



Daily Report

Monday, 15 January 2018

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 15 January 2018 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:38 P.M., 15 January 2018). 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ John Worboys

Gareth Johnson:

[\[121511\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many requests were received by his Department requesting the referral of the sentence in R v John Worboys to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme in 2009; and who those requests were made by.

Jeremy Wright:

According to our records, in 2009 the Attorney General's Office received requests to refer John Worboys's sentence to the Court of Appeal from a charity that campaigned against violence against women, and from an MP who passed on a constituent's complaint about the sentence.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Energy: Households

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[121674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the average consumption of domestic energy and gas per household was for (a) those households in receipt of the Warm Home Discount and (b) other households in each year since 2010.

Andrew Griffiths:

The Department does not hold domestic energy consumption data for households in receipt of Warm Home Discount.

For the purposes of understanding fuel poverty, domestic energy consumption is modelled from survey data using assumptions about heating levels needed to ensure a household achieves an adequate level of warmth as opposed to data based on actual consumption.

■ Energy: Prices

Drew Hendry:

[\[121873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reasons his Department's impact assessment on the Draft Domestic Gas and Electricity (Tariff Cap) Bill does not include a clear description of what constitutes conditions for effective competition.

Andrew Griffiths:

The draft Bill requires Ofgem, as the expert regulator, to carry out a review into whether the conditions for effective competition are in place. The review must

consider, among other things, the progress in installing smart meters and it will be for Ofgem to determine the relevant factors in carrying out that review.

■ Energy: Standing Charges

Tulip Siddiq:

[121675]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what information his Department holds on the proportion of average household domestic gas and electricity bills which standing charges have constituted in each of the last five years.

Andrew Griffiths:

Energy bill estimates are based on a BEIS survey of energy providers which covers around 82 per cent of the market. This data is published as part of BEIS' Quarterly Energy Prices publication. The table below shows the proportion of average household domestic gas and electricity bills which standing charges have constituted in each of the last five years, using consumption levels of 3,800kWh/year of standard electricity and 15,000kWh/year of gas.

| PROPORTION OF STANDING CHARGE TO BILL | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| | Electricity | Gas | Total |
| 2013 | 11.2% | 13.1% | 12.3% |
| 2014 | 11.6% | 12.1% | 11.9% |
| 2015 | 11.6% | 12.2% | 12.0% |
| 2016 | 11.8% | 13.3% | 12.6% |
| 2017p | 12.0% | 13.6% | 12.8% |

Note: p's indicate provisional data.

Source: Quarterly Energy Prices

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

Table 2.2.4 Average variable unit costs and standing charges for standard electricity

Table 2.3.4 Average variable unit costs and standing charges for gas

■ Groceries Code Adjudicator

Kerry McCarthy:

[121976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 12 December 2017 to Question 117048 on Groceries Code Adjudicator, for what reasons the Department has not published its response to its consultation on extending the remit of the Groceries Code Adjudicator, which closed in January 2017, and when his Department plans to publish its response.

Andrew Griffiths:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy continues to work closely with the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs on the Call for Evidence on extending the remit of the Groceries Code Adjudicator. We have carefully analysed all responses received and considered potential solutions to issues identified by respondents. We will be publishing a full Government response to the Call for Evidence shortly.

■ **Health: Research****Ms Harriet Harman:****[120235]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his Department's total spend on health research and development was in each of the last five years.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We do not hold data for total Departmental spend on health research and development. However, the UK Clinical Research Collaboration (UKCRC) have published their 2014 UK health research analysis at <http://www.ukcrc.org/research-coordination/health-research-analysis/uk-health-research-analysis/>.

■ **Industry****Tom Brake:****[121333]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of no deal with the EU on (a) the implementation of the industrial strategy and (b) the ability to secure private research and development investment to achieve the target set out in that strategy.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Our ambitious Industrial Strategy is not dependent on our negotiations with the EU. We do however recognise that EU Exit is a key issue for many sectors of the economy.

The Industrial Strategy builds on our strengths, creating strong foundations to meet the challenges of the future, and will help us make the best of our relations with Europe and beyond.

The Government wants the UK to remain the go-to-place for scientists, innovators and tech investors across the world. We intend to secure the best possible outcome for UK R&D as we exit the European Union and would welcome agreement to continue to collaborate with our European partners on science, technology and innovation.

■ Met Office: Finance

Paul Girvan:

[121004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding has been provided to the Met Office in each of the last five years.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Met Office is a trading fund and provides weather and climate services under contract to a range of government and commercial customers. *Revenue from these services in each of the last five years is shown in the following table.*

| 2016/17 | 2015/16 | 2014/15 | 2013/14 | 2012/13 | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total Revenue (£'000) | 226,827 | 227,480 | 220,795 | 208,118 | 204,929 |
| (of which) Government services (£'000) | 194,790 | 195,710 | 187,375 | 175,453 | 171,760 |

The majority of the Met Office's Government services relate to the Met Office's public task, its role as the UK's National Meteorological Service and its support of the Ministry of Defence and other Government departments in respect of weather and climate related services.

In addition, the Met Office has received grant funding from Government in the last five years, for capital investment in its underpinning infrastructure covering High Performance Computing, volcanic ash monitoring and space weather forecasting.

| 2016/17 | 2015/16 | 2014/15 | 2013/14 | 2012/13 | |
|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Total grants (£'000) | 47,000 | 50,000 | — | 3,191 | 2,234 |

■ Nuclear Safeguards

Drew Hendry:

[121903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the cost to public purse of the (a) set-up of a domestic nuclear safeguards regime and (b) ongoing running of a domestic nuclear safeguards regime.

Richard Harrington:

Current estimates of set-up and running costs are set out in paragraph 49 of the Explanatory Notes to the Nuclear Safeguards Bill (Bill 109) published on 11th October 2017. The Department will allocate to the Office for Nuclear Regulation the funding necessary, estimated at potentially up to £10 million, to set up the regime, and is likely to involve an on-going cost of around £10 million a year.

Drew Hendry:

[121904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the cost to public purse of (a) procuring IT and (b) recruitment to set up a domestic nuclear safeguards regime.

Richard Harrington:

The cost estimates provided in the answer to Question UIN 121903 include procurement of a safeguards IT system and recruitment and training of safeguards inspectors, together with strengthening the Office for Nuclear Regulator's institutional capacity to deliver the project.

Drew Hendry:

[121906]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has had recent discussions with counterparts in the Governments of (a) Australia, (b) Kazakhstan, (c) Canada, (d) the US, (e) Japan and (f) South Korea to progress new nuclear safeguards cooperation agreements ahead of the UK's departure from the Euratom in March 2019.

Richard Harrington:

In the [Written Ministerial Statement](#) on Energy published on 11th January, the Government confirmed that it is pursuing as a priority bilateral Nuclear Cooperation Agreements with four international partners where such agreements are crucial for continuity of nuclear trading: USA, Japan, Canada and Australia. These discussions are progressing well and significant progress has been made.

There are also a number of additional countries with whom we will wish to discuss our ongoing nuclear co-operation to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to allow continuity in civil nuclear trade.

Drew Hendry:

[121907]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent progress his Department has made on work to replace the UK's voluntary offer safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency to remain compliant with its obligations under international law when the UK leaves Euratom in March 2019.

Richard Harrington:

The Department has begun formal negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency on future arrangements for the application of civil nuclear safeguards in the UK, in light of the UK's withdrawal from Euratom. The UK is seeking to conclude a new Voluntary Offer Agreement and a new Additional Protocol and our intention is for these agreements to follow the same principles as the current ones.

These discussions began in September: they have been constructive and fruitful, and substantial progress has been made. It is expected that these new agreements will be put to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors for ratification at some point in 2018. The UK has emphasised its continued commitment to the IAEA and to international standards for nuclear safeguards and nuclear non-proliferation.

■ Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult

Diana Johnson:

[\[121479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many full-time equivalent staff are employed in the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult; where those employees are based and how much funding the Catapult has allocated to each NUTS 1 region.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult has 146 full-time equivalent employees.

The table sets out approximate funding that the Catapult has invested in each NUTS region to cover staffing, project costs, capital investment and business overhead costs, such as rent, rates and insurance.

| NUTS REGION | FY 2014/15 (£M) | FY 2015/16 (£M) | FY 2016/17 (£M) | FY 2017/18 (£M) | FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.5 | 2 |
| North East | 9.1 | 9.7 | 10.00 | 8.7 | 83 |
| South West | 0 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 1 |
| Scotland | 3.9 | 5.1 | 6.3 | 5.5 | 59 |
| Wales | 0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 1 |
| Total | 13.0 | 15.1 | 16.6 | 15.0 | 146 |

These figures include individual overheads and travel costs.

■ Parental Leave and Parental Pay

Kevin Brennan:

[\[121944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the letter of 21 December 2017 from Minister for Small Businesses, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility, whether his Department intends that evaluation of Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheduled to take place in 2018 will include mothers who are eligible for Maternity Allowance.

Andrew Griffiths:

We have committed to evaluate the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme in 2018 and the intention is that the evaluation will include mothers who are eligible for Maternity Allowance.

■ Patents

Rebecca Long Bailey: [121086]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Patents and Patents (Fees) (Amendment) Rules 2017 on the number of patent applications from small businesses.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The fee changes being made are the first patent fee increases since 2010. They have been made after a full public consultation and Impact Assessment, both of which considered the impact on small businesses. UK patent fees will remain amongst the lowest globally, ensuring access to the system for businesses of all sizes.

■ Post Offices: Recruitment

Gill Furniss: [121647]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the timetable is to recruit new post-masters to the 776 sub-post offices which have temporarily closed.

Andrew Griffiths:

This is an operational matter for the Post Office. The Government sets the parameters in which Post Office operates – including its geographic reach and the key services it offers – and then allows the Post Office to operate as an independent commercial organisation within those parameters. As such, the Government does not play a role in the day-to-day operational responsibilities of the company. This includes decisions regarding the recruitment of postmasters to any Post Office, whether a Directly Managed Crown branch or one that is operated on the Post office by a franchise partner.

■ Research

Tom Brake: [121200]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations he has received on researchers being excluded from EU research projects as a result of the UK's decision to leave the EU; and if he will provide a breakdown of those representations by academia and industry.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The Government is committed to ensuring the best possible outcomes for UK Science and Research as we exit the European Union. Following the referendum we set up a dedicated mailbox (research@beis.gov.uk) to allow academics, researchers and others with an interest to register any issues experienced in engaging with European activities. Since the announcement of the government underwrite of funding, the number of representations received has been low. Stakeholders have largely been in touch to seek clarification – both on the extent of the funding guarantee, and on the eligibility of UK applicants to continue participating in EU research projects after exit – rather than to report cases of discrimination.

The Joint Report, published by the UK and EU negotiating teams on 8th December 2017, and agreed by the European Council, makes clear that, as part of the overall withdrawal agreement, the UK's right to participate in EU programmes, including Horizon 2020, will be unaffected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU. UK based organisations and individuals will be able to bid for funding, participate in and lead consortia for the remainder of the programmes including in 2019 and 2020.

■ Research: Finance

Ms Harriet Harman:

[120236]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what mechanisms his Department uses to share best practice with other Government Departments on including provisions on affordable access in research and development grants.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

This Government supports open access to research publications, following the Finch Report in 2012, and further advice from Professor Adam Tickell in 2016. It is for the Research Councils and Funding Councils (and, soon, UK Research and Innovation) to implement open access within their arrangements for grants and other instruments. The Research Councils make available block grants to enable universities to make publications arising from their research open access.

Best practice in this regard is for research publications to be open access, that is, freely available for all to read on the internet, and for research data to be "FAIR". We support the recent G7 communique that proposes that "research data should adhere to the FAIR principles of being findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable". This does not mean that such data should always be open, as there are circumstances in which that would not be appropriate, for example where personal confidentiality or national security might be put at risk. Best practice is shared with other Government departments, primarily through the work of the Government Office for Science, and the Chief Scientific Advisors in Government departments across Whitehall.

■ Research: Public Expenditure

Jo Stevens:

[121808]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the yearly gross amount of public funding currently being invested in health research.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

We do not hold data for total Departmental spend on health research. However, the UK Clinical Research Collaboration (UKCRC) have published their 2014 UK health research analysis at <http://www.ukcrc.org/research-coordination/health-research-analysis/uk-health-research-analysis/>.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Blood: Contamination**

Mr Paul Sweeney: [121894]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the timetable is for the establishment of the inquiry into the contaminated blood scandal.

Mr Paul Sweeney: [121895]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the timescale is for the appointment of a chair to the inquiry into the contaminated blood scandal.

Mr David Lidington:

We have asked the Lord Chief Justice to nominate a judge to chair the inquiry, and I hope to announce the name of that judge soon. Once the Chair is appointed, we will be discussing with them the composition of the inquiry panel.

■ **Cabinet Office: Meetings**

Tom Brake: [121114]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to publish transparency data for his meetings from March to December 2017.

Chloe Smith:

Transparency data covering the period March to September 2017 for Cabinet Office Ministers' Meetings is available on gov.uk. Data covering the period October to December 2017 will be published in due course, and will also be available on gov.uk.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-april-to-june-2017>

■ **Cabinet Office: Policy**

Jon Trickett: [121689]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his policy priorities are for the next 12 months; and whether he plans to bring forward any legislative proposals in that time.

Mr David Lidington:

I intend to continue the work of the Cabinet Office and deliver the Cabinet Office purpose - to maintain the integrity of the Union, coordinate the security of the realm, sustain a flourishing democracy, to ensure the delivery of the finest public services and help implement the Government's policies and the Prime Minister's priorities. Currently, Cabinet Office has one piece of primary legislation in the pipeline - an amendment to the Digital Economy Act.

■ Electoral Register

Alex Norris:

[\[121148\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December 2017 to Question 119260, whether his Department has a minimum acceptable level for the (a) accuracy and (b) completeness of the electoral register.

Mr David Lidington:

By law, Electoral Registration Officers are charged with maintaining a complete and accurate electoral register. The Government has not set a minimum acceptable level of completeness or accuracy.

The most recent full assessment of the register completeness and accuracy was published in July 2016 by the Electoral Commission. It showed that completeness was stable (at around 85 per cent) and that the introduction of individual electoral registration in 2014 had led to a statistically significant improvement in register accuracy (at around 90 per cent).

The Government published its democratic engagement plan in December 2017 setting out how we intend to work with Electoral Registration Officers and others to continue to ensure we have the best possible electoral registers.

■ Government Departments: Reorganisation

Kevin Brennan:

[\[121680\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the total cost to the public purse of renaming Government Departments following the Cabinet reshuffle.

Mr David Lidington:

This information is not centrally held. Individual departments will hold their own information on any actions they may be required to take in light of a renaming, and any necessary costs required.

TREASURY

■ Agriculture: Taxation

Dr David Drew:

[\[121172\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has assessed the recommendations on taxation made by the Tenancy Reform Industry Group in October 2017.

Dr David Drew:

[\[121173\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will meet the Tenant Farmers Association to discuss its proposals on taxation reform.

Mel Stride:

The Chancellor keeps the tax system under review and welcomes representations from all stakeholders, including those made by the Tenancy Reform Industry Group. The Treasury will consider the recommendations made by the Tenancy Reform

Industry Group and other representations in due course, including in discussions with the Tenant Farmers Association.

■ **Arron Banks**

Liam Byrne: [\[122060\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how he plans to ensure the information sharing gateway between the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Electoral Commission will allow the FCA to share information on the Commission's investigation into Mr Arron Banks.

John Glen:

The Electoral Commission's investigation into Mr Arron Banks is a matter for the Commission.

