- 10	2010- 11	2011- 12	2012- 13	2013- 14	2014- 15	2015- 16	2016- 17
North East	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	1	1
North West	-	1	1	4	9	12	8	7	2	14
Yorkshire and Humber	-	1	-	2	-	2	3	5	4	21
East Midlands	1	2	1	4	2	3	1	9	6	12
West Midlands	2	1	1	15	8	20	27	29	30	44
East of England	-	-	-	1	2	5	7	5	7	8
London	3	8	24	65	35	42	40	53	78	52
South East	-	1	5	6	3	6	3	11	6	8
South West	-	2	1	2	1	5	1	3	5	4
Foreign (including Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Unknown	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	1	5	9

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Digital

**Notes:**

A finished admission episode is the first period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. They are counted against the year or month in which the admission episode finishes. Admissions do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the period.

Changes to the figures over time need to be interpreted in the context of improvements in data quality and coverage, improvements in coverage of independent sector activity (particularly from 2006-07) and changes in National Health Service practice.

HES years run from April to March.

**HOME OFFICE****■ Animal Experiments: Cosmetics****Alex Sobel:**[\[112351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to table a resolution at the United Nations to establish an ad hoc committee on the testing of cosmetics on animals.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

The Government currently has no plans to table a resolution at the United Nations to establish an ad hoc committee on the testing of cosmetics on animals.

The UK was the first country in the world to ban cosmetics being tested on animals. We are keen to share our knowledge and best practice globally to support the ending of cosmetics testing on animals in favour of non-animal alternatives.

**Bill Esterson:**[\[112437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to table a resolution to the UN to establish an ad hoc committee to develop an international agreement for the barring of animal testing for cosmetics.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

The Government currently has no plans to table a resolution to the United Nations to establish an ad hoc committee to develop an international agreement for the barring of animal testing for cosmetics.

The UK was the first country in the world to ban cosmetics being tested on animals. We are keen to share our knowledge and best practice globally to support the ending of cosmetics testing on animals in favour of non-animal alternatives.

## ■ Asylum

**Jared O'Mara:**

[\[111951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that immigration caseworkers fully comply with guidance on handling medical evidence for asylum seeker applications.

**Brandon Lewis:**

All officials making decisions on asylum claims receive a dedicated five-week foundation training programme which incorporates all relevant aspects of international and domestic law.

Within this programme there are specific sections on torture and medical reports, and how they should be considered and analysed in asylum claims. Medical reports will be considered together with other written and oral evidence in determining an asylum claim to ensure alleged victims of torture have their claims assessed fairly and sensitively.

Furthermore there is a robust quality assurance process in place involving technical specialists which ensures that all policies are complied with when decisions are made.

**Dan Carden:**

[\[112122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2017 to Question 9634, on asylum, (a) when and (b) where the information on the number of people claiming asylum on the basis of sexuality or gender identity in each year since 2011 will be published.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Home Office remains committed to publishing information on the number of people claiming asylum on the basis of sexual orientation. Work is ongoing to assure the quality of the data for publication in line with reporting standards.

The Home Office is also considering the most suitable vehicle for publishing the data.

## ■ Asylum: Appeals

**Jared O'Mara:**

[\[111736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many immigration cases involving rejected claims for asylum were overturned on appeal in the last 12 months.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Home Office published data on initial decisions for asylum applications and the number of allowed appeals for applications made in each year to 2016. This can be found in table as\_06 published at the link below. The data do not distinguish between appeals resulting from rejected claims and refer to all allowed appeals, regardless of initial decision. Data for 2017 are due to be published in August 2018.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/638598/asylum2-apr-jun-2017-tables.ods](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/638598/asylum2-apr-jun-2017-tables.ods)

**■ Asylum: Deportation****Chris Stephens:** [\[112795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2017 to Question 110436, on asylum deportation, for what reasons there were differences between this Answer and the Answer of 28 July 2015 to Question 6909; and if she will make a statement.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The previous answer contained data provided from internal management information. However, to maintain the highest standards of accuracy, the Home Office prefers to refer to published data, as this has been subject to rigorous quality assurance under National Statistics protocols prior to publication.

**■ Asylum: Females****Christine Jardine:** [\[112265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that women seeking asylum in the UK are treated with justice and dignity.

**Brandon Lewis:**

We are committed to delivering an asylum process that is gender sensitive and have developed an asylum gender action plan to achieve this building on the wider Government strategy to tackle violence against women and girls.

All decision-makers receive extensive training on considering asylum claims and must follow published Home Office policy guidance, including specific guidance on gender issues, which covers specific forms of gender based persecution.

All available evidence is carefully and sensitively considered in light of published country information, which covers country specific issues relating to gender based harm, including female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, violence in conflict and domestic violence.

**■ Asylum: Glasgow South West****Chris Stephens:** [\[112796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 November 2017 to Question 110788, on asylum, for what reasons there were differences between this Answer and the Answer of 29 June 2017 to Question 106 to the hon. Member for Glasgow East; and if she will make a statement.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The answer given on 29 June 2017 triangulated data held for different reasons to provide a number using a range of assumptions. To maintain the highest standards of accuracy the Home Office has come to the view that the methodology used to come to the figure provided does not fully answer the question and providing a full answer could only be done at disproportionate cost.

**■ Asylum: Southwark****Ms Harriet Harman:****[112119]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people living in (a) Camberwell and Peckham constituency and (b) the London Borough of Southwark who have been detained for immigration purposes have successfully appealed her Department's asylum claim decision in each of the last five years.

**Brandon Lewis:**

Unfortunately statistics on specific constituencies are not part of the Government's published data and cannot be obtained electronically.

Published data relating to the outcomes of asylum appeals can be found in tab Asy14 at volume 4 of the quarterly Immigration Statistics release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2017-data-tables>

**■ British National (Overseas): Passports****Stephen Gethins:****[105898]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many British National Overseas passports have been issued in each year since 1997.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The table below shows the number of British National Overseas passports printed by Her Majesty's Passport Office between January 1997 and 30 September 2017.

**BRITISH NATIONAL OVERSEAS PASSPORTS PRINTED**

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1997	12,090
1998	3,881
1999	6,250
2000	5,624
2001	139,159
2002	116,345
2003	81,690
2004	79,107
2005	46,801
2006	37,392

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**BRITISH NATIONAL OVERSEAS PASSPORTS PRINTED**


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2007	17,347
2008	8,905
2009	8,737
2010	8,039
2011	7,654
2012	10,933
2013	15,338
2014	22,022
2015	26,027
2016	37,501
2017*	15,458

\*Data is up to September 2017

■ **Domestic Violence: Southwark**

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

[\[112043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how a many domestic violence orders have been issued by courts to people in (a) Camberwell and Peckham constituency and (b) the London Borough of Southwark in each of the last five years.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs), which can prevent the perpetrator from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days, were rolled out across England and Wales from March 2014.

Latest Ministry of Justice figures show that between April 2015 and March 2016, 3,951 DVPOs have been issued by Magistrates' Courts. The Home Office does not hold data disaggregated to constituency or London borough level.