I would expect the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to provide relevant assistance to the Commission with their investigation, considering restrictions on confidential information imposed by financial services legislation, and whether the issue falls within the FCA's jurisdiction.

The Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and the Financial Services (Banking Reform) Act 2013 impose clear confidentiality restrictions to encourage the free-flow of information. Any uncertainty about the disclosure of confidential information by the regulators might lead to the regulators' sources (including regulated firms) being less willing to provide this information.

■ **Banks: Closures**

Chris Ruane: [\[121697\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with retail banks on branch closures by those banks.

Chris Ruane: [\[121700\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of bank branch closures on (a) the social isolation of individuals and (b) high street businesses.

Chris Ruane: [\[121710\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made on the effect of bank branch closures on the trends in the level of start-up companies.

Chris Ruane: [\[121716\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support his Department provides to credit unions to deliver a banking service in rural areas where high street banks branches have closed.

Chris Ruane:

[121719]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the number of high street bank branches that have closed in the last twenty years.

John Glen:

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

The Treasury does not make assessments of, nor collect data on, bank branch closures. While the decision to close a branch remains a commercial judgement for banks, the impact on communities must be understood, considered and mitigated where possible.

The industry's Access to Banking Standard, launched in May 2017, commits banks to ensure personal and business customers are better informed about branch closures and the reasons for them closing, along with the options they have locally to continue to access banking services, including specialist assistance for customers who need more help. The Access to Banking Standard is monitored and enforced by the independent Lending Standards Board.

99% of banks' personal and 95% of banks' business customers are now able to withdraw cash, deposit cash and cheques, and make balance enquiries at a Post Office counter via its network of 11,600 branches. At Autumn Budget 2017, my predecessor wrote to the Post Office and UK Finance to ask them to raise public awareness of the banking services available at the Post Office for individuals and SMEs.

The Government also recognises the important role credit unions play in delivering essential services to financially underserved communities. To help expand credit unions' reach, at Autumn Budget 2017 the Government announced that where a credit union's membership conditions are based on a local area, a credit union will be able to increase the number of potential members it can have to from 2 to 3 million. This will allow individual credit unions to offer their services to more people over a wider area.

■ **Business: Tax Allowances**

Diana Johnson:

[121475]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many businesses have been supported by R&D tax relief in each NUTS 1 region in each year since 2006-07

Mel Stride:

HMRC publishes annual statistics on R&D tax relief here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/corporate-tax-research-and-development-tax-credit>

Table RD5 shows the number of R&D tax credit claims made by companies registered in each NUTS1 region. Data for 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 are available at the above link.

Data for previous years back to 2010-11 can be found in the National Archives:

2012-13

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20150131064316/https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/corporate-tax-research-and-development-tax-credit>

2011-12

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140206152752/http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/statistics/research-tc.htm>

2010-11

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130102193237/http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/statistics/research-tc.htm>

The regional split is based on the company's registered office address, which may not be where the R&D activity takes place. Companies may make more than one claim in the same year. These data should therefore be interpreted with caution.

■ **Older People: Employment**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[121670]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of people aged 65 and over that will still be in employment in each year between 2018 and 2023.

Elizabeth Truss:

The Office for Budget Responsibility provide the Government with estimates for employment growth, but do not produce specific estimates for the 65+ population.

According to their latest forecast, employment will grow by over 600,000 by 2022.

The government recognises the need to support sectors to adapt to a changing and ageing workforce as a priority for the UK and has made a commitment to work with employers to promote the benefits of older workers and encourage industries to lead in adapting their workplaces to the requirements of an ageing workforce.

■ Overseas Companies

Mr Gavin Shuker:

[\[121640\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department maintains a list of all UK companies which have a global turnover of more than (a) £16 million, (b) £26 million, (c) £36 million and (d) £46 million; and if he will make a statement.

Elizabeth Truss:

The department does not maintain such a list of UK companies. However we engage with businesses of all sizes in order to understand their needs and priorities

■ Poverty: Children

Laura Smith:

[\[121206\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of rising household debt on levels of child poverty.

Elizabeth Truss:

The proportion of people in absolute poverty is at record lows. Since 2010 there are 600,000 fewer people, with 200,000 fewer children, in absolute poverty. Work is the most effective way out of poverty and unemployment has not been lower since 1975. We are helping people retain more of what they earn by raising the personal allowance, successive increases mean that a basic rate tax payer will be £1,075 better off in 2018-19 than in 2010-11, and to help with the cost of living we are also freezing tax on fuel and alcohol. To support working parents we are introducing Tax Free Childcare, providing support of up to £2000 per year for each child, and are doubling free childcare available for 3 and 4 year olds to 30 hours a week, saving in total around £5,000 a year per child. We are also banning letting agent fees and have published a draft bill to require Ofgem to implement a cap on standard variable and default energy tariffs. However, there is more to do and the government is committed to delivering a country that works for everyone. Last April, the government published its "Improving Lives: Helping Workless Families" strategy. This focused on measures that tackle the root causes of poverty, including specifically problem debt.

■ Private Finance Initiative

Stella Creasy:

[\[121669\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much tax was paid to the public purse by private finance initiative companies, by sector, in each year since 2010.

Elizabeth Truss:

Private Finance Initiative companies operate similar to any private company and face the same tax treatment.

The Government cannot comment on the confidential tax affairs of individual company or group taxpayers.

■ Revenue and Customs Digital Technology Services: Equal Pay**Jon Trickett:**[\[121229\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to page five of the transparency data, RCDTS: gender pay gap report and data 2017, published on 21 December 2017, if he will break down the pay gap data by (a) grade and (b) profession.

Robert Jenrick:

The mean gender pay gap for Revenue and Customs Digital and Technology Service (RCDTS) was 4.6%. It is not possible to break down this figure by grade as during the period in which it was calculated not all RCDTS staff had been assigned a grade. Likewise, information on professions is not held in a format that allows the figure to be broken down.

■ Shared Ownership**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[121673\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of properties in (a) London, and (b) the UK have been bought through shared ownership in each of the last five years; and in what proportion of the transactions for such purchases the purchaser paid Stamp Duty Land Tax on the full market value of the property rather than on the percentage of the property that they were buying.

Tulip Siddiq:[\[121677\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of properties purchased in (a) London and (b) the UK have been purchased through shared ownership in each of the last three years; and on what proportion of those transactions the purchaser opted to pay Stamp Duty Land Tax on the full market value of the property rather than on their percentage of the property.

Mel Stride:

The requested information is not held. Purchasers are not required to state on the Stamp Duty Land Tax return whether or not the property is bought through shared ownership.

■ Shipping: Solent**Stephen Morgan:**[\[121162\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has made to support the Solent's ports and seafarers in the event that the EU and UK fail to negotiate a customs deal before the UK leaves the EU.

Mel Stride:

Future customs arrangements will depend on the outcome of negotiations. The Government hopes for and expects a mutually beneficial outcome. The Government is working hard to ensure that all businesses, including ports and seafarers on the Solent, have the necessary support and guidance in place to be ready for future

customs arrangements. To this end, the Government is engaging with businesses in every sector and region of the UK economy to assess the effect of EU Exit on them.

The Government published Future Customs Arrangements: A Future Partnership Paper and the Customs Bill White Paper in 2017, which contain information to help businesses consider what plans they need to make.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Cadets

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[121666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to visit cadet detachments in Northern Ireland during 2018; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

As Minister with responsibility for Cadets, I commend the good work Cadet forces do in Northern Ireland and welcome invitations to visit its Cadet establishments. I met with a number of Cadet detachments during a Remembrance event in Northern Ireland in 2017. I have no immediate plans to visit Cadet detachments in Northern Ireland in 2018, but I would be very happy to consider such visits in the future.

■ Armed Forces: Training

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[121660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK armed forces personnel by unit have participated in cold weather training in Norway in each year since 2007.

Mark Lancaster:

The information requested is not held centrally in the format requested and can be provided only at disproportionate costs.

■ HMS Ocean

Luke Pollard:

[\[121423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what postings he plans for the crew of HMS Ocean following its decommissioning.

Mark Lancaster:

As part of normal career management of Royal Navy (RN) personnel, those serving in HMS OCEAN will be individually re-assigned. These assignments will be determined by the skills required to deliver RN tasking, while taking into account individual preferences.

■ HMS Raleigh**Dr Julian Lewis:**[\[122044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total level of financial investment has been in the design and construction of the heavy replenishment-at-sea demonstration at HMS Raleigh and whether that system will be used to supply the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

Guto Bebb:

I am withholding the level of financial investment in the Heavy Replenishment-At-Sea (HRAS) Demonstrator at HMS Raleigh as its release would prejudice commercial interests.

It is intended that bulk stores and ammunition for the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers will be replenished by a HRAS system.

■ Military Bases: Wales**Jonathan Edwards:**[\[121594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which military bases, training centres, and other various military establishments are located in Wales.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The following Ministry of Defence sites are located in Wales:

- ABERTILLERY
- ABERYSTWYTH
- BLAINA RIFLE RANGE
- BRECON BKS HQ 160 BDE
- BRIDGEND, LITCHARDS X
- CAERNARFON
- CAERWENT TRAINING AREA
- CAPEL CURIG TRG CAMP
- CARDIFF, GABALFA
- CARDIFF, MORGAN ST
- CARMARTHEN
- CASTLEMARTIN TRAINING AREA
- COLWYN BAY
- CWMBRAN
- CWRT Y GOLLEN RFCA
- CWRT-Y-GOLLEN CAMP RFCA
- DENBIGH RIFLE RANGE

-
- DIO SDT HQ WALES (SENNYBRIDGE)
 - KINMEL PARK RFCA
 - LLANSILIN RIFLE RANGE
 - FAIRBOURNE RESOURCE INITIATIVE TRAINING CENTRE
 - FDTC CRICKHOWELL
 - GORSEINON ARMY RESERVE CENTRE
 - HAVERFORDWEST / CAWDOR BARRACKS (BRAWDY)
 - HIGHTOWN BARRACKS
 - HMS CAMBRIA - SULLY, NR CARDIFF
 - HMS CAMBRIA TAVE DIVISION - SWANSEA (CO-LOCATED WITH ARMY IN GLAMORGAN STREET)
 - INFANTRY BATTLE SCHOOL (IBS) BRECON
 - JOINT SCHOOL FOR ADVENTUROUS TRAINING LLANRWST
 - JSMTTC INDEFATIGABLE
 - KINMEL RFCA
 - LAMPETER WETC
 - LLANDUDNO ARMY RESERVE CENTRE
 - MAINDY BARRACKS
 - MANORBIER RANGES
 - MERTHYR WETC
 - MOD RANGE ABERPORTH
 - MOD RANGE PENDINE
 - MOLD RIFLE RANGE
 - MONA AIRFIELD ANGLESEY
 - MONMOUTH (CASTLE)
 - MONMOUTH (VAUXHALL CAMP)
 - NEWPORT, RAGLAN
 - PENALLY (CAMP AND RANGES)
 - PONTYPRIDD ARMY RESERVE CENTRE
 - PRESTATYN
 - PWLLHOLM TRAINING AREA
 - RAF PEMBREY SANDS
 - RAF VALLEY

- RHYL WETC
- ROGIET MOOR RANGES
- SEALAND RIFLE RANGES
- SENNYBRIDGE TRAINING AREA
- ST ATHAN
- ST ATHAN WEST CAMP
- SULLY
- SWANSEA, GLAMORGAN ST.
- SWANSEA, GRANGE
- SWANSEA, MORFA
- TEMPLETON TRAINING AREA
- TY - ISAF BASE CAMP TALYBONT
- WREXHAM
- YNYS GAIANT, MENAI BRIDGE

■ **Ministry of Defence: Land**

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[\[121593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's policy is on public access for walking and cycling on his Department's land.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) policy is a presumption in favour of public access for recreational purposes wherever this is compatible with operational and military training uses, public safety, security, conservation and the interests of MOD tenants.

■ **National Security**

Luke Pollard:

[\[121421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has requested the timetable for the completion of the National Security Capabilities Review to be extended until Autumn 2018.

Gavin Williamson:

No, it has not. Ministers will consider the conclusions of the National Security Capability Review in due course.

■ **North Korea: Nuclear Weapons**

Alan Brown:

[\[121389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has received reports of imminent missile test launches by North Korea; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Lancaster:

The Secretary of State is briefed on a regular basis about the development of North Korean Ballistic Missile capability, including the conduct of significant tests when they occur. The Ministry of Defence continues to work with its international partners to support the policy of exerting maximum political and economic pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to change its direction and reach a peaceful resolution to regional tensions.

■ **RAF Northolt****Gareth Thomas:**[\[121981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) military, (b) non-commercial civil, (c) commercial civil and (d) London Air Ambulance air movements there were at RAF Northolt in each month in 2017.

Guto Bebb:

The requested air movements are shown below.

| TYPE OF MOVEMENT | JAN 2017 - NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS | FEB 2017 - NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS | MAR 2017 - NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS | APR 2017 - NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS | MAY 2017 - NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS | JUN 2017 - NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Military | 218 | 188 | 324 | 198 | 263 | 309 |
| Non-commercial civil | 34 | 49 | 75 | 67 | 55 | 86 |
| Commercial civil Including Aeromedical | 745 | 859 | 883 | 577 | 856 | 1,001 |
| London Air Ambulance | 65 | 59 | 70 | 68 | 69 | 66 |
| Type of Movement | Jul 2017 - Number of Movements | Aug 2017 - Number of Movements | Sep 2017 - Number of Movements | Oct 2017 - Number of Movements | Nov 2017 - Number of Movements | Dec 2017 - Number of Movements |
| Military | 214 | 169 | 236 | 206 | 219 | 80 |
| Non-commercial civil | 139 | 133 | 149 | 154 | 129 | 62 |

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Commercial 969 | 776 | 965 | 942 | 986 | 559 |
| civil | | | | | |
| Including | | | | | |
| Aeromedical | | | | | |
| London Air 66 | 64 | 81 | 66 | 71 | 62 |
| Ambulance | | | | | |

■ Reserve Forces: Contracts

Mrs Madeleine Moon:

[\[120747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2017 to Question 116559, how many and what proportion of the strength of the Army Reserve were on Full Time Reserve Soldier contracts in (a) April 2013, (b) April 2014, (c) April 2015, (d) April 2016 and (e) April 2017; and what proportion of the number on each of those dates was (i) full and (ii) home commitment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The total strength of the Army Future Reserves 2020 as at April 2013, April 2014, April 2015 April 2016 and April 2017 are shown in the attached table, with the number and proportion who are on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) contracts, and what proportion of the number on each of those dates was full and home commitment.

Notes

1. Future Reserves 2020 includes volunteer reserves who are mobilised, High Readiness Reserves and those volunteer reserves serving on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) and Additional Duties Commitment (ADC). Sponsored Reserves who provide a more cost effective solution than volunteer reserve are also included in the Army Reserve FR20.
1. On 1st April 2012 and 1st April 2013 there were a very small numbers of Reserves on FTRS Limited Commitment contracts. These have been included in FTRS(Home Commitment).
1. Figures have been rounded to 10 for presentational purposes; numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias. Totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear to be the sum of their parts.

Attachments:

1. Total strength of Army Future Reserves 2013-2017 [120747 - Madeleine Moon.docx]

■ Reserve Forces: Training

Mrs Madeleine Moon:

[\[120746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2017 to Question 116552, what the total strength of the Army Reserve was in (a) April 2016,

(b) April 2015, (c) April 2014, (d) April 2013 and (e) April 2012; and how many and what proportion of that strength in each such April were (i) Phase 1, (ii) Phase 2 or (iii) not yet trained; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The total strength of the Army Future Reserves 2020 as at April 2016, April 2015, April 2014 April 2013 and April 2012 are shown in the attached table, with the total divided into Phase 1 trained only, Phase 1 and Phase 2 trained and those who are not yet trained.

Notes:

1. The number and proportion of Army Reserves who are not yet Phase 1 trained includes those who have been recruited but will not start training until confirmed medically fit. It may also include those who have joined the Army Reserve over a year ago but have not yet completed Phase 1 training.
1. Future Reserves 2020 includes volunteer reserves who are mobilised, High Readiness Reserves and those volunteer reserves serving on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) and Additional Duties Commitment (ADC). Sponsored Reserves who provide a more cost effective solution than volunteer reserve are also included in the Army Reserve FR20.
1. Figures have been rounded to 10 for presentational purposes; numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias. Totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear to be the sum of their parts.

Attachments:

1. Total strength of the Army Future Reserves [120746 - Madeleine Moon.docx]

■ **Strategic Defence and Security Review**

Alan Brown:

[\[121386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he will implement a full defence review before 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Gavin Williamson:

Ministers will consider the conclusions of the National Security Capability Review in due course, and decide what needs to happen next.

■ **Trident Missiles**

Alan Brown:

[\[121388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost to public purse of introducing the new Mark 4A non-nuclear arming, fusing and firing system to the UK's Mark 4 nuclear warhead.

Guto Bebb:

I am withholding details of the cost of the Mark 4A programme for the purposes of safeguarding national security.

■ **Type 31 Frigates**

Dr Julian Lewis:

[122040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Type 31e frigate will be designed in the UK.

Guto Bebb:

The National Shipbuilding Strategy (paragraph 92) was clear that for reasons of national security, the UK prioritises the need to retain the ability to design, build and integrate warships.

Richard Graham:

[903279]

What progress he has made on implementing the National Shipbuilding Strategy and procuring the Type 31e frigate.

Guto Bebb:

We launched the Type 31e programme in September last year. The programme is in the pre-procurement phase and we are currently looking at industry's responses to a Request for Information which invited high level proposals against the outline requirements for an initial order of five ships at a maximum average price of £250 million each.

■ **Veterans: Employment**

Jo Stevens:

[121811]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate his Department has made of the employment levels of veterans (a) 6 months, (b) one year and (c) five years after leaving the armed forces.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

An estimated 80 per cent of personnel who left the Armed Forces in Financial Year (FY) 2015-16 were employed six months after leaving their Service. The Ministry of Defence is due to publish updated statistics (for FY 2016-17 Service leavers) on Thursday 25 January. Full details of the current statistics can be found at the following address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/career-transition-partnership-ex-service-personnel-employment-outcomes-statistics-index>.

Employment rates for veterans at the one year and five year points after leaving the Armed Forces are not held by the Ministry of Defence.

■ Warships

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[121661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what system of ice classification is used by the Royal Navy to describe the ability of ships to operate in low sea temperatures; what the features of that system are; and what the ice classification is of each commissioned Royal Navy vessel.

Guto Bebb:

The Royal Navy uses the ice classification process embedded in the ship design rules of the Classification Society.

We do not discuss the detail of the extreme weather conditions to which individual Royal Navy units can operate as this would or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[122041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what priority his Department accords to maintaining UK sovereign warship design capability; and if he will make a statement.

Guto Bebb:

The National Shipbuilding Strategy (paragraph 92) was clear that for reasons of national security, the UK prioritises the need to retain the ability to design, build and integrate warships.

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[122042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what criteria will be applied when decisions are made between competing bids for the design of warships to assessing whether the UK's prosperity agenda is being furthered.

Guto Bebb:

The evaluation criteria for a tendering exercise will be agreed prior to a competition on a case-by-case basis for future warship programmes being launched.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Athletics: Sportsgrounds

John Mann:

[\[121281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many athletics tracks have been (a) closed and (b) opened since the 2012 London Olympic Games.

Tracey Crouch:

According to Sport England's Active Places Power database which maps community sports facilities in England (a) 12 athletics tracks have closed, and (b) 12 new athletics tracks have been built in England since 2012. This data can be found at: www.activeplacespower.com.

■ Broadband: Northern Ireland**Paul Girvan:** [\[120996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that broadband customers in rural Northern Ireland receive the same guarantee of minimum speeds as other parts of the UK.

Margot James:

I refer the Hon Member to the Written Ministerial Statement entitled "Universal Broadband" made on 20th December. Once the broadband USO has been implemented, consumers across the UK will have a legal right to request from a designated provider, who has a legal obligation to supply, a broadband connection of at least 10Mbps, up to a reasonable cost threshold.

Paul Girvan: [\[121007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that broadband customers in rural Northern Ireland have access to equivalent speeds as customers in the rest of the UK.

Margot James:

Currently over 85% of premises in Northern Ireland have access to superfast broadband and this is expected to increase to 87% by the end of March 2018 as a result of the Government's Superfast Broadband Programme. The Government has allocated a further £150 million to support ultrafast broadband roll-out as part of the June 2017 funding support package for Northern Ireland. For any premises that do not have access to superfast broadband the government will give everyone in the UK a legal right to request a connection of at least 10Mbps by 2020. The Better Broadband Scheme is also available now to enable all premises to have access to a connection speed of at least 2Mbps today.

■ Broadband: Rural Areas**Dr David Drew:** [\[120638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to facilitate access to superfast broadband for people who live in remote rural areas and cannot afford that service; and how those people can apply for support to access superfast broadband.

Margot James:

The Government's Superfast Broadband Programme has provided access to superfast broadband (speeds of more than 24Mbps) to over 4.65 million premises that would otherwise not have got it. Coverage will continue to be extended further both through the Government's programme and further roll-out by the private sector.

For the remaining premises that do not have access to superfast broadband, the Government will ensure universal broadband of at least 10Mbps by introducing a regulatory broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO) to give everyone access to high speed broadband by 2020.

■ Creative Industries Council

Kevin Brennan:

[121793]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 December 2017 to Question 118626, when the annual review of the membership of the Creative Industries Council will take place.

Kevin Brennan:

[121945]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 December 2017 to Question 118626, if he will expand the number of industry representatives on the Creative Industries Council to include trade union representation.

Margot James:

The review of membership of the Creative Industries Council will take place later in the year. As stated in the previous answer, the review process is led by the Council's industry co-Chair. Organisations and individuals interested in being involved in the Council's work can do this through a range of council sub-groups, details of which can be found at www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk.

■ Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press Inquiry

Afzal Khan:

[122053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to publish its response to the Leveson Inquiry.

Margot James:

The Government has publicly consulted on Section 40 of the Crime and Courts 2013 and Part 2 of the Leveson Inquiry. The Secretary of State and the Home Secretary are currently consulting with Sir Brian Leveson. Sir Brian wishes to consider the information properly before giving a formal view on the issues raised. Once we have considered his views, we will be publishing the Government's response to the consultation.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Equal Pay

Jon Trickett:

[121230]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the transparency data, DCMS gender pay gap 2016-2017, published on 18 December 2017, if she will publish the pay gap data for ordinary pay and bonus pay by (a) grade and (b) profession.

Tracey Crouch:

As part of the new legal requirement for public authorities to publish their gender pay gap every year, DCMS published their figures in December 2017:

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| MEAN GENDER PAY GAP | 3.3% |
| Median gender pay gap | 8.2% |
| Mean bonus pay gap | -7.1% |
| Median bonus pay gap | -92.4% |

Splitting these figures by grade gives the following breakdown:

Mean gender pay gap

| GRADE | PAY GAP |
|---------|---------|
| AA/AO | -5.9% |
| EO | -3.8% |
| HEO/SEO | 1.8% |
| G6/7 | 0.3% |
| SCS | 12.3% |

Median gender pay gap

| GRADE | PAY GAP |
|---------|---------|
| AA/AO | -9.2% |
| EO | -6.1% |
| HEO/SEO | 2.3% |
| G6/7 | -0.9% |
| SCS | 10.0% |

Narrative on the mean and median pay gap: As a department most of our staff are concentrated at HEO/SEO and Grade 6/Grade 7; this represents around 70% of the total workforce. At SCS level a number of highly specialised Digital roles, predominantly males, has led to the gap increasing at this level.

Mean bonus pay gap

| GRADE | PAY GAP |
|-------|---------|
| AA/AO | -17.4% |
| EO | -5.1% |

| GRADE | PAY GAP |
|---------|---------|
| HEO/SEO | 1.1% |
| G6/7 | -19.3% |
| SCS | 17.6% |

Median bonus pay gap

| GRADE | PAY GAP |
|---------|---------|
| AA/AO | -17.4% |
| EO | -15.4% |
| HEO/SEO | 40.0% |
| G6/7 | -88.2% |
| SCS | 0.0% |

Narrative on the mean and median bonus gap: Overall of all the men that received bonus payments 52% received an in-year award only, for women this was 44%. These payments are generally lower than the end of year award payment and where there is a median bonus pay gap, this is because the median point falls within the in-year award pay range rather than in the end of year figure.

Narrative on Professions: DCMS does not hold profession information for every employee so this breakdown is not possible.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Regulation

Priti Patel: [\[120897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the title was of each set of regulations introduced by her Department in each month since May 2010; which of those regulations have been (a) subject to the (i) one in one out and (ii) one in two out procedure and (b) (i) revoked and (ii) amended; and what the net cost to (A) the public purse; and (B) business of those regulations is.

Priti Patel: [\[120925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which EU (a) Directives, (b) Regulations and (c) other legislation affecting her Department she is planning to propose (i) revocation and (ii) amendment of after the UK leaves the EU.

Margot James:

The changes to regulations affecting business during the 2010-15 Parliament are recorded in Statements of New Regulation that were published every six months.

These are available on <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/one-in-two-out-statement-of-new-regulation>.

For the 2015-17 Parliament, the Government will shortly publish its final report on the savings to business delivered during that Parliament.

For the current Parliament, the Government is committed to maintaining a proportionate approach to regulation to enable business growth while maintaining public protections. This will be monitored through the target that the Government is required to set under the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015.

Priti Patel: [120982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what processes her Department has put in place to (a) monitor, (b) collate cost information on, (c) review and (d) respond to requests to amend or revoke regulations introduced by her Department.

Margot James:

The European Union (Withdrawal) Bill will retain EU law as it applies in the UK on exit day. We expect between 800 and 1000 statutory instruments will be required across Government to correct this retained EU law to ensure the statute book functions appropriately outside the EU. All Departments are engaged in this process. As we leave the EU, the Government's EU exit legislative programme is designed to cater for the full range of negotiated and non-negotiated outcomes.

■ Erasmus+ Programme

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [121653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many youth projects are supported by Erasmus Plus (Youth), and how many British young people have been supported by those projects since the start of that programme.

Tracey Crouch:

Details of the number of youth projects can be found at <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/statistics-0> under 'Projects funded' - 'Data Tables', Table 1.

There are no records of the nationality of participants, but details of the number of participants funded in the UK can be found at <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/statistics-0> under 'Project Mobilities and Outputs' - 'Data Tables', Table 1.

Copies of the information have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

■ Football Association: Finance

Laura Smith: [121521]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much money the Football Association received from the public purse in each of the last five years.

Laura Smith:

[\[121522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what Football Association projects received ring-fenced Government funding in each of the last five years.

Tracey Crouch:

The Football Association has received £41.9m of National Lottery and Exchequer funding from Sport England over the past five years for the grassroots programmes it delivers. That total broken down equates to £10,287,050m in 2013/14; £9,175,259m in 2014/15, £9,345,964m in 2015/16, £10,033,667m in 2016/17 and £3,081,184m currently in this financial year. Within that total, the FA Skills programmes received £1.5million in each of the five years, and £2million was ring-fenced over the last three years to the FA's coaching programme that seeks to improve diversity in that workforce.

In addition to this funding, the DCMS via Sport England has invested through the Football Foundation charity a further £10million per year over the last five years to the FA and Premier League Facilities Fund and committed a further £8million for the last three years into the FA led Parklife football hubs programme.

■ **Gambling: Internet**

Hywel Williams:

[\[121365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with online gaming platform providers on ensuring that moderators identify and remove hate speech and ban offending users.

Hywel Williams:

[\[121366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had recent discussions with online gaming platform providers on strengthening user guidelines to ensure that hate speech is removed and that offending users are banned.

Hywel Williams:

[\[121367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had recent discussions with online gaming platform providers on the creation of a voluntary code of conduct for online gaming; and if she will make a statement.

Hywel Williams:

[\[121368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will include online gaming platforms in the UK Government's code of practice for social media providers and if she will make the code legally binding.

Hywel Williams:

[\[121369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what her Department's policy is on tackling the use of hate speech on online gaming platforms.

Margot James:

On 11 October the Government set out plans to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. The Internet Safety Strategy green paper considers options for working with online platforms, game publishers, game developers and with agencies such as the Video Standards Council Rating Board, to continue to improve online safety in games.

Through the Strategy consultation we have sought views on a number of online safety initiatives, including working with the video games industry to share guidance and best practice to help ensure their consumers can have a safe and enjoyable experience online. The Strategy also highlighted the announcement made by Home Secretary to create an Online Hate Crime Hub that will ensure that victims of online hate crime have their cases effectively and efficiently investigated.

The consultation closed in December and we are now analysing the responses. A government response will be published in due course. Details of Ministerial meetings can be found on Gov.uk.

■ Mayflower: East Midlands**John Mann:**[\[121280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much and what proportion of the money committed to the East Midlands by his Department for the 2020 Mayflower Pilgrims 400th anniversary has been allocated to date.

Michael Ellis:

VisitBritain has allocated £500,000 of funding to the Mayflower 400 team to assist in the delivery of the Mayflower commemorations. The national Mayflower Trail is a part of this project and includes Scrooby and Austerfield as Nottinghamshire sites of interest.

■ Ofcom: International Cooperation**Christine Jardine:**[\[120936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what funding her Department has allocated to Ofcom to promote in international forums the use of the (a) 961-1015 MHz, (b) 1045-1075 MHz, and (b) 1105-1154 MHz bandwidths for Programme Making and Special Events.

Margot James:

Up to £55m of funding will be available to help support the programme making and special events sectors impacted by the 700MHz spectrum clearance programme.

■ Photographs: Disclosure of Information**Meg Hillier:**[\[115649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will change the law to make it illegal to take a photograph of someone naked without their consent.

Meg Hillier:

[\[115651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Secretary of State has any plans to update the law on consent to be photographed.

Meg Hillier:

[\[116955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will assess the effectiveness of legislation governing photographic consent.

Margot James:

Government recognises that the legislation governing photographic consent raises complex issues. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport are discussing this area of legislation with the Ministry of Justice and will write to the Rt Hon member following the outcome of these discussions. A copy of the letter will be placed in the House library.

■ Radio Frequencies

Christine Jardine:

[\[120938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans her department has for supporting manufacturers of Programme Making and Special Events equipment to build equipment for use in the (a) 961-1015 MHz, (b) 1045-1075 MHz, and (c) 1105-1154 MHz bands.

Margot James:

Ofcom have reported that 2 manufacturers have stated their intention to have equipment that operates in the 960 MHz band on the market in the near future.

Christine Jardine:

[\[120940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what new services her Department plans on being introduced into the 1350-1400 MHz band over the next decade.

Christine Jardine:

[\[120941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what new services her Department plans on being introduced into the 960-1164 MHz band over the next decade.

Margot James:

It is not possible to comment with any certainty on possible changes to spectrum use over a 10 year time frame.