■ **Extradition: United Arab Emirates**

**Martyn Day:**

[\[106085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, (a) how many extradition requests have been made, (b) how many of those have been refused and (c) what the cost to the public purse for legal aid is for such requests made by the UAE in each year since 2010.

**Brandon Lewis:**

As a matter of long standing policy and practice, the UK will neither confirm nor deny whether an extradition request has been made or received until such time as a person is arrested in relation to the request.

Between 2010 – 2016, 22 people were arrested in relation to extradition requests from the UAE to the UK. In the same period, 1 individual was extradited from the UK to the UAE, with the remaining cases discharged by the courts or still pending.

In regards to the cost to the public purse for legal aid for such requests, the Legal Aid Agency and Scottish Legal Aid Board does not collect data in the form requested.

**■ Grenfell Tower: Fires****Stuart C. McDonald:****[111755]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people who are entitled to discretionary leave to remain as a survivor or other individual directly affected by the Grenfell Tower fire.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The dedicated Grenfell immigration policy is a targeted scheme that we expect to benefit a limited number of people. The welfare of survivors is our greatest priority and we have extended the operation of the policy until 30 November to give those who think they might be eligible an additional opportunity to come forward.

**Ms Diane Abbott:****[112313]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to provide additional financial assistance for successful applicants under the discretionary 12 months leave to remain visa for survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire to make any further immigration applications.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Government has published guidance at the link below which makes clear that there will be no fee for the initial grant of 12 months' leave under the dedicated Grenfell survivors immigration policy. The guidance also sets out that individuals will then be able to apply for two further periods of two years' limited leave under this policy without paying a fee.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grenfell-tower-fire-handling-immigration-cases>

**Ms Diane Abbott:****[112314]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of (a) amending or (b) extending the discretionary immigration policy for Grenfell Tower fire immigration cases beyond the end of November 2017.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Grenfell immigration policy for survivors is open to new cases until 30 November 2017. We have kept the closing date under continual review since we first announced the policy.

We consider that the offer of a 5-year route to indefinite leave to remain in the UK is a generous and proportionate one and we have no plans to amend that approach. Details of this are set out in the published guidance at the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grenfell-tower-fire-handling-immigration-cases>

Eligible survivors granted the initial 12 months' leave outside the rules will be able to apply for further periods of two years' limited leave outside the rules with access to public funds and permission to work, and indefinite leave to remain after five years' lawful residence. We intend to waive fees for the further grants of limited leave to remain.

This five-year timeframe is consistent with the minimum period of leave that refugees need to have before they can apply for permanent residence. It also means that those granted leave under the dedicated Grenfell immigration policy will be able to qualify for permanent residence in half the time of other migrants without lawful status who are granted leave on the basis of family or private life; the latter are required to complete 10 years' lawful residence.

**■ Home Office: Brexit****Ian C. Lucas:**[\[111800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff appointed after 24 June 2016 in her Department hold a post that includes work on the UK leaving the EU.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Home Office constantly monitors the capabilities it needs to deliver the Government's agenda. Any changes to resource requirements flowing from Home Office EU Exit planning or related projects are factored into this strategic planning.

By its nature, EU exit work is complex and cross-cutting, involving multiple directorates and teams within in the Department. Given the interactions between EU exit work and the Department's other priorities, it would not be possible to give an accurate figure on how many staff in the Home Office have responsibilities relating to exiting the EU.

**■ Immigration****Catherine West:**[\[112085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many decisions on applications for leave to remain and further leave to remain were made outside of her Department's six month processing target.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Home Office regularly publishes performance data as part of the quarterly Home Office Transparency release, including elements such as performance against service standards. A range of key input and impact indicators are currently published by the Home Office on the [Migration transparency data](#) webpage.

**Catherine West:**[\[112154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for (a) leave to remain and (b) further leave to remain were not decided within the target six month processing time in each of the last five years.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Home Office regularly publishes performance data as part of the quarterly Home Office Transparency release, including elements such as performance against service standards. A range of key input and impact indicators are currently published by the Home Office on the [Migration transparency data](#) webpage.

**■ Immigration Controls****Sir Edward Davey:**[\[112269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps are being taken at UK borders to prevent any dangers to public health relating to the outbreak of plague in Madagascar.

**Brandon Lewis:**

Border Force Officers will refer any passengers that require medical attention in accordance with established procedures and advice from Public Health England.

**■ Immigration: Glasgow South****Stewart Malcolm McDonald:**[\[112120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many non-UK citizens in Glasgow South constituency will be required to apply for (a) settled and (b) temporary status as outlined in the Government's November 2017 technical note, citizens' rights, administrative procedures in the UK.

**Brandon Lewis:**

All EU nationals and their family members living lawfully in the UK before the specified date will be eligible to apply for status. Subject to security checks, applicants who are able to evidence five years' continuous lawful residence will be given settled status; those who do not will receive a temporary status to enable them to accrue five years' residence and qualify for settled status in due course.

As our reply to HC1275 states, the Home Office does not hold any data on the numbers of EU citizens in Glasgow who may have to apply for settled status. The same is true of temporary status.

**■ Immigration: Married People****Keith Vaz:** [\[111494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many cases of leave to remain for the spouse of a British citizen are currently awaiting a decision.

**Brandon Lewis:**

Data on UK Visas and Immigration temporary and permanent migration activities including In-Country Work In Progress Casework, is published on the .GOV.UK website. The relevant route is 'Spouse' as indicated on worksheet InC\_03.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/in-country-migration-data-august-2017>

As well as being a British citizen, a sponsor on the 'spouse' route may also be a person with indefinite leave to remain (settlement) or with leave to remain as a refugee.

**■ Refugees: Children****Alex Burghart:** [\[111895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by what date she expects that the Government will have fulfilled its commitment to transfer 480 children under the Dubs scheme.

**Brandon Lewis:**

We are fully committed to transferring 480 unaccompanied children from Europe under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016. A number of children have arrived from France under section 67 in recent weeks and transfers are ongoing.

We are working very closely with Member States, as well as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and NGO partners to identify and transfer children safely to the UK in line with each individual Member State's national laws. More eligible children will be transferred from Europe in due course.

**Alex Sobel:** [\[112362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has received any representations from Leeds City Council on the provision of more places for unaccompanied child refugees under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

**Brandon Lewis:**

We are very grateful to Leeds City Council for their work in looking after unaccompanied asylum seeking children, including their active participation in the National Transfer Scheme (NTS).

Any offers of further placements for unaccompanied asylum seeking children will be utilised to fulfil all of our existing commitments, including under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 and our broader work through the NTS of ensuring a more equal allocation of the approximately 4,500 unaccompanied children already in care in the UK.

**Shabana Mahmood:**[\[112550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce dangerous journeys for unaccompanied child refugees with family in the UK.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Government strongly supports the principle of family unity, and we have a comprehensive framework in place for refugees and their families to be safely reunited in the UK without the need for dangerous journeys.

Our family reunion policy allows children to join their refugee parents, and there are also specific provisions in the Immigration Rules that allow extended family members lawfully resident in the UK to sponsor unaccompanied children where there are serious and compelling circumstances. We have reunited over 24,000 partners and children with their families under our family reunion policy in the last five years.

Further, those children recognised by UNHCR as

refugees can join close family members in the UK through our Mandate resettlement scheme.

**Strategic Migration Partnerships****Stuart C. McDonald:**[\[112032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what tasks each strategic migration partnership are funded to undertake.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships are each funded by the Home Office to coordinate, support and deliver participation in the asylum dispersal scheme; the refugee resettlement schemes; the national transfer scheme for unaccompanied asylum seeking children; and to coordinate the provision of ESOL training for eligible migrants.

**Visas: Skilled Workers****Seema Malhotra:**[\[112435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Tier 2 (General) visa applications her Department has received in each month since January 2016; how many of those applications were (a) applications from outside the UK, (b) extensions within the UK, (c) switches within the UK, (d) extensions within the UK (Premium service) and (e) switches within the UK (Premium service); how much was received in fees to her Department for each of those categories; and what the average waiting time to decision was for each of those categories in each month of that period.

**Brandon Lewis:**

We are unable to provide all of the specific data requested. In line with published quarterly transparency data we have provided for:

- a) The number of Tier 2 applications made out of country
- b) and c) The number of Tier 2 and 5 applications made in country
- d) and e) The number of Tier 2 and 5 same day premium applications made in country

Link to the latest published data:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data#uk-visas-and-immigration>

**Seema Malhotra:**

**[112436]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of Tier 2 (General) visa applications made in each month since January 2016 had a decision made on them within three weeks.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The published quarterly transparency data does not separate out Tier 2 General applications from the wider Tier 2 route. We have therefore provided the published data for all Tier 2 subcategories which includes General, Intra Company Transfers, Minister of Religion and Sportspeople.

Link to the latest published data:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data#uk-visas-and-immigration>

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Education: Exports

**Bill Esterson:**

**[109385]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what (a) steps he has taken and (b) discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on achieving the education export targets set in the 2014 International Education Strategy.

**Mark Garnier:**

There are regular discussions between the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the Department for Education concerning education export matters.

This Government continues to support growth in UK education exports, including through the work of the team dedicated to education exports in the Department for International Trade, who have recently announced the establishment of a DIT Education Sector Advisory Board, chaired by myself, which will support the aspirations of the sector internationally. The inaugural meeting of the Board is scheduled for December.

## ■ Exports

**Barry Gardiner:**

[\[111266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether he will set up business engagement groups for exporters and potential exporters on a (a) country and (b) sectoral basis.

**Mark Garnier:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) conducts a wide range of engagement with businesses in a range of fora, including regular meetings with the major trade bodies and representative groups across business sectors, to ensure that it maintains effective engagement on sectoral and country issues. DIT recently convened the Board of Trade to engage across the UK and ensure the benefits of trade are enjoyed across the UK, with advice from representatives of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Department also ensures it has a comprehensive understanding of sectoral and geographic issues through its sector teams, Geographical Hubs and network of 177 international posts; and relationships with individual firms. To further strengthen the international perspective the Department is appointing nine Trade Commissioners. The Department routinely engages through these groups and with individual firms to discuss exporting issues.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Administration of Justice: Hearing Impaired

**Ben Lake:**

[\[105731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with charities for the deaf on the service received by people registered as deaf in the justice system.

**Dominic Raab:**

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) regularly seek advice from relevant experts as we work to respond to the individual needs of those under our supervision and in our care including those registered as deaf. We are proactively looking at ways to ensure our workforce is even more diverse and representative of the people we serve so that customer needs are met both now and in the future. The Equalities and Inclusion Engagement Group sits quarterly; the main aim of this group is to collaborate positively with HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) to review aspects of the proposed Court reform. This ensures we integrate equality principles into all reformed services, promoting a service that is inclusive, user focussed, and that does not discriminate against the vulnerable or disadvantaged. HMCTS have a standing arrangement with the Disabilities Charity Consortium (of which Action on Hearing Loss are a member), that agendas are shared in advance of meetings to ensure that when relevant items are upcoming that are of importance to member charities they can either join the meeting, feed in via or other members that are attending, or share input directly with HMCTS.

## ■ Law Centres: Closures

**Gloria De Piero:**

[\[106437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information his Department holds on the number of law centres dispensing legal aid which have closed in the last five years.

**Dominic Raab:**

Thirty-six offices advertising themselves as a 'law centre' have withdrawn from their legal aid contracts between April 2012-April 2017.

Please note that a withdrawal from contract does not necessarily mean that a Law Centre has closed.

The Legal Aid Agency regularly reviews market capacity and accessibility to make sure that there is adequate provision of legal aid around the country, and moves quickly to safeguard provision where gaps may appear.

A new tender process for all civil legal aid contracts has recently launched, with services under these contracts beginning in autumn 2018.

## ■ Legal Aid Scheme

**Richard Burgon:**

[\[111875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of the Government funding for legal aid is spent on court fees.

**Dominic Raab:**

Legal aid providers may claim for court fees under Licensed Work. The amounts claimed will be definitively recorded against claims paid on cases registered after 1 April 2016.

However, court fees cannot yet be distinguished from other categories of disbursement for the majority of cases because of the way they were recorded on previous data systems.

What information is identifiable could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

**Sandy Martin:**

[\[111932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2017 to Question 7534, on legal aid scheme, whether he has looked more widely at the impact of recent policy changes on access to legal aid; and whether his Department will be taking steps to ensure that people in all regions can access legal aid providers.

**Dominic Raab:**

On 30 October, the Lord Chancellor announced the commencement of the post-implementation review of the legal aid changes made by, and following, the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012. The review will look at the impact of recent policy changes on access to legal aid.

The Legal Aid Agency regularly review the capacity of the legal aid market to cope with demand for legal aid and take action where a regional shortfall develops.

**Richard Burgon:**

[\[112144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on the economic viability of criminal defence firms of proposed changes to the Litigators' Graduated Fee Scheme.

**Richard Burgon:**

[\[112145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on the recruitment and retention of criminal law practitioners as a result of the proposed changes to the Litigators' Graduated Fee Scheme.

**Dominic Raab:**

We published an Impact Assessment alongside our response to consultation – <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/lgfs-and-court-appointees/>

There is no data to suggest that criminal defence firms will be less economically viable than they were before a Costs Judge decision in the case of Napper caused an unintended increase in the fee levels for cases with a large amount of electronic evidence. There is no evidence that the previous fee levels are no longer sustainable.

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) recently ran a tender exercise for new criminal legal aid contracts. As a result of that tender, the LAA currently has contracts with a total of 1280 organisations who are contracted to deliver criminal legal aid services from a total of 1943 offices. Those contracts commenced on 1 April 2017. The LAA is satisfied that there is sufficient provision of criminal legal aid services across England and Wales.