■ Sanitary Protection: VAT

Ian Lavery:

[\[121287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether there is a minimum limit above which charitable organisations must bid in applying for funding from the tampon tax fund.

Tracey Crouch:

Applications to the Tampon Tax Fund should be for £1million or more and be from organisations that can deliver impact across their chosen category and across multiple regions in one or more of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Applications are welcomed from individual organisations or consortia with an identified lead organisation. We are particularly interested in receiving applications from organisations whose projects include making onward grants to other charitable organisations, as a way of utilising existing expertise in the sector, increasing geographical reach, and improving impact.

■ Third Sector: Finance**Stephen Morgan:**[\[121154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to increase the number of funding sources available for charities and voluntary organisations.

Tracey Crouch:

Charities and voluntary organisations are receiving funding from Government through a number of programmes. This includes unlocking £360m for good causes from dormant bank accounts. Other examples include investing £32m so far in disadvantaged women and girls via the Tampon Tax Fund and £40m in youth organisations through the Youth Investment and #iwill Funds.

Government is also taking steps to open up new opportunities for charities and voluntary organisations' to play a role in public services. Efforts include recruiting a Crown Representative for the sector and ongoing Commissioning Academy programmes.

■ Tickets: Sales**Laura Smith:**[\[121312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the effect of online ticket platforms on the affordability of tickets to entertainment events.

Laura Smith:[\[121314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to take steps to limit the ability of online robots to purchase tickets for entertainment events.

Margot James:

We are determined to crackdown on unacceptable behaviour in the online ticketing market and improve fans' chances of buying tickets at a reasonable price.

The Consumer Rights Act 2015 already includes rules about tickets offered for sale on the secondary market, but the Digital Economy Act passed last year adds an additional requirement for ticket sellers to provide a unique ticket number when re-selling a ticket resale, and provides the power to create a specific offence, where

tickets are purchased electronically, of purchasing more tickets than the maximum permitted. We intend to enact this power via secondary legislation later this year.

We welcome the work of the Competition and Markets Authority and Trading Standards in taking enforcement action against those who are suspected to be in breach of consumer law.

■ **Tourism: Portsmouth**

Stephen Morgan: [\[121155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial assistance her Department is providing to increase the number of visitors to Portsmouth.

Michael Ellis:

VisitBritain and VisitEngland work with Destination Management Organisations to promote tourism across the UK. Government also provide funding for individual projects to improve their visitor offer, in particular through the Discover England Fund and the Coastal Communities Fund. Portsmouth has recently received £1.75m of Coastal Communities Funding to revitalise its Victorian Arches in the Heart Battery and £50,000 of Coastal Revival Funding for the repair and refurbishment of the South Parade Pier. Portsmouth Council also received £10,000 to set up a Coastal Communities Team to develop an economic plan for the area.

■ **Urban Areas: Culture**

Diana Johnson: [\[121486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to page 234 of the Industrial Strategy, published in November 2017, to which cities will the £2 million in place-based cultural development be allocated.

Michael Ellis:

The Cultural Development Fund will use £2 million funding for 2018/19 to test the model for place-based cultural development and support towns and cities to develop culture and creative industries led growth strategies. No decisions have yet been made on which regions will benefit from funding.

■ **Video Games**

Daniel Zeichner: [\[120735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to support the video games industry.

Daniel Zeichner: [\[120736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of the creation of a British Games Institute and its potential effect on the video games industry.

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[120737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will meet with hon. Members to discuss the potential merits of the creation of a British Games Institute.

Margot James:

The video games industry is a great success story and we are committed to promoting its growth. Companies in the sector have received some £119 million from the UK's video games tax relief since its introduction in 2014. Additionally our UK Games Fund has supported more than 60 games projects and our funding for the programme has recently been extended to 2020. The games sector will also benefit from the Government's new transformative £33 million "Audience of the Future" strand of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

We are continuing to work with other Government Departments, public organisations and representatives from industry to consider what else we can do to drive growth in the games sector and the wider creative industries, including as part of the planned sector deal.

EDUCATION

■ Academies: School Meals

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[121798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what percentage of academies founded between January 2010 and June 2014 have voluntarily signed up to the national school food standards.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Statutory School Food Standards apply to local authority maintained schools, academies that opened prior to September 2010 and academies and free schools in England entering into a funding agreement from June 2014.

All new academies are expected to meet the food standards. Over 1400 academies, founded between September 2010 and June 2014, are voluntarily following the standards and we encourage the remaining schools to commit to them.

■ Assessments: Fraud

Stephen Timms:

[\[121717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps his Department has put in place to reduce instances of cheating in GCSE and A Level exams.

Nick Gibb:

This is a matter for the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) and I have asked its Chief Regulator, Sally Collier, to write directly to the hon Member for East Ham (Stephen Timms). A copy of her reply will be placed in the House of Commons Library.

■ Children: Day Care**Stephen Timms:****[121715]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average weekly cost was of a childcare place in Greater London in each year since 2010.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The department collects data on the weekly cost of childcare through our regular parent surveys. These can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-childcare-and-early-years>.

Tracy Brabin:**[121835]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) childminders and (b) group-based childcare settings rated (i) good and (ii) outstanding by Ofsted in each local authority have left the Early Years Register in each month of the last three years.

Nadhim Zahawi:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 27 November 2017 to Questions 114905, 114907 and 114908:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-questions-answers/?page=1&max=20&questiontype=AllQuestions&house=commons%2clouds&uin=114908>.

Tracy Brabin:**[121996]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many eligibility codes for 30 hours of free childcare have been issued for the January term in (a) the England, (b) each region of England and (c) each local authority area in England.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As of 8 January 2017, 326,068 eligibility codes for 30 hours of free childcare had been issued for the spring term as published in the management information release: [30 hours free childcare eligibility codes issued and validated: January 2018](#). The publication also includes a local authority breakdown and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/30-hours-free-childcare-eligibility-codes-issued-and-validated>.

See below for a breakdown of issued codes by region:

| REGION | ELIGIBILITY CODES ISSUED BY 8 JANUARY 2018 |
|--------------------------|--|
| NORTH EAST | 14,814 |
| NORTH WEST | 50,584 |
| YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER | 33,304 |
| EAST MIDLANDS | 30,541 |

| REGION | ELIGIBILITY CODES ISSUED BY 8 JANUARY 2018 |
|-----------------|--|
| WEST MIDLANDS | 34,103 |
| EAST OF ENGLAND | 34,473 |
| INNER LONDON | 12,925 |
| OUTER LONDON | 26,168 |
| SOUTH EAST | 53,163 |
| SOUTH WEST | 35,489 |
| Unknown | 504 |
| Total | 326,068 |

Tracy Brabin:

[121998]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of eligibility codes for 30 hours of free childcare issued for the January term have been validated in (a) England, (b) each region of England and (c) each local authority in England.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As of 8 January 2018, 266,494 eligibility codes for 30 hours of free childcare had been issued for the spring term as published in the management information release: [30 hours free childcare eligibility codes issued and validated: January 2018](#). The publication also includes a local authority breakdown and is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/30-hours-free-childcare-eligibility-codes-issued-and-validated>.

See below for a breakdown of validated codes by region:

| REGION | ELIGIBILITY CODES VALIDATED BY 8 JANUARY 2018 |
|--------------------------|---|
| NORTH EAST | 12,833 |
| NORTH WEST | 42,947 |
| YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER | 27,780 |
| EAST MIDLANDS | 24,251 |
| WEST MIDLANDS | 28,889 |
| EAST OF ENGLAND | 27,370 |
| INNER LONDON | 9,624 |
| OUTER LONDON | 18,834 |

| REGION | ELIGIBILITY CODES VALIDATED BY 8 JANUARY 2018 |
|------------|---|
| SOUTH EAST | 43,176 |
| SOUTH WEST | 30,784 |
| Unknown | 6 |
| Total | 266,494 |

Tracy Brabin:

[\[122017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to provide more information on extending the eligibility for 30 hours of childcare to foster children.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As Minister for Children and Families and my hon. Friend, the Member for Scarborough and Whitby (Robert Goodwill), announced during the Westminster Hall debate on 19 December 2018, the department is working to allow foster carers to access the additional 30 hours free childcare for their foster children where it is right for the child.

The department is working with local authorities, fostering service providers, fostering charities and foster carers themselves to develop plans for delivery. More detail will be set out in due course.

■ Church Schools: Catholicism

Helen Jones:

[\[122026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will meet representatives of Catholic education to discuss the requirements for the opening of new Catholic schools; and if he will make a statement.

Anne Milton:

Ministers and officials hold meetings with a range of partners and stakeholders, including representatives from the Catholic education sector and will continue to do so. The department plans to respond to the proposals regarding the establishment of new faith free schools as set out in the consultation document, 'Schools that work for everyone', in due course.

■ Department for Education: Sick Leave

Tom Brake:

[\[121100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of officials in her Department took sick leave for reasons relating to stress in the last year; and what proportion of total sick leave in her Department that leave was.

Tom Brake: [\[121103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many days' sick leave officials in her Department took for reasons relating to stress in the last year.

Tom Brake: [\[121107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the cost was to her Department as a result of officials taking sick leave in the last year.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The number of employees in the Department for Education from December 2016 to December 2017 who were absent due to stress was 102, this represented 2% of the total workforce. The proportion of sickness absence related to stress was 14% of the overall sickness absence for the department.

The total amount of sickness absence days in the Department for Education from December 2016 to December 2017 due to stress was 2652.

The estimated cost to the department from December 2016 to December 2017 for employees taking sickness absence, is estimated at £2,700,000.

■ Education: Finance

Peter Aldous: [\[121204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which local authorities have applied to her Department for authorisation to make further deductions or variations to the limits set out in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2017.

Nadhim Zahawi:

89 local authorities requested to disapply the School and Early Years Finance (England) regulations 2017, this relates to the funding year 2017/18.

■ Free School Meals

Imran Hussain: [\[121259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to increase the number of children receiving free school meals who are entitled to them.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We recognise the benefits of providing a healthy school meal to the most disadvantaged children and we want to make sure that as many eligible children as possible are claiming their free school meals.

Schools and local authorities have worked hard in recent years to encourage eligible families to register for free school meals, and we provide schools with a model registration form and guidance. We will continue to look at the most effective practice and to share this with schools and local authorities.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[121334]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of families that will become ineligible for free school meals as a result of proposed changes to the net earnings threshold and how many of those families would benefit financially by reducing their income in order to receive free school meals.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We are currently consulting on proposals for free school meals eligibility under Universal Credit. We will consider the responses to the consultation carefully and will continue to refine our analysis as our policy on this matter develops.

Currently around 1.1 million of the most disadvantaged children are eligible for and claim a free nutritious meal. This government provides significant funding to ensure the most disadvantaged children receive free school meals. Under our proposals, no existing recipients of free school meals should lose their entitlement following the introduction of new eligibility criteria. We have proposed protection arrangements to ensure that every pupil who is eligible and receiving free school meals at the point at which the criteria are changed (or any claimants who gain free school meals during the rollout of Universal Credit) should be protected against losing their meals whilst Universal Credit is fully rolled out nationally. In addition, any protected pupils who are still receiving free school meals once the Universal Credit transition is complete would continue to receive protection until the end of their current phase of education.

Under our proposed net earnings threshold, we estimate that around 50,000 more children will become entitled to free school meals than at present, enabling us to target support towards a greater number of families on low incomes. It is right that we make sure that free school meals reach children from the most disadvantaged families, and we are consulting on this issue to make sure that this is the case.

■ **Free School Meals: Wansbeck**

Ian Lavery:

[121381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the number of families in Wansbeck constituency who would be entitled to free school meals under the pre-universal infant free school meals system.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The proportion of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals under the pre-universal free school meals system is published at the annual 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' statistical release

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2017>.

Data is not summarised by parliamentary constituency, but data for each school is available in the Underlying data: SFR28/2017 of the annual 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' statistical release, contained in file

'SFR28_2017_Schools_Pupils_UD'. The figures can be filtered by school phase, school type and parliamentary constituency.

■ Free School Meals: Warrington North

Helen Jones:

[122031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) children eligible for free school meals in the Warrington North constituency and (b) children who would be eligible if the plans in the consultation on eligibility for free school meals are implemented.

Nadhim Zahawi:

This information is published in the underlying data: SFR28/2017 of the annual 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' statistical release, available here:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2017.

We estimate that the proposals outlined in the consultation will lead to an extra 50,000 children across the county receiving free school meals compared to today's number of claimants. The analysis is not available at constituency level.

■ GCSE: Merseyside

Frank Field:

[122047]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils achieved five or more GCSEs graded A*-C who were (a) eligible for and (b) not eligible for free school meals by (i) gender and (ii) ethnicity in (A) Birkenhead, (B) Wallasey, (C) Wirral South and (D) Wirral West constituencies in each year for which data is available.

Nick Gibb:

The number and percentage of pupils, at the end of key stage 4, achieving five or more GCSEs (or equivalents) at grade A*-C, including English and maths, split by the requested characteristics is provided in the attached document. Data for the 2016/17 academic year is not provided as the characteristics information for this year (ethnicity and free school meals) will be published on the 25 January 2018.

Since the 2015/16 academic year Progress 8, Attainment 8 and EBacc entry and attainment are the headline measures for secondary school performance.

Attachments:

1. 122047 attachment [122047 attachment.xlsx]

■ Hearing Impairment: Children

Siobhain McDonagh:

[121149]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of local authorities provide radio aids hearing technology to assist deaf children in educational settings.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We do not collect data on the provision by local authorities of radio aids to deaf children in educational settings.

Schools and local authorities are required to provide auxiliary aids as part of the reasonable adjustment duty under the Equality Act 2010. Schools are expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces in comparison to non-disabled pupils. All such decisions depend on the facts of each individual case. Where there is a centrally organised visual or hearing impairment service it may be reasonable for the local authority to provide more expensive aids or support through that service but not reasonable for an individual school to have to provide them.

Local authorities must have regard to the statutory responsibilities placed upon them by the Children and Families Act 2014 to determine appropriate provision for children and young people with special educational needs or a disability (SEND) in their area and to keep it under review. They are also required to consult children and young people and their families on their published Local Offer of SEND provision. This is especially important for low incidence types of SEND such as hearing impairment.

■ Office for Students**Jon Trickett:**[\[121226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many applications were received to serve on the board for the Office for Students.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

[Holding answer 10 January 2018]: Two parallel open recruitment campaigns were held in the second half of 2017. One for Office for Students (OfS) board members, and a second specifically for a student experience board member, who must have experience of representing or promoting the interests of students, individually or generally, on higher education courses provided by higher education providers.

The OfS board members' competition received 221 applications.

The student experience board member competition received 133 applications.

Some applicants responded to both campaigns.

Jon Trickett:[\[121313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the selection criteria were for positions on the board of the Office for Students.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

[Holding answer 10 January 2018]: The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires that the Office for Students (OfS) must have a Chair, a Chief Executive Officer, a Director for Fair Access and Participation and between seven and 12 ordinary members. At least one of these ordinary members must have experience of representing or promoting the interests of students, individually or generally, on

higher education courses provided by higher education providers. The Higher Education and Research Act (Schedule 1, S2(2)) sets out criteria for ministers to have regard to in making appointments.

The selection criteria were published in the applicant packs which were available on the Cabinet Office Public Appointments website for the duration of the campaign. Extracts from the applicant packs are provided in the attached document.