#### ■ Legal Aid Scheme: Electronic Government

**Richard Burgon:**

[\[111871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate the Government has made of the cost of the Client and Cost Management System in each of the last five years.

**Richard Burgon:**

[\[111872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much the Government has spent on the Client and Cost Management System in each of the last five years.

**Dominic Raab:**

In each of the last five years, the Government's expenditure on the Client and Cost Management System (CCMS) has remained within its estimates. The costs (£m) incurred in each of the last five years are set out below.

This expenditure is representative of all aspects of the system, i.e. the LAA's internal management and administration of CCMS, and the interface used by the legal profession.

2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
£ 15.174	£ 7.858	£ 4.526	£ 3.995	£ 3.841

**■ Legal Aid Scheme: Southwark**

**Ms Harriet Harman:** [112040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of people living in (a) Camberwell and Peckham constituency and (b) the London Borough of Southwark who were in receipt of legal aid in each of the last 10 years.

**Dominic Raab:**

The data recorded by the Legal Aid Agency does not track how many individuals have accessed legal aid in either a given period or a particular location. This is because data is based on the number of items of work completed, rather than the number of people receiving public funding, and the location of the provider as opposed to the address of the client.

Statistics broken down by local authority area (based on the location of the provider) are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/legal-aid-statistics-january-to-march-2017>

**■ Ministry of Justice: Written Questions**

**Catherine West:** [111883]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to answer the named day written question 107525 tabled on 12 October 2017.

**Dominic Raab:**

I refer the honourable member to the answer which I gave in PQ 107525, answered on 13th October 2017.

**■ Rape: Trials**

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [111944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many successful applications have been made in Crown Courts in England and Wales under section 41(2) of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 enabling defence lawyers to cross-examine rape complainants about their sexual history in each of the last five years.

**Dominic Raab:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

**■ Sentencing: Appeals**

**Henry Smith:** [111834]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the unduly lenient sentence scheme.

**Dominic Raab:**

The unduly lenient sentence scheme provides a valuable way to ensure that sentences for serious crimes can be challenged where they are considered to be

unduly lenient. In 2016, the Attorney General referred 190 cases to the Court of Appeal, and in 141 of these the Court of Appeal increased the sentence.

## LEADER OF THE HOUSE

### ■ Legislative Drafting: Parliamentary Scrutiny

**Grahame Morris:** [\[110517\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, whether the Government plans to seek Select Committee scrutiny for any draft Bills during the 2017 Parliament.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

As I set out in my answer to the hon. Member for Lancaster and Fleetwood on 8 September the Government has set out an ambitious programme of 27 Bills and draft Bills and will ensure that Parliament will be able to perform its scrutiny function in the usual way.

### ■ Private Members' Bills

**Grahame Morris:** [\[110516\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, if she will bring forward proposals to provide more parliamentary time per session for consideration of Private Members' Bills.

**Andrea Leadsom:**

The Government announced the timetabling for Private Members' Bills on 17 July.

In the extended Parliamentary session of 2010-12, the Government did provide extra days but those dates were approved at a later date.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Marriage: Northern Ireland

**Christine Jardine:** [\[901701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent discussions he has had with political parties in Northern Ireland on equal marriage for same-sex couples.

**Chloe Smith:**

*Both mine and the Secretary of State's position on this issue is clear and well known: me and the Secretary of State voted in support of equal marriage in England and Wales and like the Prime Minister hope this can be extended to Northern Ireland in the future. Me and the Secretary of State believe marriage should be a fundamental and common right across the UK.*

*However, the fundamental position remains that equal marriage is an entirely devolved issue in Northern Ireland and one that the UK Government would like a restored Assembly to resolve.*

**■ Northern Ireland Government****Alan Mak:** [\[901702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what progress has been made on restoring devolved government in Northern Ireland.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Government remains committed to the restoration of devolved Government in Northern Ireland. I have been working closely with the parties towards this objective since March. There remain a small number of differences, particularly around language and culture and sustainability of the Executive, which the parties are continuing to discuss with the support of the UK Government and, as appropriate, the Irish Government.

**■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland****Craig Tracey:** [\[901700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps the Government is taking to tackle paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland.

**James Brokenshire:**

The 2015 Fresh Start Agreement included a number of commitments to tackle paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland. This resulted in the NI Executive bringing forward an Action Plan. The UK Government is providing £25m in support of this. A Programme Board has been established to drive this work forward.

**SCOTLAND****■ Local Growth Deals: Scottish Borders****John Lamont:** [\[111863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with local authorities on the borderlands growth deal.

**John Lamont:** [\[111865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what the next steps are for the Borderlands Growth Deal.

**John Lamont:** [\[111867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with Ministers from the Scottish Government on ensuring that the UK and Scottish Governments work together to deliver the Borderlands growth deal.

**David Mundell:**

The UK Government is committed to deliver a transformational and economic Deal for the Borderlands area that will focus on issues such as infrastructure, skills and energy. I will drive this work forward to see an agreed deal in the coming months.

I and my officials have had a number of meetings with local representatives and local authorities which led to the partners submitting their proposals on 29 September.

My officials are now discussing these proposals with other UK Government Departments and the Scottish Government and I plan to hold discussions with Scottish Government Ministers soon to agree how both Governments can best take this work forward.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ **Motor Vehicles: Sales**

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**

[\[112452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has issued guidance on the potential merits of people purchasing new (a) diesel and (b) petrol cars.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has announced an end to the sale of all new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040. The Department for Transport has not issued specific guidance on the potential merits of purchasing either a new diesel or petrol car.

### ■ **Railway Stations: Access**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[111518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many train stations have waiting rooms which are fully accessible.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Government does not hold this information.

### ■ **Railway Stations: Disability**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[111525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many railway stations (a) have and (b) do not have step-free access.

**Paul Maynard:**

Information on the facilities available at railway stations is collected and held by the Rail Delivery Group, rather than the Department. However, we understand that around 460 of our 2,500 stations in the UK have step free access to and between every platform, which accounts for more than 70% of journeys. Accessibility information about individual stations is published on the National Rail Enquiries website.

We remain committed to continuing to invest in the accessibility of the railway during the next five year Control Period from 2019 and will confirm the way in which we will deliver this later in the year.

**■ Railway Stations: Public Lavatories****Rachael Maskell:** [\[111521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the number of train stations which have toilets which are accessible.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Government is clear that customers should have access to toilet facilities at railway stations that are appropriate to their needs. According to figures provided by the Rail Delivery Group, there are currently 713 accessible toilets across the network.

**■ Railways: North of England****Jo Platt:** [\[112110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2017 to Question 110675, whether the announced £300 million of infrastructure spending related to Northern Powerhouse Rail will be allocated including spending on connectivity to that project.

**Paul Maynard:**

The £300m of funding announced by my RHF the Chancellor of the Exchequer is the direct costs of making passive provision on HS2 for junctions which would allow HS2 infrastructure to accommodate potential future Northern Powerhouse Rail and Midlands Connect services.

**■ Roads: North of England****Diana Johnson:** [\[111781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how his Department plans to invest in major road schemes identified by Transport for the North which are not part of the Strategic Road Network; and whether such schemes will be considered as potential investments in the Government's 2020-2025 Road Investment Strategy.

**Jesse Norman:**

Transport for the North was created to establish a clear, long term, strategic transport vision for the North of England, including a portfolio of strategic prioritised potential transport investment opportunities to support economic growth at both the national, and local level. It is these priorities that will inform the Government's investment decisions.

There are several potential funding sources for major schemes on the local road networks that might be identified by Transport for the North. These include the Local Growth Fund and the Large Majors Fund. The Major Road Network (MRN) will also be available as a source of funding in the future. A consultation, to be launched before the end of the year, will provide more details on our proposals for how the MRN will operate.

The second Road Investment Strategy (2020-25) will focus investment on the Strategic Road Network and will only invest in schemes not part of the Strategic Road Network if a compelling case is made that it will help that network function better.

#### ■ **Taxis: Fuel Cells**

**Liam Byrne:**

[\[111833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to approve hydrogen cell technology to power taxis in England.

**Jesse Norman:**

We recognise that hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) are a potentially important technology, alongside battery electric vehicles, for decarbonising road transport. The Government supports ultra low emission vehicle (ULEV) taxis through its Plug in Taxi Grant with support of up to £7,500 for a new purpose built ULEV taxi and through the Plug in Car Grant with up to £4,500 per vehicle. Both grants are technology neutral, and as long as the vehicle meets the eligibility criteria for the grant it is eligible for support.

## WALES

#### ■ **Aerospace Industry: Wales**

**Chris Ruane:**

[\[112375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent meetings he has held with (a) Ministers of the Welsh Government and (b) Cabinet colleagues on the effect of the UK leaving the EU on the aerospace industry in Wales.

**Alun Cairns:**

I hold regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues, including the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, and with the Welsh Government to discuss a range of issues, including the impact on Wales of the UK leaving the European Union.

The Government recognises the importance of the aerospace sector to Wales, and I recently visited the impressive facilities at both Airbus and Raytheon. Over 23,000 people in Wales are employed by in excess of 160 companies with state-of-the-art facilities which manufacture, supply, maintain, repair and overhaul, civil and military aircraft from around the world.

I will continue to work with other Government departments, my expert panel of stakeholders, the Welsh Government, and the National Assembly for Wales, to support the Welsh economy and promote a prosperous Wales within a strong United Kingdom.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Wales

**Chris Ruane:** [\[112283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what bilateral meetings he has had with (a) Welsh Ministers and (b) UK Government Ministers to discuss renewable energy in Wales.

**Alun Cairns:**

I hold regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues and the Welsh Government to discuss a range of issues, including renewable energy.

Wales plays an important role in contributing to the UK's diverse energy generation mix, and I was pleased to see the wave testbed project in Pembrokeshire included in the Swansea City Deal signed earlier this year by the Prime Minister.

The Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales also have responsibility for a number of aspects of renewable energy and economic development in Wales.

## ■ Wales and Borders Rail Franchise

**Chris Ruane:** [\[112291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent bilateral meetings he has had with (a) Welsh and (b) UK Government Ministers to discuss the rail franchise for Wales.

**Alun Cairns:**

I hold regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues and with the Welsh Government to discuss the operation of Wales' rail network. The UK Government remains committed to devolving franchising powers to the Welsh Government as agreed in 2014 and is continuing to support their procurement for the next Wales & Borders franchise, including the development of the South Wales Metro.

## ■ Wales Office: Working Conditions

**Chris Ruane:** [\[112419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what steps his Department is taking to improve the (a) physical and (b) mental wellbeing of staff employed in his Department.

**Guto Bebb:**

The physical and mental wellbeing of our staff is crucially important to the Department. Whilst the Wales Office is not an employer in its own right, staff have access to all Ministry of Justice employee services that help to sustain physical and mental wellbeing, including Occupational Health and a 24 hour employee assistance helpline. In line with best practice, the Wales Office has a designated Mental Health Champion.

We have also worked with other parts of the UK Governance Group to offer bespoke events. This year, we have delivered two week-long programmes open to all staff focused on enhancing wellbeing in the workplace.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Department for Work and Pensions: Correspondence****Frank Field:**[\[112282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will provide details of any available freepost addresses for correspondence to be sent to his Department.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

There are currently 1045 DWP freepost addresses available. Please find a list of these addresses attached.

**Attachments:**

1. DWP Freepost Address List [112282 DWP freepost address list v1.xlsx]

**■ Department for Work and Pensions: Telephone Services****Jon Trickett:**[\[111488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which public telephone lines for his Department's services are charged at higher rates; and how much was taken by each such telephone line in the last 12 months.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The cost of a call, if applicable, to any Department for Work and Pensions telephone lines is set by service providers within the parameters laid out by Ofcom. The Department does not receive any revenue from calls made to its public telephone lines or get provided with details of the costs to individuals of calls that are made to any of its telephone numbers.

**■ Employment****Alex Sobel:**[\[112454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to support people into work who are (a) not on Jobseekers allowance and (b) do not have access to a work coach.

**Damian Hinds:**

People who are not on Jobseekers Allowance or do not have access to a Work Coach can register on Universal Jobmatch which is a free service that enables them to search and apply for jobs. It allows them to create a personalised profile and a CV that will help match them to job opportunities and allow employers to match their skill set against the specific job and invite them to apply.

In addition they can access the self service facilities that are available in the Jobcentre and be sign posted to other areas of support and provision in the area.

## ■ Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing

**Sir David Crausby:**

[\[112276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households have been subject to the bedroom tax policy in each year since its introduction.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The number of households with a deduction to their Housing Benefit (HB) due to the removal of the spare room subsidy each year since its introduction in April 2013 is available on [DWP Stat-Xplore](#).

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Figures on DWP Stat Xplore do not include claimants on Universal Credit (UC) with a removal of the spare room subsidy (RSRS) deduction, as this data is not currently available.

## ■ Jobcentre Plus

**Margaret Greenwood:**

[\[112051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will publish information on the geographical area covered by each Jobcentre Plus office.

**Damian Hinds:**

There is currently a search facility to help find the local Jobcentre Plus Office which serves a customer's and partner's specific postcode. This is available at [Jobcentre Plus Local Office Search - Gov UK](#). The data behind the tool is regularly reviewed and maintained to remain up to date.

Department for Work & Pensions use an internal system holding postcodes covered by each Jobcentre, to allow staff to signpost customer queries and work tasks to the correct owning office. However, an individual claimant may elect to use a different jobcentre if that is more convenient for them.

## ■ Personal Independence Payment

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[111562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the personal independence payment process on the health and wellbeing of claimants.

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[111563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the effect of long-term sick and disabled personal independence payment (PIP) claimants taking repeated PIP tests and assessments of the health and wellbeing of claimants; and what the cost to the public purse has been of such repeat tests and assessments since they were instituted.