Attachments:

1. Extracts from applicants' packs [121313 - Attachment - 090118.docx]

Mr David Lammy:

[121439]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many candidates were (a) considered, (b) shortlisted and (c) interviewed for positions on the board of the Office for Students; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

[Holding answer 11 January 2018]: Two parallel open recruitment campaigns were held in the second half of 2017; one for Office for Students board members, and a second specifically for a student experience board member. The campaigns generated 221 applications for the non-executive board member positions and 133 applications for the Student Experience representative. Some applicants responded to both campaigns.

17 candidates were shortlisted across the two campaigns and of those, 16 were subsequently interviewed, with one candidate choosing to withdraw.

My Rt hon. Friend the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation responded to questions in the House of Commons on this subject on 8 January 2018.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[121617]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many people were identified as suitable for appointment in the recruitment process for the board of the Office for Students but were not appointed.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

[Holding answer 11 January 2018]: Two parallel open recruitment campaigns were held in the second half of 2017; one for Office for Students (OfS) board members, and a second specifically for a student experience board member. The campaigns generated 221 applications for the non-executive board member positions and 133 applications for the Student Experience representative. Please note that some applicants responded to both campaigns.

11 candidates were shortlisted for interview for the non-executive board member positions. Ten interviews were held as one candidate did not attend the interview. six candidates were shortlisted and interviewed for the student experience board member position.

Ten candidates were deemed appointable for the non-executive board member positions. Three candidates were deemed appointable for the student experience board member position. Ministers chose to appoint five candidates from the ten non-executive campaign and therefore five candidates were not appointed. For the student experience campaign, ministers chose not to appoint any of the three appointable candidates. Ministers then chose to make an interim appointment of one of the successful candidates appointed to the OfS Student Panel onto the OfS Board and will re-run a campaign for a permanent student representative on the OfS Board later in the year.

Gordon Marsden:

[\[121618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the response by the Universities Minister on the 8 January 2018 to the Urgent Question on the appointment of Toby Young to the board of the Office for Students, who was the Higher Education representative that served on the panel for appointments to the Board of the Office for Students.

Gordon Marsden:

[\[121619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what briefing was prepared by her Department to ensure the panel for appointments to the Board of the Office for Students had sufficient background information on applicants' use of social media to ensure they were able to do due diligence on their decision.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

[Holding answer 11 January 2018]: The Higher Education representative who served on the panel for appointments to the Board of the Office for Students, referred to by the Universities Minister on the 8 January 2018, was Gordon McKenzie, Chief Executive of GuildHE.

Panel members received application details of candidates that they had shortlisted ahead of the interviews. This included declarations on conflicts of interest and political activity which were then discussed with candidates at interview.

Due diligence took place ahead of interviews and appointments. Neither panel members nor the department were aware of the offensive tweets by Toby Young before his appointment was made. These remarks were years, in some cases decades in the past. It is not reasonable or proportionate for government to trawl through tens of thousands of tweets over many years when making public appointments though we will reflect on the lessons that we can learn from this experience.

Kevin Brennan:

[\[121620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation of 8 January 2018, how many candidates deemed appointable by the most recent appointment panel for the Office for Students were not subsequently appointed.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

[Holding answer 11 January 2018]: Two parallel open recruitment campaigns were held in the second half of 2017; one for Office for Students (OfS) board members, and a second specifically for a student experience board member. The campaigns generated 221 applications for the non-executive board member positions and 133 applications for the student experience representative. Please note that some applicants responded to both campaigns.

11 candidates were shortlisted for interview for the non-executive board member positions. 10 interviews were held as one candidate did not attend the interview. Six candidates were shortlisted and interviewed for the student experience board member position.

Ten candidates were deemed appointable for the non-executive board member positions. Three candidates were deemed appointable for the student experience board member position. Ministers chose to appoint five candidates from the ten non-executive campaign and therefore five candidates were not appointed. For the student experience campaign, ministers chose not to appoint any of the three appointable candidates. Ministers then chose to make an interim appointment of one of the successful candidates appointed to the OfS Student Panel onto the OfS Board and will re-run a campaign for a permanent student representative on the OfS Board later in the year.

Stella Creasy:[\[121668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Consumer Rights Act 2015, what responsibilities the Office of Students will have to uphold the consumer rights of students.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Higher education providers (HEPs) can have responsibilities under consumer law, including under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, which should be discharged fully, and policies and procedures should be in place to comply with the law. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has published guidance to help HEPs understand and meet their obligations under consumer law. This guidance sets out that students should have access to clear, specific and timely information; understandable, fair and transparent terms and conditions; and clear and fair complaints handling processes.

The government published a consultation on behalf of the new Office for Students (OfS) regarding the regulation of the higher education sector, which closed on the 22 December 2017. The consultation includes a proposal that the OfS will require registered higher education providers in the approved and approved (fee cap) categories to demonstrate that, in developing their policies and procedures governing their contractual and other relationships with students, they have given due regard to relevant guidance, such as that of CMA, as to how to comply with consumer law. A response will be published in due course.

Wes Streeting:[\[121786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the timetable is to fill the vacancy on the board of the Office for Students.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The resignation of Toby Young from the board of the Office for Students (OfS) will not prevent it from carrying out its responsibilities. The appointments to the board reflect the diverse needs of the higher education sector, young people and employers. The OfS board's broad range of skills and experience across the field of education will ensure it is able to deliver for students.

We will look to replace Toby Young in due course.

Wes Streeting:[\[121791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many candidates interviewed for appointment to the Board of the Office for Students scored more highly at interview than Toby Young.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The interview panel did not rank the appointable candidates. Following the interviews, they presented ministers with the list of appointable candidates and those that were deemed not appointable, alongside a summary of their strengths as demonstrated at interview.

■ Pre-school Education**Helen Jones:**[\[122027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the role of maintained nursery schools in tackling educational inequalities; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Maintained nursery schools (MNS) are commonly located in disadvantaged areas and all but one is rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. We are providing around £60 million a year of supplementary funding to enable local authorities to maintain funding rates for MNS until at least 2019-20.

■ Pre-school Education: Finance**Tracy Brabin:**[\[121833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason the Early Years Investment Fund has been closed.

Nadhim Zahawi:

A decision was made not to continue development of the Early Years Investment Fund in order to ensure resources are being directed to where there is the greatest need.

■ Pre-school Education: Universal Credit

Caroline Lucas: [\[121378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2017 to Question 117664, what use her Department makes of the information on qualifying households in receipt of universal credit and other legacy benefits that is provided to her Department by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Caroline Lucas: [\[121379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how local authorities are informed of households in their area in receipt of universal credit that include a child that is or is about to be two years' old so that they can promote the free early years education entitlement for two-year-olds to qualifying households.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The department receives information from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on families who are potentially eligible for the entitlement to free early education for two-year olds, and passes relevant information to local authorities seven times a year. Local authorities may then use this to make direct contact with parents, to encourage and assist them to take up the offer. The information may also be used by local authorities to help with future capacity and sufficiency planning by providing a better understanding of the distribution of potentially eligible children.

The lists are intended to help local authorities to improve take up of the offer, but do not include every potentially eligible child. There are other means by which local authorities can identify eligible children and ensure high take up. The department is working closely with the DWP to ensure the accuracy of the information that is provided. Universal Credit data will be made available to the Department for Education in order to support this policy.

Caroline Lucas: [\[121380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department will be taking account of families in receipt of universal credit when evaluating and benchmarking the take-up of the free early years education entitlement for two-year-olds in local authority areas.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Take-up rates for the eligible two-year-old population benefitting from funded early education are published annually in the National Statistics release: Provision for children under five years of age in England. The next release is scheduled for June/July 2018 covering data from January 2018.

The department obtains information about eligible households from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). We are working closely with the DWP to improve our data-sharing and ensure the comprehensiveness of the information provided.

■ Pupils: Sanitary Protection

Stephen Morgan:

[121163]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information her Department holds on the number of school absences caused by girls' inability to access free sanitary products.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department for Education collects information on absence through the termly school census. The department collects data on the number of possible sessions, number of authorised absences, number of unauthorised absences and the reason for absence for each pupil. The reasons for absence do not include a category which would enable sessions missed due to a lack of access to menstrual products to be identified. The method of data collection does not enable us to identify pupils who are routinely missing school as we collect information on the total sessions missed each term. Full details of the absence data we collect in school census can be found in the census guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-census>.

We are committed to ensuring that any action to address absence is based on robust evidence. We have sought to establish whether there has been any rigorous national assessment of the prevalence of period poverty or its impact on attendance, however none appears available. We reached out to school stakeholders in July 2017 through the Association of School and College Leaders forum asking for contributions on the issue and have received a very limited response. We are producing additional analysis of our absence data to look for evidence of period poverty and will publish findings in due course.

We have made it a priority to reduce school absence for all pupils and there has been some notable success in this area, with overall yearly absence rates decreasing from 6.5% of possible sessions missed in 2006/7 to 4.6% in 2015/16.

■ Pupils: Sexual Offences

Julian Knight:

[121345]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance her Department plans to issue to schools on tackling peer-on-peer sexual abuse.

Julian Knight:

[121346]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to prevent peer-on-peer sexual abuse in schools.

Nadhim Zahawi:

On 14 December 2017 the department published advice for schools on how to prevent and respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children (available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>.)

Keeping Children Safe in Education is statutory guidance that all schools must have regard to when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of

children (available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>).

KCSIE sets out that all staff should receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction and that training should be regularly updated. All schools should have an effective child protection policy. The policy should include procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse, set out how allegations will be investigated and dealt with, be clear abuse should never be passed off as “banter” and set out how victims of peer on peer abuse will be supported.

The department is consulting on revising KCSIE. The consultation (available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/keeping-children-safe-in-education-proposed-revisions>) closes on 22 February 2018 and provides an opportunity to comment on the effectiveness of the sexual violence and sexual harassment advice.

■ Schools: North of England

Imran Hussain:

[121662]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to publish its response to Sir Nick Weller's report on the Northern powerhouse schools strategy.

Nick Gibb:

The Government published its response to Sir Nick Weller's report on the Northern powerhouse schools strategy as part of the 2016 Northern Powerhouse strategy. (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/571562/NPH_strategy_web.pdf).

■ Sex and Relationship Education

Darren Jones:

[121188]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the National Education Union report on Sexism in schools published in December 2017, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the relationships and sex education curriculum is designed to prevent sexism and sexual harassment among children and young people at all key stages.

Nick Gibb:

On 14 December 2017 the Department published advice for schools on how to prevent and respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>.

The Department wants to ensure that all pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to keep themselves safe and develop healthy, respectful and positive relationships for adult life in modern Britain. The Department is actively engaging with a wide range of stakeholders to develop the regulations and guidance on Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education; and we launched two calls for evidence on 19 December, one for adults and one for young people, to seek views on the curriculum content for these subjects. The calls for evidence close on 12

February and can be accessed via this link: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/life-skills/pshe-rse-call-for-evidence/>.

We envisage draft regulations and the guidance will be published for consultation later this year. The regulations will then be laid in Parliament.

Julian Knight:

[121347]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will take steps to improve and strengthen the teaching of consent during sex and relationship education in schools.

Nick Gibb:

It is important to provide all young people with a curriculum that ensures they are equipped for life in modern Britain. As announced in March 2017, the new subjects of Relationships Education in primary schools and Relationships and Sex Education in secondary schools are likely to cover the issue of consent, as well as areas such as self-respect and respect for others, commitment, tolerance, how to manage conflict, and how to recognise unhealthy relationships. The Policy Statement is available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/595828/170301_Policy_statement_PSHEv2.pdf.

We are engaged in discussions with a wide range of stakeholders to develop the regulations and guidance for these subjects. We have also launched two calls for evidence, one for adults and one for young people, to seek views on the curriculum content for these subjects. The calls for evidence are available at: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/life-skills/pshe-rse-call-for-evidence/>.

We envisage draft regulations and the guidance will be published for consultation later this year. Regulations will then be laid in Parliament.

■ Sign Language: GCSE

Stephanie Peacock:

[121336]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 17 September 2017 to Question 112129, on sign language: GCSE, whether a Level 2 qualification in British Sign Language would be accepted as equivalent to a GCSE for the English Baccalaureate.

Stephanie Peacock:

[121337]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 17 September 2017 to Question 112129, on sign language: GCSE, what assessment her Department has made of the effect on disabled young people of there not being a GCSE available in British Sign Language.

Stephanie Peacock:

[121338]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 17 September 2017 to Question 112129, on sign language: GCSE, when her Department plans to introduce new GCSEs.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is committed to the education of all children and young people with special educational needs or a disability, including those with a hearing impairment.

As part of the GCSE reform process, which began in 2011, the Government carried out equality impact assessments at every stage of its review. We expect the reformed GCSEs to remain universal qualifications and therefore accessible for all, with good teaching and applying reasonable adjustments where appropriate. The Government has no current plans to consider new GCSEs.

Qualifications which are not GCSEs or AS levels do not count towards the English Baccalaureate, which is a performance measure for schools.

Students: Loans**Alex Sobel:**[\[121273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the reason is for the difference in the repayment thresholds for Plan 1 and Plan 2 loan schemes.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Plan 1 and Plan 2 income contingent repayment student loans are separate loan products with different terms and conditions, including different interest rates, repayment thresholds and write-off periods.

Alex Sobel:[\[121274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason students with a Student Loan living in countries with higher tax rates are subject to a lower repayment threshold than students living in the UK.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The repayment of student loans is governed by the Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) Regulations 2009 (as amended). All borrowers, including those resident in the UK and overseas, are liable to make student loan repayments calculated on the basis of pre-tax income.

Overseas repayment thresholds are calculated using World Bank cost of living data (which is used to compare differences between the cost of living in the UK and other countries), not the tax rates of countries of residence. This means that if a borrower is resident in a country calculated as having a lower cost of living than the UK, the repayment threshold applied to their loan will be lower than would be the case if they were residing in the UK.

Alex Sobel:[\[121275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reasons the Student Loan repayment rate is calculated using gross salary levels.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The repayment of student loans is governed by the Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) Regulations 2009 (as amended). The amount that a borrower is required to repay is calculated on the basis of income subject to National Insurance contributions (for UK-resident PAYE borrowers) or income subject to tax (for borrowers required to complete a Self Assessment Tax form or borrowers resident overseas). This provides equal treatment of borrowers. An individual's effective tax rate can be dependent on a variety of factors, such as investment income or pension contributions, and does not provide a simple link to earnings.

■ Students: Part-time Employment**Layla Moran:**[\[121763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 9 January 2018 to Question 120227, what assessment he has made of the effect of his proposals for two-year university courses on the ability of students to seek part-time employment during term-time alongside studying to fund their living costs.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Accelerated degree courses generally require study at the same intensity, in hours per week, as their standard degree equivalents. Accelerated study is achieved by increasing the number of weeks studied per year rather than the number of hours per week. As such, we would expect students on such courses to be as able to work part-time work during term time as students on traditional programmes. The proposed arrangements for living cost support are set out in the consultation on accelerated degrees, which closes on 11 February, and we will consider any relevant evidence in the responses we receive to that consultation.

■ Teachers: Labour Turnover**Angela Rayner:**[\[122023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many teachers who qualified in (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15, (c) 2015-16, and (d) 2016-17 have left the profession.

Nick Gibb:

Full information on retention rates for newly qualified teachers who began their employment in each year since 1997 is available in Table 8 of the 'School Workforce in England: November 2016' statistical release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2016>.

Information for 2016 is not yet available but will be published later this year.

■ Teachers: Pensions**Laura Smith:**[\[121317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure equality in survivor benefits for widows and widowers in the Teachers' pension scheme.