**Mr David Lammy:**

**[111564]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the effect of the abolition of lifetime awards of disability living allowance on the health and wellbeing of claimants.

**Sarah Newton:**

DWP and our Assessment Providers are committed to providing a quality, sensitive and respectful service by conducting fair, accurate and objective assessments, not all of which have to be carried out face-to-face where sufficient evidence exists. Where a face-to-face assessment is required claimants are given the opportunity to alert their Assessment Provider of any additional requirements they may have and the providers will meet any such reasonable requests. Claimants are also encouraged to bring someone with them to their consultation where they would find that helpful for example, to reassure them or to help them during the consultation. The PIP Assessment Guide, which is regularly updated, provides comprehensive guidance for Health Professionals regarding all aspects of the assessment process, including how health professionals conduct themselves during face-to-face consultations.

Awards of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can be at one of eight possible rates of payment. Reviews of PIP are therefore a key part of the benefit and ensure that not only awards remain correct where needs may change but that we also maintain contact with the claimant, both features missing from its predecessor Disability Living Allowance. The length of an award is based on an individual's circumstances and can vary from nine months to an on-going award with a light touch review at the ten year point. Award reviews can also be instigated where a claimant reports that their needs have improved or got worse. PIP already recognises that for the most severely disabled claimants, the award review process could seem unnecessarily intrusive. Existing PIP claimants with the most severe, lifetime disabilities, whose functional ability has remained the same, are more likely to have their evidence reviewed by a DWP Decision-Maker and will not need to have another face-to-face assessment with a healthcare professional.

We will continue to closely monitor developments across the health and disability landscape and engage with stakeholders to improve the service we provide. We are committed to ensuring that the PIP reassessment process works effectively across the spectrum of disabilities and health conditions, including mental health conditions, cognitive impairments and physical disabilities.

The Department has interpreted your costs request to mean the DWP costs associated with PIP award reviews. The yearly operating costs are shown in the table below:

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
PIP Award Reviews	£167,408	£1,867,455	£8,019,582	£5,958,376

#### Notes

The data above is shown in financial years (01<sup>st</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> March) with the exception of 2017/18 which is 01<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> September

The costs associated with Award Reviews have risen each year due to the staged roll-out of the PIP benefit.

#### Source

Activity Based Management Model – L1 Operating Costs

### ■ Personal Independence Payment: Parkinson's Disease

#### Stephen Lloyd:

[111958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with Parkinson's disease have been transferred from disability living allowance to personal independence payment to date.

#### Sarah Newton:

The latest available data on the number of people with Parkinson's disease who have been reassessed from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Personal Independence Payment can be found in table 8D in the file "Personal Independence Payment: DLA to PIP reassessment outcomes, October 2016" at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-independence-payment-april-2013-to-october-2016>

#### Stephen Lloyd:

[111959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with Parkinson's disease have been placed in the personal independence payment no review required category.

#### Sarah Newton:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer previously giving by the Hon. Member Penny Mordaunt MP on 25 July 2017 to Question [UIN 5325](#).

There is no "no review required" category for Personal Independence Payment.

### ■ Social Security Benefits: Mental Illness

#### Sandy Martin:

[111934]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that adults with schizophrenia and other permanent mental health conditions are made aware of their entitlement to claim the benefits to which they are entitled and assisted in making that claim.

**Sarah Newton:**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has an established approach to providing information to all its potential customers through the use of information leaflets, which are widely available and on the Gov.uk website. The National Employer and Partnership Team work with national partners through the Operational Stakeholder Engagement Forum (OSEF). This group consisting of about 40 organisations also attend quarterly meetings to learn more about, and feedback on, current and proposed DWP policies and communication practices. Attendees are encouraged to circulate key messages from the meetings to their many local outlets.

We also, at a local level, work with a wide range of partners and customer advocates in identifying and providing an appropriate level of support to customers who are vulnerable, including those with mental health conditions.

DWP's definition of vulnerability is "any individual who is identified as having complex needs and/or requires additional support to enable them to access DWP benefits and use our services" as being vulnerable. This definition ensures that we have consistency and continuity in the type and level of service which is being offered and that it supports the customer appropriately whatever their needs. Assistance to make a claim is available, this can be through additional support from our telephony agents, or through face to face support in our network of jobcentres or a home visit.

DWP adopts this approach at all points of contact with the customer and uses its records to ensure, to the best of its abilities, when individuals are identified as being vulnerable we take all reasonable steps to try to mitigate any risks.

When DWP Staff are satisfied the risk to the individual is significant and immediate they are explicitly empowered to act without consent to take all steps felt necessary to address significant and immediate risks to an individual's welfare or safety.

Where DWP consider that any risk is not significant or immediate we will continue follow our established approach working with the individual and with consent, where necessary, contact any relevant organisations to provide the appropriate levels of support.

**■ Unemployment****Fiona Bruce:****[111633]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to implement the recommendations of his Department's report on Improving Lives: Helping Workless Families, published in April 2017.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

Improving Lives: Helping Workless Families set out a framework for improving outcomes for disadvantaged children, now and in the future. The Department for Work and Pensions continues to work with key stakeholders and with other Departments to take forward the four policies set out in the document. Further announcements will be made in due course.

**■ Universal Credit****Justin Tomlinson:** [\[112443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to make video relay services available to all universal credit applicants who require them.

**Damian Hinds:**

Video relay service (VRS) is currently being trialled through the call centres for Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Access to Work, as well as by the Access to Work advisers in the Hearing Loss Team. Having been successfully trialled in Personal Independence Payment, DWP are now taking steps to roll out the service to Employment Support Allowance. The service has proved to be popular with DWP customers and has received positive feedback. The VRS trial is continuing to be evaluated and DWP will continue to explore the possibility of offering this service across other areas of DWP.

**Lesley Laird:** [\[112457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to promote awareness of financial assistance available to universal credit claimants awaiting their first full payment.

**Lesley Laird:** [\[112459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the criteria is for claimants of universal credit to receive additional payments while waiting for their initial payment.

**Damian Hinds:**

All new Universal Credit claimants are offered personal budgeting support during their initial interview and those who cannot wait until their first payment are able to request up to half of their indicative award as an advance.

As a result we have taken steps to clarify guidance to ensure claimants get access to the right support. We have also provided communications to increase the visibility of Universal Credit Advances so claimants are made aware of their availability and how to apply for them and the maximum they can claim.

The eligibility criteria for a Universal Credit new claim advance is that the claimant must be likely to be entitled to Universal Credit, must be in financial need and be able to re-pay the advance over the agreed repayment period. Those moving to Universal Credit from legacy benefits can get a benefit transfer advance if they are likely to be entitled to Universal Credit and able to re-pay the advance over the agreed repayment period.

**■ Universal Credit: Christmas****Lesley Laird:** [\[112446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that claimants waiting for full payment of universal credit over Christmas 2017 are adequately financially supported.