Nick Gibb:

Pensions for widows were introduced in 1972 to most public sector pension schemes, including the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). Surviving partner pensions were extended in 1988 to cover widowers, in 2005 for civil partners and in 2014 for same sex marriage spouses. The Government has made it clear that it believes that it is right that married same sex couples and civil partners should be treated equally to married opposite sex couples. That is why TPS legislation ensures that survivor benefits, accrued since 1988, are built up equally for all legal relationships.

The Supreme Court Case of Walker v Innospec, has confirmed that the surviving partner of a pension scheme member must not be treated differently based on their sexual orientation. HM Treasury is responsible for policy in this area and will soon provide instructions to departments on the implication of the Walker case. When the full extent of this ruling is understood, we will take all steps necessary to ensure the TPS complies.

Louise Haigh:[\[122066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to extend entitlement to a late spouse's teacher's pension to remarried surviving spouses of teachers who retired or died before January 2007.

Nick Gibb:

Pensions were introduced for the widows of teachers in 1972. Spousal pensions were then extended to include widowers and civil partners. Up until 2007, funding of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) was on the basis that partner pensions would cease, should the dependent partner remarry or enter a civil partnership.

In 2007, the rules governing survivor pensions were changed to ensure that any pension which becomes payable to a surviving spouse or civil partner, where the member had service in the TPS after 1 January 2007, will be paid for life. There are no plans to retrospectively apply this amendment to those who retired, or otherwise left the TPS, before the regulations were changed.

■ Teachers: Recruitment**Mrs Louise Ellman:**[\[121654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November to Question 110214 on Science: Teachers, what analysis has been conducted to assess the effect of increasing bursaries on the retention of staff in subjects identified as areas where it is difficult to recruit; and will she make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

Bursaries are a recruitment incentive designed to attract the best people into teaching, in the subjects where the need for new teachers is greatest. Though bursaries are not intended as a retention device, the vast majority of bursary recipients gain qualified teacher status and go straight into the classroom. In 2015/16, the latest year for which data is available, 94 per cent of trainee teachers who

received a bursary found a teaching post within six months of gaining qualified teacher status.

The Department is piloting a new approach for maths trainee teachers this year to test whether offering a proportion of the bursary as a retention incentive remains as effective in encouraging candidates to train to teach. Maths trainees for 2018/19 will receive £20,000 during training with two further payments of £5,000 in their third and fifth year of teaching .

The Department is undertaking analysis of the effects of bursaries for retention, which will track the progress of bursary recipients from training into the classroom. We will publish our findings later this year and they will be used to shape future approaches to financial incentives.

■ Universities Superannuation Scheme

Jo Stevens:

[\[121810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to encourage Universities UK to resolve the dispute over the Universities Superannuation Scheme.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Universities are autonomous institutions and they are responsible for their own pension provision. The department has not taken steps to encourage Universities UK, or any other party, to resolve the dispute regarding the Universities Superannuation Scheme, but continues to monitor developments.

■ Universities: Freedom of Expression

Jo Stevens:

[\[121648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his Department's policy is on the no-platforming at universities of (a) Al-Muhajiroun, (b) the British National Party, (c) the English Defence League, (d) Hizb-ut-Tahir, (e) the Muslim Public Affairs Committee and (f) National Action; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

Al-Muhajiroun and National Action are proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000. Membership is illegal and these groups should not be given a platform at universities.

Universities have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to ensure freedom of speech, including for visiting speakers (under the Education Act (No 2) 1986). The government therefore, does not support blanket no-platforming of individuals or organisations who are legally exercising their right to freedom of speech; it is for universities to balance their legal duties on a case-by-case basis.

The government's position on this issue has been publicly stated on a number of occasions.

■ Wakefield City Academies Trust

Jon Trickett:

[\[121709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for School Standards on the 6 November 2017, Official Report, column 1178, whether the resources and support provided includes the return of reserves that were transferred from schools to Wakefield City Academies Trust before its collapse.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Wakefield City Academies Trust has chosen to take a trust-wide perspective of its finances, and is working with the Department for Education to ensure all 21 academies transfer to incoming trusts in a way that secures the financial future for each school and the education of their pupils. We are working with all of the schools and the preferred new trusts to determine appropriate support and resources, including funding, so that each of the schools has what is required to improve pupil outcomes. Our priority is to transfer the schools to trust that will be able to ensure every child receives an excellent education.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Dr David Drew:

[\[121732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many herds have been subject to interferon gamma testing in each of the (a) low, (b) edge and (c) high-risk bovine tuberculosis control areas in 2017; and if he will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The number of holdings in England subject to interferon gamma testing is set out below.

| TB RISK AREA | LOW | EDGE | HIGH |
|---|-----|------|------|
| Number of holdings(CPH) to which IFN-γ test applied | 45 | 228 | 100 |

In response to the question, 'herd' has been interpreted to mean 'holding (County Parish Holding - CPH)'.

Please note that this is unpublished data and has been provided from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) laboratory records.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: South West

Dr David Drew:

[\[121733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many herds in (a) Gloucestershire, (b) Somerset and (c) Dorset were subject to interferon gamma

testing in each of the (i) three years prior to badger culls commencing and (ii) subsequent years since badger culls commenced in those areas.

George Eustice:

The number of holdings subject to interferon gamma testing is set out below.

NUMBER OF CPHs TESTED

| 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|----|
| Dorset | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0* | 0 | 16 |
| Gloucestershire | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2* | 3 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| N Somerset & S Glouc | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2* | 7 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Somerset Excluding North | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2* | 1 | 1 | 4 | 13 |

* These figures reflect the year in which authorised badger culling commenced in the specific counties - 2013 for Gloucester and Somerset and 2015 for Dorset.

‘Herd’ has been interpreted to mean ‘holding (County Parish Holding - CPH)’.

APHA laboratories record the information based on the split counties for Gloucester and Somerset and so this is the only way that the information can be readily supplied.

Please note that this is unpublished data and has been provided from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) laboratory records.

■ **Exhaust Emissions: Greater London**

Tom Brake:

[\[121095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of devolving powers to the Greater London Authority on the regulation of emissions from non-road mobile machinery.

Tom Brake:

[\[121096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with the Mayor of London’s Office to devolve powers on the regulation of emissions from non-road mobile machinery.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Defra officials regularly have discussions with the Mayor’s office on a range of issues relating to air quality, including their experience of regulating emissions from non-road mobile machinery in London.

We will publish a Clean Air Strategy this year setting out how we will work towards meeting our ambitious targets for reducing air pollution by 2020 and 2030, and are considering a range of options as part of that work.

■ Farms: Tenancy Agreements

Dr David Drew: [\[121167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to the reports from the Tenancy Reform Industry Group working group submitted to him in October 2017.

Dr David Drew: [\[121168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward proposals to implement the recommendation of the Tenancy Reform Industry Group made in October 2017 to allow tenants under the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 to have the statutory right to assign those tenancies to assist with retirement and restructuring.

Dr David Drew: [\[121169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will implement the recommendation of the Tenancy Reform Industry Group made in October 2017 to require that contractual clauses in farm tenancies regulated by the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 which seek to restrict farm tenants from investing in fixed equipment, diversifying or working off the holding should be subject to a test of reasonableness.

Dr David Drew: [\[121170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the recommendations from the Tenancy Reform Industry Group of October 2017, whether he has plans to encourage longer-term Farm Business Tenancies; and if he will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The government is committed to supporting a vibrant tenant farming sector which creates opportunities for new entrants to the industry. Last year I asked the Tenancy Reform Industry Group to give an opinion on a range of issues. This included giving consideration to how Defra might make greater use of its powers under the 1970 Agriculture Act. I have received their report and we are considering these matters further.

■ Fly-tipping

Stephanie Peacock: [\[121130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to review fly-tipping penalties and sentences.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government is committed to tackling fly-tipping. It is for local authorities to use the full range of powers available to them and ensure they prioritise resources to tackling this issue. I am raising this with colleagues that Ministry of Justice and we will work with the appropriate people in the court system to ensure sentencing levels act as an effective deterrent.

We have published a consultation on a range of proposals to tackle waste crime and fly-tipping. These proposals include giving local authorities and the Environment Agency the power to issue a fixed penalty notice to householders who give their waste to fly-tippers.

Stephanie Peacock:**[121132]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of fly-tipping on local environments and wildlife.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Tackling all waste crime, including fly-tipping, is a government priority. Fly-tipping involves the illegal deposit of different types of waste, from the small scale deposit of single items to the larger scale deposit of multiple items. Fly-tipping incidents therefore can have different impacts on the environment depending on the type of waste being fly-tipped. The types of waste being fly-tipped can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fly-tipping-in-england>.

The Environment Agency has recently published the Waste Crime Interventions and Evaluation Project which included an estimation of the environmental cost of illegal waste sites. The report can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662841/Waste_crime_interventions_and_evaluation_-_report.pdf

■ Incinerators: Recycling**Dr David Drew:****[121919]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has commissioned research into the potential effect of increased incineration capacity on levels of recycling; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Defra is currently looking at the overall capacity that may be needed to deal with England's waste that remains after recycling and re-use. This analysis is ongoing and does not specifically focus on waste incineration.

We are developing a new resources and waste strategy which will aim to ensure we have the right mix of waste infrastructure that maximises its value as a resource and minimises its environmental impact.

■ Local Government: Smallholdings

Dr David Drew: [\[121174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he is taking steps to ensure that local authorities obtaining best value from the management of their county council smallholding estates; and if he will make a statement.

Dr David Drew: [\[121175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward proposals to strengthen the accountability of local authorities in the management of their county council smallholding estates as proposed by the Tenancy Reform Industry Group in October 2017.

George Eustice:

The government is committed to supporting a vibrant tenant farming sector which creates opportunities for new entrants to the industry. Last year I asked the Tenancy Reform Industry Group to give an opinion on a range of issues. This included giving consideration to how Defra might make greater use of its powers under the 1970 Agriculture Act. I have received their report and we are considering these matters further.

■ Natural England: Equal Pay

Jon Trickett: [\[121232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the transparency document entitled Natural England Gender Pay Gap Report 2017, if he will set out the pay gap data on ordinary pay and bonus pay by (a) grade and (b) profession.

George Eustice:

For clarity, it should be recognised that this question is about equal pay, as it is by grade, rather than the gender pay gap which applies to the whole of an organisation. The data provided in Natural England's response is based on the data used for Natural England's Gender Pay Gap Report 2017. Natural England will be undertaking an Equal Pay Audit in 2018, which will include other protected characteristics.

a) Natural England's mean & median pay gap data by grade are shown in the table below. Negative figures represent a pay gap in favour of females.

| GRADE | MEAN PAY GAP | MEDIAN PAY GAP |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Apprentice (1st Year) | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Apprentice (After 1st year) | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| AO | 0.2% | -4.5% |
| EO | -0.9% | -3.4% |

| GRADE | MEAN PAY GAP | MEDIAN PAY GAP |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| HEO | 4.5% | 8.1% |
| SEO | 4.7% | 7.1% |
| G7 | 8.4% | 12.8% |
| SCS1 | 1.9% | 0.8% |
| SCS2 | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| SCS3 | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Board Member | 6.0% | -1.4% |
| Grand Total | 10.90% | 13.2% |

* Natural England has no substantive females at SCS2 / SCS3 hence the 100% GAP

Bonus Pay Gap

| Grade | Mean Pay Gap | Median Pay Gap |
|-------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Apprentice (1st Year)** | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Apprentice (After 1st year)** | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| AO | -3.9% | 0.0% |
| EO | -3.6% | 0.0% |
| HEO | 4.3% | 0.0% |
| SEO | 7.8% | 0.0% |
| G7 | -13.9% | 4.5% |
| SCS1 | 95.5% | 95.5% |
| SCS2 | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| SCS3 | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Board Member** | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Grand Total | 20.0% | 0.0% |

* Natural England has no substantive females at SCS2 / SCS3 hence the 100% GAP ** Not Eligible for bonus

b) We do not hold data by profession for Natural England so are unable to provide this.

Key to addressing the gender pay gap in Natural England is the progression of women's careers. Natural England has a number of measures in place to do this. These include participation in Civil Service talent programmes which have recently become available to Non-Departmental Public Bodies: for example - Positive Action Pathways (talent programmes for under-represented groups) and Crossing Thresholds (a career development programme for Women). Natural England also runs its own annual Future Leadership Programme and, when appropriate, a Senior Leadership Programme. Natural England also runs a mutual mentoring scheme and has a gender champion and network in place, their role being to further and promote women's interests in Natural England. They are critical to building a better understanding of and finding ways to meet the support women say they want to progress their careers. Natural England is continuously looking at and drawing on best practice across the Defra group and wider Civil Service to support women.

■ **Power Stations: Sri Lanka**

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[121451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has received representations on the underground drilling at the Northern Power Plant in Chunnakam, Sri Lanka.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Defra has received no such representations.

■ **Sugar Beet**

Jo Churchill:

[\[120674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support the UK beet sugar industry in (a) Bury St Edmunds, (b) the East of England and c) the UK after the UK leaves the EU.

George Eustice:

Leaving the EU and the Common Agricultural Policy gives us an opportunity to transform our agricultural policy into a fairer system that will help farm businesses across all sectors thrive. We are committed to delivering value for money to the taxpayer while supporting British agriculture and the environment. We will publish for consultation a command paper setting out our proposals later this Spring.

The Government's manifesto commit to provide the same cash total in funding for farm support until the end of this parliament, expected in 2022. This offers a greater level of security and certainty for the UK farming sector than anywhere else in the EU, where funding is only guaranteed until 2020.

We are also committed to improving and simplifying our existing farm support systems. We have recently announced four new Countryside Stewardship offers, including an offer specifically for the arable sector, along with a simplified application process for 2018.

The Secretary of State recently met representatives of the sugar beet industry to hear the industry's views. The removal of EU sugar beet quotas, which the government pressed for, allows British growers to move towards competing on a level-playing field with other sugar producers around the world, including by opening up export opportunities for beet sugar production.

■ Waste Disposal

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[122037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, from which local authorities he has received representations on their waste processing capacity as a result of the ban by China on importing certain types of waste from the UK.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

To date Defra has not received any representation from local authorities on their waste processing capacity as a result of the ban by China on waste imports.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Brexit

Jon Trickett:

[\[121293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, which of his Department's Quarterly Transparency Returns contains the list of attendees at the meetings referenced in Questions 119375, 119359, 119349, 119342, 119051, 119043, 118993, 118986, 118972, 118958, 118954, 118951 and 118948.

Mr Steve Baker:

The names of all attendees at these meetings are not held centrally.

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Ministerial Duties

Catherine West:

[\[121946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, when he plans to update the list of ministerial responsibilities for his Department.

Mr Steve Baker:

Ministerial responsibilities are published and kept up to date on GOV.UK. Suella Fernandes MP was appointed as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State on 9 January 2018. Her ministerial responsibilities will be published in due course.

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Public Expenditure

Tommy Sheppard:

[\[121955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, which fruitless payments in excess of £30,000 his Department has made by (a) recipient of each such payment, (b)

purpose of each such payment, (c) value of each such payment and (d) reason that payment was classified as fruitless in the 2017-18 financial year to date.

Mr Steve Baker:

The Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) has made no fruitless payments as defined by HM Treasury's Managing Public Money.

■ **Department for Exiting the European Union: Sick Leave**

Tom Brake:

[\[121108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what the cost was to her Department as a result of officials taking sick leave in the last year.

Mr Steve Baker:

The Civil Service has set out five priorities for the health and wellbeing of its employees, including priorities in relation to physical and mental wellbeing. In addition, the Civil Service has also committed to being a leading employer on mental health support, in line with the recommendations set out in the independent review Thriving At Work and the Work, Health and Disability: Improving Lives consultation.