**Lesley Laird:**

[\[112458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to ensure prompt payment of (a) universal credit claims and (b) advanced payment claims over the Christmas period.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Department plans to advance the timing of all payments where people would be impacted by bank holidays, to ensure they have money over the festive period, also supporting those customers who request an advance payment during this time. This includes the careful assessment of technical system and banking system availability to ensure successful payments can be made. This year we have enhanced the functionality and added a faster payment contingency function in Universal Credit.

#### ■ **Universal Credit: Disability**

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[111508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of mandatory health and work conversations on the health and wellbeing of disabled claimants which take place after the roll-out of universal credit.

**Sarah Newton:**

We have rolled out the Health and Work Conversation (HWC) to Employment and Support Allowance claimants. Whilst taking part in the HWC will be mandatory for the majority of individuals there are extensive safeguards in place. There are clear exemptions for claimants where it would be inappropriate for them to attend. Work coaches also have the flexibility to defer the HWC if the claimant cannot attend due to temporary circumstances.

All Universal Credit claimants are expected to attend mandatory interviews prior to the work capability assessment where it is reasonable to do so. From late Autumn work coaches will use the Health and Work Conversation techniques to support claimants in discussions with claimants.

#### ■ **Universal Credit: Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath**

**Lesley Laird:**

[\[112451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what categories of claimants will be transferred onto the universal credit service in Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath constituency when the full service of universal credit is rolled out in December 2017; and what the dates of those transfers will be.

**Damian Hinds:**

Both Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath Jobcentres are due to move onto the Universal Credit full service in December 2017. We would normally begin transferring existing Universal Credit claimants to the full service after 3 months.

The Department is not currently transferring claimants from legacy benefits to Universal Credit. This process is not due to begin until 2019.

Some claimants on legacy benefits will experience a change of circumstance which means they will need to make a new claim to Universal Credit, and their entitlement will be re-calculated based on their new circumstances. All claimants in a full service area may naturally migrate following such a change.

■ **Voluntary Work: Charities**

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[111878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Jobcentre Plus offices signpost clients to volunteer opportunities in charity retail from which they could gain employability skills.

**Damian Hinds:**

The sign-posting to volunteering and Work Experience opportunities that is taking place in Jobcentre plus offices is a standard part of our offer where available.

However, DWP does not collect information on the number of Jobcentre plus offices which signpost clients to volunteer or work experience opportunities in charity retail from which they could gain employability.

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[111892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 71 of the report by Demos entitled, Shopping for Good, if he will implement the recommendation to set up clear communication channels with local charity shop managers on the voluntary nature of placements.

**Damian Hinds:**

Jobcentre plus already has clear communication channels set up with employers including charitable organisations. DWP's National Employer and Partnership Team work with 10 well known charities such as Barnado's, British Heart Foundation and others to make over 62,000 volunteering and work experience opportunities available to Jobcentre Plus claimants. These are then communicated through the Jobcentre Plus network. As part of the process employer advisers discuss the voluntary nature and terms of the placement with the placement host as part of their signing of their Employer Agreement.

Jobcentre Plus will continue to develop learning and products to further support the conversations held with employers and charitable organisations when setting up voluntary placements.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### TREASURY

#### ■ **Childcare Service Update**

**The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mel Stride):**

[\[HCWS247\]](#)

This Government is committed to supporting parents with the cost of childcare. We've doubled free childcare to 30 hours a week and introduced Tax-Free Childcare. This support is fairer than the employer voucher scheme, as for the first time it is available to self-employed parents, and all qualifying working parents regardless of their employer. It is better targeted as the support is based on a per child basis, rather than a per parent basis.

The Government opened the childcare service in April of this year – one site where parents can apply for both 30 hours free childcare and Tax-Free Childcare through an easy-to-use, single digital application. This avoids the need for parents to provide the same information twice and means that many parents receive an eligibility result in real time.

More than 275,000 parents now have an open childcare account. Of these, over 216,000 parents received an eligibility code for 30 hours free childcare in September.

However, HMRC recognise that over the summer some parents didn't receive the intended level of service whilst using the site. Whilst the majority of parents used the childcare service without significant problems, some parents experienced technical issues including delayed decisions about their eligibility for one or both of the schemes. The Government acted quickly to address this, and HMRC and their delivery partners NS&I have now made significant improvements to the service.

Over the coming months, we will gradually open the childcare service to parents of older children, whilst continuing to make further improvements to the system. This means we can manage the volume of applications going through the service, so parents continue to receive a better experience and prompt eligibility responses when they apply – almost all parents receive a response within five working days, and most get their decision instantly. All eligible parents will be able to apply by the end of March 2018.

On 24<sup>th</sup> November, we will open the service to parents whose youngest child is under 6 or who has their 6th birthday on that day. Parents can apply online through the childcare service which can be accessed via the Childcare Choices website:

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

Applications for Tax-Free Childcare accounts have been lower than expected. We want to encourage more parents to take up the offer they are entitled to and now the service has improved, we will undertake activity to raise awareness of Tax-Free Childcare amongst parents.

Tax-free Childcare is just one part of the support this Government offers for childcare costs. Where eligible, parents are able to access Working Tax Credits which covers 70% of childcare costs or Universal Credit which increases this support to 85% of costs, 15 free hours of childcare for disadvantaged 2 year olds, 15 free hours for all 3 and 4 year olds, and an additional 15 hours to working parents of 3 and 4 year olds. Employer Supported Childcare will also remain open to new entrants until April 2018.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention and Protocols

**The Minister for the Arts, Heritage and Tourism (John Glen):** [\[HCWS244\]](#)

I am today announcing and publishing measures to support the effective implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols of 1954 and 1999 and the Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act 2017.

The United Kingdom ratified the Convention and acceded to the Protocols on 12th September. They will enter into force for the United Kingdom on 12th December.

Commencement regulations have been made to bring the Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act 2017 into force on that date.

I am publishing a document setting out implementation measures in three key areas: cultural property protected by the Convention and Protocols; safeguarding protected cultural property; and use of the cultural emblem.

Part one of the document identifies seven categories of cultural property in the United Kingdom which we consider meet the definition of cultural property set out in the Convention and are therefore protected by the Convention and Protocols. These categories are indicative and non-exhaustive: there may be other cultural property which meets the definition and which is therefore also protected. The list of categories is UK-wide and has been agreed with the devolved administrations.

Part two sets out our approach to safeguarding cultural property. It explains that we do not intend to impose any additional or specific safeguarding requirements on the owners, guardians and trustees of cultural property in England to be implemented during peacetime, given that they should already have plans in place to deal with emergencies and disasters and armed conflict affecting the territory of the United Kingdom is not expected in the foreseeable future.

Part three deals with use of the cultural emblem. It explains when permission to use the cultural emblem is required and how to request permission. It also explains that the government does not intend to grant permission for the cultural emblem to be displayed on immovable cultural property, such as museums and historic buildings, during peacetime, except where a strong, persuasive case can be made for doing so, in order to protect the integrity of the cultural emblem as a symbol of protection during armed conflict.