The total cost of sickness absence to the Department in 2017 was £16,455.24 based on an average of the cost by grade. Health and Wellbeing forms part of the Department for Exiting the European Union's commitment to making the Department a great place to work. The Department has an attendance management policy and a dedicated mental health and wellbeing group who have been leading on a number of wellbeing activities across the Department to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of staff employed in the Department.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ **Bahrain: Overseas Aid**

Tom Brake:

[\[121119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which institutions and organisations in Bahrain will directly benefit from the (a) Global Britain and (b) Integrated Activity Funds during the 2018 financial year; and which UK Government body is tasked with implementing any training for which those funds are used in Bahrain.

Alistair Burt:

The Government works with a number of implementation partners to support Bahraini-led reform, including in the field of human rights. These programmes aim to support progress on building effective and accountable institutions, strengthening the rule of law, and justice reform. All of our work is in line with international standards, and aims to share UK expertise and experience. Any training provided by, or on behalf of, the British Government fully complies with our domestic and international human rights obligations.

■ Bahrain: Political Prisoners

Tom Brake:

[\[121118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made representations to the Bahraini Government on the alleged mistreatment of (a) Bahraini opposition leader Hasan Mushaima and (b) human rights activists Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja and Dr Abduljalil Al-Singace; and if he will make a statement.

Alistair Burt:

We have raised these cases at a senior level. The UK has a continuing dialogue with the Government of Bahrain in which we raise individual cases.

The UK encourages those with concerns about treatment in detention to report these to the relevant human rights oversight bodies. We urge these bodies to carry out swift and thorough investigations. The UK continues to encourage the Government of Bahrain to deliver on its international and domestic human rights commitments.

■ Bangladesh: Human Rights

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[121794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will stop providing support, aid and training to the security services in Bangladesh in the event that allegations of human rights abuses are substantiated.

Mark Field:

Any defence engagement or security assistance provided in Bangladesh are subject to a rigorous analysis of human rights risks through our Overseas Security and Justice Assessment process. Where credible allegations of human rights violations are made in connection with any UK overseas security assistance, we reserve the right to immediately withdraw support.

I am deeply concerned by allegations of human rights abuses by Bangladeshi law enforcement including extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances.

Bangladesh remains a human rights priority country for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and we regularly raise our concerns with the Government of Bangladesh.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[121889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Minister for Africa of 9 January 2018, on human rights, Official Report, col. 162, what representations his Department has made to the Government of Bangladesh on the disappearance of its political opponents in that country.

Mark Field:

I am deeply concerned by allegations of enforced disappearances, including of political opponents of the Government, in Bangladesh. I raised specific human rights cases with the State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam on 30 November 2017, and our concerns regarding disappearances with Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque on 2 November 2017. Lord Ahmad, FCO Minister for the Commonwealth and

the UN, raised our human rights concerns, including enforced disappearances, with senior leaders in the Government of Bangladesh during his visit to Bangladesh from 7 to 10 August.

Bangladesh remains an FCO Human Rights Priority Country. Ministers, and our High Commission in Dhaka, will continue to engage the Government of Bangladesh on the full range of our concerns, including enforced disappearances.

■ **Burma: Political Prisoners**

Tom Brake: [\[121106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made recent representations to Aung San Suu Kyi on the continued detention of political prisoners in Myanmar.

Mark Field:

The Foreign Secretary has not recently made representations on the continued detention of political prisoners in Burma.

Our Ambassador, however, has raised the issue of political prisoners on several occasions with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and her ministers over recent months. Since her government took office in April 2016, at least 160 political prisoners have been released. However, we estimate there are still 47 political prisoners. The UK will continue to call for their release.

■ **Burma: Procurement**

Tom Brake: [\[121105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his Department's policy is on the British Embassy and other UK Government offices in Myanmar purchasing goods or services from military-owned or controlled companies.

Mark Field:

The government does not currently have a policy of avoiding purchasing goods or services from such companies. The military has an extensive and opaque range of business interests. Services and goods provided by military-linked companies range from drinking water to port handling services. For many services used by the British Embassy, the choice of providers is very limited. However, the UK is working to improve transparency and accountability standards in the Burmese economy to make the ownership of companies clearer.

■ **Burma: Rohingya**

Stephen Morgan: [\[121164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last spoke to the State Counsellor of Burma in respect of her role in the Rohingya crisis.

Mark Field:

The Foreign Secretary last spoke with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi on 21 October 2017. He raised his concerns about ongoing violence including vigilante attacks, and called on her government to make progress on facilitating refugee return and access for the UN Fact Finding mission. The Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific raised concerns over the Rohingya crisis in a meeting chaired by Aung San Suu Kyi on 21 November 2017, as part of the Asia Europe Meeting of Foreign Ministers. Our Ambassador in Burma discussed the issue with her again on 5 December.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:[\[121937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Myanmar on ensuring unimpeded and timely humanitarian access to support (a) Rohingya refugees and (b) refugees displaced within Rakhine state.

Mark Field:

I met State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi on 27 September in Naypyidaw and stressed the importance of an end to the violence and the provision of humanitarian relief in Rakhine State. I reiterated the importance of allowing humanitarian access to northern Rakhine when he met Burma's Defence Minister on 20 November, and the Ambassador raised it in his meeting with the Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor on 11 January.

■ Colombia: Human Rights**Patrick Grady:**[\[121310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Colombian counterpart on (a) offering a date-specific official invitation to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders to visit Colombia and (b) ensuring that the mandate of the UN mission to Colombia with regards to the monitoring the human rights situation is maintained.

Sir Alan Duncan:

We encourage the Colombian Government to invite the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights to visit Colombia.

At the request of the Colombian Government, the UK led negotiations which resulted in UNSC resolution 2377. The resolution establishes the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia to monitor and verify the implementation of the Peace Agreement with the FARC. I support the work of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Colombia, which monitors the human rights situation and works closely with the UN Mission. On 20 December 2017, I announced that the OHCHR would be included in a package of additional UK support to the Peace Process in Colombia.

■ Colombia: Peace Negotiations**Patrick Grady:**[\[121309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the Colombian Government in (a) progressing peace talks with the ELN, (b) extending the bilateral ceasefire and (c) dismantling the economic, political and military structures of the paramilitary groups.

Sir Alan Duncan:

We supported the temporary ceasefire with the National Liberation Army (ELN) announced in September and provided technical support to the Colombian Government's negotiating team. The ceasefire ended on 9 January. We condemn the subsequent attacks carried out by the ELN against civilian and military targets on 10 January. The UN Security Council has called for both sides to prevent a return to conflict.

■ Crimes Against Humanity: Arrest Warrants**Jo Stevens:**[\[121805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support the arrest and apprehension of those individuals with outstanding ICC Arrest Warrants.

Mark Field:

The United Kingdom is a strong supporter of the ICC and believes it is important that fugitives from international justice do not enjoy impunity. If an individual who is wanted by the ICC enters the United Kingdom, we have a legal obligation to arrest and surrender that individual in accordance with the International Criminal Court Act 2001. All State Parties to the ICC have a similar legal obligation to arrest and surrender an ICC-indicted individual if they enter their territory. The United Kingdom regularly raises the importance of cooperation between the ICC and States Parties to the Rome Statute (most recently on 12 December at the UN Security Council). We will continue to raise our concerns with non-cooperating governments, including through the European Union.

■ Egypt: Ahmadiyya**Siobhain McDonagh:**[\[121319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has made representations to the Egyptian Government on the arrest of 25 Ahmadi Muslims in that country on the grounds of their religion; and if he will make a statement.

Alistair Burt:

We condemn all discrimination against religious minorities and constraints on their freedom to practise their faith. The Egyptian constitution contains protections for Freedom of Religious Belief and it is important that these rights are respected.

We regularly raise our concerns around the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, which are essential to improving the protection of Freedom of Religious Belief in Egypt.

■ **Egypt: Islamic State**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[121893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will he make representations to the Egyptian Government on the attack on Mar Mina Church in Helwan on 29 December 2017 by IS terrorists in order to establish what steps are being taken to apprehend the perpetrators of that attack.

Alistair Burt:

We strongly condemn the recent attacks in Egypt against the Coptic Christian community, claimed by Daesh, and welcome the swift response by the Egyptian authorities in arresting the perpetrators. We welcome President Sisi's calls for peaceful coexistence and the Egyptian Government's expression of support for the rights of Christians and for religious tolerance. The British Government is committed to working with international partners, including Egypt, to strengthen the protection of freedom of religion or belief. The Government continues to work closely with the Egyptian authorities on security and counter-terrorism.

■ **Embassies**

Tom Brake:

[\[121093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many new embassies and consulates the Government anticipates it will need to establish if the UK can no longer be represented by another EU member state when the UK leaves the EU.

Sir Alan Duncan:

We do not anticipate any requirement to open additional embassies or consulates as a result of EU Exit.

■ **EU Immigration: Hungary and Poland**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[121665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will hold discussions with his Hungarian and Polish counterparts on the acceptance of migrants under the EU quota scheme; and how that scheme will work in the period up to March 2019.

Sir Alan Duncan:

UK Ministers continue to engage with all our partners within the EU and beyond in the interests of achieving safe, orderly and properly managed migration.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Equal Pay

Jon Trickett:

[121248]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the transparency document entitled Foreign and Commonwealth Office Gender Pay Gap Report, if he will set out the pay gap data for median, mean and bonus pay by (a) grade and (b) profession.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The pay gap data for the FCO for median, mean and bonus pay by grade is:

| GRADE | CS GRADE | MEAN ORDINARY PAY | MEDIAN ORDINARY PAY |
|-------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|
| A1 | AA | 0.9% | 0.0% |
| A2 | AO | 1.7% | 1.3% |
| B3 | EO | 0.2% | -1.7% |
| C4 | HEO | 2.4% | 0.9% |
| C5 | SEO | 6.9% | 3.6% |
| D6 | G7 | 2.4% | 0.0% |
| D7 | G6 | 3.2% | 0.4% |
| SMS1 | SCS1 | 2.6% | -0.3% |
| SMS2 | SCS2 | 0.8% | 2.0% |
| SMS3 | SCS2 | 1.4% | 2.3% |

| GRADE | CS GRADE | MEAN BONUS PAY | MEDIAN BONUS PAY |
|-------|----------|----------------|------------------|
| A1 | AA | -73.2% | -79.9% |
| A2 | AO | 11.5% | 63.4% |
| B3 | EO | -3.4% | -0.9% |
| C4 | HEO | 2.8% | -0.8% |
| C5 | SEO | 9.8% | 8.3% |
| D6 | G7 | 12.0% | 8.5% |
| D7 | G6 | 4.6% | 0.0% |
| SMS1 | SCS1 | 24.9% | 70.5% |

| GRADE | CS GRADE | MEAN BONUS PAY | MEDIAN BONUS PAY |
|-------|----------|----------------|------------------|
| SMS2 | SCS2 | -11.3% | 0.0% |
| SMS3 | SCS2 | -8.9% | -8.9% |

These figures include FCO(Services) and Wilton Park.

The FCO does not hold data on professions so I am unable to answer (b).

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Sick Leave

Tom Brake:

[\[121098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many and what proportion of officials in his Department took sick leave for reasons relating to stress in the last year; and what proportion of total sick leave in his Department that leave was.

Sir Alan Duncan:

From 1 January to 31 December 2017, 48 members of FCO UK-based staff recorded stress as a reason for sickness absence. This equates to 1% of the total UK-based headcount figure as of 31 December 2017 (4,521); and to 9.5% of the total recorded sickness absence in 2017.

Tom Brake:

[\[121102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many days' sick leave officials in his Department took for reasons relating to stress in the last year.

Sir Alan Duncan:

From 1 January to 31 December 2017, a total of 1,389 days of sickness absence were recorded by FCO UK-based staff for reasons related to stress. This equates to an average of 0.31 days per person in 2017.

■ Lebanon: Politics and Government

Dr David Drew:

[\[121176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with (a) Saad Hariri and (b) Hezbollah on securing a stable government for Lebanon.

Alistair Burt:

The Foreign Secretary has not had any recent discussions with Prime Minister Saad Hariri.

On 8 December 2017, I met Prime Minister Hariri at the International Support Group for Lebanon in Paris and made clear that the UK wants to see a stable, sovereign and prosperous Lebanon. We believe that this can only be based on coexistence, true disassociation from regional conflicts, and the disarmament of all militias so that

no one party can hold the country's stability or politics hostage. The UK has a no contact policy with Hezbollah.

■ Libya: Slavery

Tom Brake: [\[121115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent reports his Department has received on slavery and abuse of migrants in Libya; and whether he has raised the subject of those reports with the Libyan Government.

Alistair Burt:

The UK is determined to eliminate the scourge of forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking. The Government works closely with the Libyan Government and takes all allegations of abuse seriously. During his visit to Libya in August the Foreign Secretary raised with Prime Minister Serraj the importance of offering humanitarian support to migrants and the need to respect human rights. I also raised our concerns about the human rights situation in Libya, including the issue of slavery, with the Libyan Deputy Prime Minister on 1 December and welcomed the investigation into this issue. Her Majesty's Ambassador has further underlined our concerns about these reports in our recent discussions with the Libyan Government, and will continue to monitor the situation closely.

■ North Korea: Nuclear Weapons

Alan Brown: [\[121390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Russian counterpart on the situation in North Korea; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Field:

The Foreign Secretary met Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov on 22 December 2017 in Moscow. They discussed how best to work together, as permanent members of the UN Security Council, in tackling global security issues such as North Korea. On the same day, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted UNSCR 2379 on the DPRK, showing once again that the international community remains united in its condemnation of DPRK's reckless and destabilising actions. Ensuring full implementation of UNSCR 2379, and other UN resolutions, is now the priority.

Alan Brown: [\[121391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the effectiveness of UN Security Council sanctions in encouraging North Korea to cease its nuclear activities.

Mark Field:

The unanimous adoption of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions on North Korea, most recently UNSCR 2397 demonstrates that the international community will not accept its illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The sanctions now

in place significantly reduce the export revenues the regime uses to fund its illegal programmes.

There is evidence that the impact of these measures are increasingly being felt by the Kim regime.

■ North Korea: Religious Freedom

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[\[122063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on the degree of religious freedom in North Korea, and what steps he is taking to promote and protect the right to freedom of religion and belief in that country.

Mark Field:

We are aware of reports, including the UN Commission of Inquiry report (2014), that people in North Korea who are involved in religion (outside of state-controlled organisations), face severe punishment for practising their beliefs, including summary executions, torture, lack of judicial process and forced labour. Officially recognised places of worship are effectively under state control. Given the closed nature of the regime it is difficult to verify reports.

We shall continue to work bilaterally and with partners in international fora, such as in the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council, to raise our concerns on human rights issues with the DPRK government at every opportunity. We continue to urge the DPRK to uphold its human rights obligations and engage substantively with the international community on this issue.

■ North Korea: UN Resolutions

Alan Brown:

[\[121392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the UK's Permanent Ambassador to the UN on the most recent UN Security Council resolution on North Korea.

Mark Field:

The UK welcomes the unanimous adoption of the latest UN Security Council resolution on North Korea (UNSCR 2397). The international community has once again shown it is united in its condemnation of North Korea's reckless and destabilising actions. This resolution further reduces the revenues North Korea uses to fund its illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

The Foreign Secretary and I followed the process of agreeing this tough new resolution closely. Our officials in Whitehall and the UK Mission to the United Nations also worked closely together to deliver this resolution. We will continue to work with our allies and international partners to increase diplomatic pressure on the DPRK to choose a better path.