Initial permissions to use the emblem for education and training purposes and by the Ministry of Defence, for the new Armed Forces' Cultural Property Protection Unit, the British Red Cross, and the Blue Shield International and National Committees of the Blue Shield are included in an annex. These permissions will come into force on 12th December.

Parts two and three and the permissions in the annex relate only to England. The devolved administrations are responsible for safeguarding cultural property and for granting permissions to use and display the cultural emblem in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

I am also publishing a separate guidance document on the new offence of dealing in unlawfully exported cultural property which is created by section 17 of the Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act 2017.

Both documents are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protection-of-cultural-property-in-the-event-of-armed-conflict>.

I have arranged for copies of both documents to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

## HEALTH

### ■ Report of the Expert Working Group on Hormone Pregnancy Tests

**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Steve Brine):** [\[HCWS245\]](#)

My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Lord O'Shaughnessy) has made the following statement:

Today, the Commission on Human Medicines has published the report of its Expert Working Group on Hormone Pregnancy Tests. Based on its extensive and thorough review, the Expert Working Group's overall finding, endorsed by the Commission on Human Medicines, is that the available scientific evidence, taking all aspects into consideration, does not support a causal association between the use of Hormone Pregnancy Tests, such as Primodos, during early pregnancy and adverse outcomes of pregnancy, either with regard to miscarriage, stillbirth or congenital anomalies.

In the UK, Hormone Pregnancy Tests first became available for diagnosing pregnancy in the 1950s. Between the 1950s and 1978, when Primodos was withdrawn from the market in the UK, a number of studies were published which investigated a possible link between women being given a Hormone Pregnancy Test to diagnose pregnancy and the occurrence of a range of congenital anomalies in the offspring.

Although there was never any reliable evidence that HPTs were unsafe, concern about this issue, coupled with the development of better pregnancy tests meant that a number of precautionary actions were taken to restrict the use of HPTs. The tests were voluntarily removed from the market by the manufacturers.

The body of information subsequently accrued by the 'Association for Children Damaged by Hormone Pregnancy Tests' and other campaigners, led to a Parliamentary debate in 2014 during which the then Minister for Life Sciences, George Freeman MP, stated that he would instruct that all relevant documents held by the Department of Health be released. In addition, he determined that an independent review of the papers and all the available evidence was justified.

The purpose of the review was to ascertain whether the totality of the available data, on balance, support a causal association between use of a Hormone Pregnancy Test by the mother and adverse pregnancy outcomes. It also considered whether, alternatively, the anomalies could have been due to chance alone or due to other factors.

An Expert Working Group of the Commission on Human Medicines was established in October 2015 to conduct the review with the benefit of up-to-date scientific expertise.

The Expert Working Group was subject to a strict conflict of interest policy and comprised experts from a broad range of specialisms, together with lay representation. The terms of reference of the Expert Working Group, were as follows:

To consider all available evidence on the possible association between exposure in pregnancy to hormone pregnancy tests and adverse outcomes in pregnancy (in particular congenital anomalies, miscarriage and stillbirth) including consideration of any potential mechanism of action.

To consider whether the Expert Working Group's findings have any implications for currently licensed medicines in the UK or elsewhere.

To draw any lessons for how drug safety issues in pregnancy are identified, assessed and communicated in the present regulatory system and how the effectiveness of risk management is monitored.

To make recommendations.

The final report summarises the scientific evidence that was considered by the Expert Working Group, its conclusions on the evidence, and its recommendations. All the available relevant evidence on a possible association has been extensively and thoroughly reviewed with the benefit of up-to-date knowledge by experts from the relevant specialisms.

In addition to the overall conclusion, the Expert Working Group has made a number of recommendations to safeguard future generations through strengthening the systems in place for detecting, evaluating, managing and communicating safety concerns with use of medicines in early pregnancy. These recommendations can be found in the report. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency will coordinate their implementation, in collaboration with relevant organisations; and the Commission on Human Medicines, together with its Expert Advisory Group on Medicines' for Women's Health, will ensure progress is regularly monitored.

The evidence which has been reviewed by the Expert Working Group will be published in the New Year once it has been checked in line with the legal duties of data protection and confidentiality.

I attach a copy of the report.

(PDF Document, 946.07 KB)

This statement has also been made in the House of Lords:

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Road haulage update

**Secretary of State for Transport (Chris Grayling):**

[\[HCWS246\]](#)

The impact of disruption at the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel in Kent can lead to significant congestion in that county and further afield. In the event of such disruption, Operation Stack is deployed which queues lorries on the M20 until they can access their ferry or train, closing parts of the motorway to other traffic. However, it has been accepted that this is not an ideal contingency solution particularly given the impact it has on the M20, the surrounding roads, and in particular on people and businesses in Kent.

Following significant and long-running disruption in the summer of 2015, due to French ferry employee industrial action and migrant activity in France, Operation Stack was deployed for over 30 days that summer. The government determined to find a solution to the issue and announced that a new lorry holding park would be built at Stanford West in Kent. The lorry park was to be designed to mitigate the worst impacts of Operation Stack by taking lorries off the road until they could be released to Dover or Eurotunnel.

However, in October 2016 this decision was judicially reviewed on the grounds that the Government had not properly taken into account the environmental impact on a local business and the area in which the lorry park would be built.

Today I am withdrawing the earlier decision to site a lorry park at Stanford West on the grounds that the Government can no longer defend the judicial review. My Department and Highways England have, since being judicially reviewed, tried to find a solution so that the lorry park could be delivered as quickly as possible to mitigate the impacts of Operation Stack, whilst also meeting our environmental obligations. However, it has not proven possible to do so.

But I can announce today that we are immediately starting the process to promote a lorry park through the normal planning process, including a full Environmental Impact Assessment, as a potential permanent solution to Operation Stack. As part of this we will reassess the scope, scale and location of our solutions, taking into account changes since the original concept of the lorry park was promoted, in particular the UK's exit from the European Union but also the need for 'business as usual' lorry parking in Kent. Highways England intend to consult on the options in early 2018 with a view to submitting a planning application in 2019.

Alongside this, I have tasked Highways England with developing an interim solution to be in place by March 2019. Highways England have developed a number of options that, while continuing to hold HGVs on the M20, would allow non-port traffic to continue to travel in both directions reducing the levels of traffic disruption seen in Operation Stack. This could, for example, be through holding HGVs in the centre of the motorway rather than on the coastbound carriageway. Different technologies ranging from steel barriers to moveable barrier systems could be deployed to deliver these solutions. A final decision on which option to take forward will be made in early 2018, with a view to completing delivery by March 2019.

Specific investment decisions on both the permanent and interim solutions will, of course, be subject to normal considerations of affordability and value for money.

Today's announcement demonstrates that despite the setback to our plans to build a lorry park at Stanford West, the Government is still serious about finding both short and permanent solution to help tackle the traffic disruption that can occur from disruption at our busiest border for lorry freight