■ Somalia: Religious Freedom**Lady Hermon:**[\[122092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of religious freedom in Somalia; what representations his Department has made to the Somali Government on improving the protection of religious freedom; and if he will make a statement.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office assesses that Somalia has made some progress towards upholding and protecting human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. However, there continue to be serious violations and abuses and a culture of impunity persists. The British Government has not made specific representations to the Somali Government on protection of religious freedoms, but has consistently called for the protection of all human rights in Somalia and for the Somali Government to fulfil its international obligations and commitments. This includes the UK statement at the 36th session of the UN Human Rights Council on 27 September 2017 and in the communiqué of the London Somalia Conference held in May 2017.

■ Sudan: Migration**Stephen Timms:**[\[122065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent research his Department has (a) commissioned and (b) undertaken on the drivers of migration from and through Sudan; and if he will make a statement?

Harriett Baldwin:

The Government has undertaken research on migration to help shape policy and programming in Sudan, including on migration routes, the drivers of migration, and the links to human trafficking. Sudan is a source, transit, and destination country for migrants, and migration is a key topic at the UK-Sudan Strategic Dialogue, most recently discussed at the fourth session in October 2017.

■ Syria: Diplomatic Relations**Dr David Drew:**[\[121177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the timetable is for the (a) re-establishment of full diplomatic relations with the Government of Syria including (b) re-opening the British Embassy in Damascus.

Alistair Burt:

The British Government has not severed diplomatic relations with Syria. Since the withdrawal of our staff from the British Embassy in Damascus in February 2012 and the closure of the Syrian Embassy in London in August 2012, our dealings have been minimal and only in relation to essential consular or administration issues. There is no plan to change this. The UK believes the Asad regime has lost its legitimacy due to

its atrocities against the Syrian people and that a sustainable political settlement in Syria ultimately requires a political transition away from the current regime.

■ USA: Nuclear Weapons

Dr David Drew:

[\[121949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions has he had with his US counterpart on changes that country plans to make to its nuclear policy.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Government has close and regular dialogue with the US Administration on all aspects of nuclear and arms control policy. In early 2017, President Trump announced that the US would conduct a Nuclear Posture Review. The US has sought views from the UK and other Allies as part of the process. The Review has not yet concluded.

HEALTH

■ Accident and Emergency Departments

Mr Stephen Hepburn:

[\[121400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to reduce pressure on NHS A&E departments in (a) South Tyneside, (b) Gateshead, (c) the North East and (d) England.

Stephen Barclay:

NHS England advises that the North East and North Cumbria Urgent and Emergency Care Network, working on behalf of local clinical commissioning groups, has produced a winter surge management campaign to help reduce pressure on accident and emergency (A&E) services in the region. The campaign launched on 13 November during the national self-care week, and the winter activity will last until the end of March 2018.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust has robust winter plans in place to ensure the proactive management of patient flow, facilitation of safe and timely discharge and the efficient use of inpatient capacity during the winter period. These plans are operational from November 2017 to May 2018 and were submitted as part of the local A&E delivery board plans and in line with the North East region's urgent and emergency care network. The Trust planned extra bed capacity for the winter period, with up to 24 additional acute inpatient beds available as needed.

Nationally, the National Health Service planned earlier than ever before to cope with this winter, supported by an additional £437 million which includes funding to make sure people going to A&E get directed to the right service for their needs, and an extra £1 billion of funding to be spent on meeting adult social care needs, supporting the social care market and reducing pressure on the NHS this year.

■ Behaviour Disorders: Children

Laura Smith:

[\[121234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether targets are in place for maximum waiting times for diagnosis of children with behavioural disorders such as ADHD.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

There are no such maximum waiting times targets in place.

Guidance published by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) on the diagnosis and management of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children over three years, young people and adults is intended to improve the diagnosis of ADHD as well as the quality of care and support for people with ADHD. It does not however make recommendations on waiting times.

NHS England has been working with NICE and the National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health to develop new mental health pathways, including for children and young people. These could benefit people with ADHD and other behavioural disorders who have mental health needs by facilitating better and faster diagnosis. The pathways are currently in draft and are being considered for publication over the coming months.

■ Care Homes: Working Hours

Laura Smith:

[\[121318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to ensure that care homes do not close as a result of the recent ruling on pay during sleep-in shifts.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

The Government recognises the pressure that sleep-in liabilities may place on care providers and is exploring options to minimise any impact on the social care sector.

As in any market there are inevitable entries and exits of care organisations, but the Government is committed to ensuring that the social care sector is stable, both for those receiving care and for care workers.

We have given local authorities in England an extra £2 billion over the next three years to maintain access for our growing aging population and allow councils to sustain a diverse care market including care home places.

In addition the Government has announced we will consult on plans to improve the social care system and to put it on a more secure financial footing.

■ Chronic Illnesses: Children

Stephen Morgan:

[\[121157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to expand routine outcome data collection for long-term conditions in children.

Steve Brine:

Patient outcome data collections currently include the National Clinical Audits on Diabetes and Epilepsy, which are delivered by the Royal College of Paediatric and Child Health and managed by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) on behalf of NHS England. There is also a Child Health Clinical Outcome Review Programme, which is run by the National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death, also managed by HQIP on behalf of NHS England. The Review Programme is currently examining two topics: chronic neurodisability; and, adolescent mental health.

Audit programmes are routinely reviewed with new audits being commissioned as and when a need is identified. More information about HQIP audits and Review Programme can be found at the following link:

www.hqip.org.uk

There is also a range of service and population outcome data, available at national, and in many cases, local level, relevant to the care and support of children with long term conditions, as well as the prevention of conditions. For example, the NHS Outcomes framework indicators 1.6 ii Five year survival from all cancers in children and 2.3ii Unplanned hospitalisation for asthma, diabetes and epilepsy in under 19s; and the Public Health Outcomes Framework indicator 2.06 Child excess weight in 4-5 and 10-11 year olds. The latest versions of the frameworks can be found at the following links (the 2016/17 version of the NHS Outcomes framework remains in use). The Frameworks are routinely reviewed and revised as appropriate.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-outcomes-framework-2016-to-2017

www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-health-outcomes-framework-2016-to-2019

Additional data may also be collected by local services to improve patient care, where such a need is identified.

■ Clinical Commissioning Groups: Sponsorship

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[121370]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, which Clinical Commissioning Groups have a policy of not accepting sponsorship from drug companies and similar organisations; and whether his Department plans to regulate or stop such sponsorship arrangements.

Steve Brine:

NHS England does not collect data centrally on which clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have a policy of not accepting sponsorship from drug companies and similar organisations. NHS England published statutory guidance on managing conflicts of interest for CCGs in June 2017 which aims to support CCGs to identify and manage a range of conflicts of interests, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/revised-ccg-coi-guidance-jul-17.pdf>

This guidance addresses the issue of sponsorship. In addition, NHS England published system-wide guidance in February 2017 on managing conflicts of interest in the NHS which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/guidance-managing-conflicts-of-interest-nhs.pdf>

■ Coeliac Disease: Prescriptions

Alex Sobel: [\[121272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether staple gluten-free foods will continue to be available on prescription for people with coeliac disease.

Steve Brine:

A report has been prepared on the responses to the consultation on the availability of gluten free foods on prescription, which will be published alongside the Government's decision in due course. Meanwhile, a range of staple gluten free foods continue to be available on prescription for patients with established gluten sensitivity enteropathies, including coeliac disease.

■ Contraceptives: Young People

Stephen Morgan: [\[121158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to improve the implementation of NICE guidance on contraceptive services for people under 25.

Steve Brine:

Local authorities have been mandated to commission open access sexual health services, including contraception services, that meet the needs of their population. We expect commissioners and providers to take account of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance on contraception services for people under 25 when commissioning and providing local services.

■ Department of Health: Equal Pay

Jon Trickett: [\[121231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the transparency data, MHRA gender pay gap report: 2016 to 2017, published on 18 December 2017, if he will break down the pay gap data on (a) ordinary, (b) hourly and (c) bonus pay by profession.

Stephen Barclay:

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, the Department published in December 2017 gender pay gap figures including mean gender pay gap in hourly pay, median gender pay gap in hourly pay, mean bonus gender pay gap, and median bonus gender pay gap in the publication *Gender Pay Gap Report 2016-2017*. These figures related to the core Department and its executive agencies, including the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

The MHRA does not centrally hold any information on individuals' professions so are unable to provide any gender pay gap information by profession.

■ **Department of Health: Sick Leave**

Tom Brake: [\[121099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many and what proportion of officials in his Department took sick leave for reasons relating to stress in the last year; and what proportion of total sick leave in his Department that leave was.

Tom Brake: [\[121104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many days' sick leave officials in his Department took for reasons relating to stress in the last year.

Tom Brake: [\[121111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the cost was to his Department as a result of officials taking sick leave in the last year.

Stephen Barclay:

The cost of average working days lost in the rolling year period as at 30 September was £856,882.

Departmental information systems do not record sickness absence relating to stress as a distinct category. Within the broader category that includes all mental health issues, 1,822 working days were lost in the rolling year period as at 30 September 2017, and 89 staff had periods of sickness absence which is 4% of the headcount in the rolling year period. The proportion of days taken due to all mental health issues (from all sickness absence) was 34%.

■ **Health**

Dr David Drew: [\[121364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans he has to encourage the use of social prescribing by GPs; and what recent discussions has he had with NHS Clinical Commissioners on social prescribing.

Steve Brine:

The Department is committed to the development of social prescribing due to both its ability to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and its potential to take pressure off general practice and other services.

NHS England is encouraging general practitioners (GPs) to support social prescribing as one of the ten high impact actions to release capacity set out in the GP Forward View. NHS England is working with federations of GPs to increase support for social prescribing. Regional social prescribing networks spread good practice and innovation in social prescribing across England, providing support for clinical commissioning group commissioners and practitioners.

There have been no recent discussions between the Secretary of State and NHS Clinical Commissioners on social prescribing. NHS England's Clinical Lead for Social Prescribing met Julie Wood, CEO of NHS Clinical Commissioners in October 2017 to discuss how to raise the profile of social prescribing amongst commissioners.

■ **Hospitals: Parking**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[121315]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many staff employed at (a) Lancashire Teaching Hospitals, (b) University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay, (c) Blackpool Teaching Hospitals are (i) being pursued for parking fines by their employers and (ii) are subject to deductions from wages or other actions by bailiffs to recoup such fines and other costs.

Stephen Barclay:

This data is not collected centrally.

National Health Service trusts make decisions locally about the provision of car parking to patients, visitors and staff.

The Department published NHS patient, visitor and staff car parking principles on 23 August 2014, these were subsequently updated in October 2015 and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-patient-visitor-and-staff-car-parking-principles/nhs-patient-visitor-and-staff-car-parking-principles>

■ **Hospitals: West Yorkshire**

Jon Trickett:

[121387]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the number of NHS appointments that have been cancelled or postponed in (a) Wakefield district and (b) West Yorkshire in the last 12 months.

Stephen Barclay:

NHS England publishes quarterly performance data on cancelled elective operations, which includes national, regional and provider level activity, and this can be accessed at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cancelled-elective-operations/cancelled-ops-data/>

NHS Digital published a report for 2016-17 surrounding Hospital Outpatient Activity which incorporates cancellation data, including national, regional and provider level activity, and this can be accessed at:

<http://digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB30154>

Information for postponed appointments is not collected centrally.

■ Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination

Stephen Morgan:

[121156]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the cost of extending the HPV vaccine to teenage boys.

Steve Brine:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is updating its advice on the potential extension of the human papillomavirus vaccination programme to include adolescent boys.

An assessment of the overall costs of expanding the programme will be completed once JCVI's final advice is received.

■ Mental Health Services: Patients' Rights

Mr Steve Reed:

[121123]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) children and young people and (b) their families or carers understand their rights when entering institutional mental health settings.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

The Mental Health Act (1983) Code of Practice sets out the information that should be shared with patients and their nearest relative, and guidance on communication with patients, their families and carers in respect of the steps hospitals are required to take to ensure that patients who are detained understand important information about how the Act applies to them.

Paragraph 19.76 of the Code states that, "Hospital managers should ensure that staff providing children and young people with information about their rights in accordance with section 132 of the Act have sufficient knowledge and experience to be able to provide information to children and young people and determine whether the information has been understood. Written information must always be made available. Such information should be age appropriate and include an explanation about when they have the right to see an independent mental health advocate under the Act and an explanation of how one can be made available."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-mental-health-act-1983>

■ NHS: Finance

Tom Brake:

[121094]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the oral contribution of the Foreign Secretary of 27 November 2017, Official Report, column 55, how much additional funding will be provided to the NHS each week after the UK leaves the EU.

Stephen Barclay:

The Department and the Government as a whole are determined to make a success of leaving the European Union and we are always keen to seek opportunities to continue to sustain and improve the National Health Service.

The Government is assessing the implications of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU on the health sector and is undertaking detailed implementation planning for all scenarios.

The Government has already committed to backing the NHS with an additional £10 billion, in real terms, by 2020/21. We recognised that demand on the NHS has been higher than projected, which is why we have now committed to backing the NHS in England further so that by 2019/20 it will have received an additional £2.8 billion of revenue funding for frontline services than previously planned over the period. This includes £337 million this winter to help trusts to increase capacity. We have also committed £3.5 billion of new capital investment by 2022/23 to transform its estate and drive further efficiency savings.

■ NHS: Procurement**Tom Brake:**[\[121406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the effect of changes in the value of the pound since June 2016 on NHS supply costs.

Stephen Barclay:

The Spending Review set budgets for the National Health Service for the years up to and including 2020-21. This was the product of detailed negotiations, which included analysis across a range of factors that impact on the cost of healthcare, including the value of the pound. The Department of Health and Social Care, along with Her Majesty's Treasury, continues to assess the impact of changes in factors, both pressures and offsetting efficiency opportunities.

■ Ophthalmic Services**Bambos Charalambous:**[\[121243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department collects data on the number of hospital admissions for people with (a) age-related macular degeneration, (b) glaucoma and (c) diabetic retinopathy.

Stephen Barclay:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 8 January 2018 to Question [120603](#).

Bambos Charalambous:[\[121244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will introduce a national eye health strategy to address the increase in the level of sight-threatening conditions.

Steve Brine:

The Government takes sight loss very seriously. The Public Health Outcomes Framework includes an indicator that tracks the rate of reported sight loss (measured

through the number of new certifications of visual impairment rate per 100,000 population) including the rates for the three main causes of preventable sight loss - glaucoma, age related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy. The Department also supports Vision UK, an umbrella organisation for the eye health and sight loss sector, which aims to improve eye health and end sight loss, improve support across eye health and social care services and improve awareness of sight loss.

Given the size of England, and the diversity of the health needs of different communities, we believe commissioning needs to be owned and managed locally and there are therefore no plans to introduce a national eye health strategy.

■ **Prescriptions: Fees and Charges**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[121294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many FP57 forms were processed by the NHS Business Services Authority in 2017 for people seeking a refund for prescription charges; and what the average cost of processing a FP57 form and returning the prescription charge to the applicant was in 2017.

Steve Brine:

The number of FP57 forms processed by the NHS Business Services Authority in 2017 for people seeking a refund for prescription charges cannot be provided as this information is not available. We can verify that a total of 9,819 refund applications for prescription charges were processed in England during the period of 1 January 2017 and 30 November 2017. Prescription refund applications may contain one or more FP57 forms. Applications received during December 2017 are still being processed and the data for this month is not yet available.

The average cost of processing a FP57 form and returning the prescription charge to the applicant in 2017 cannot be provided as this information is not available.

■ **Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension**

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[121140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people were diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension (a) nationally and (b) in South Yorkshire in each of the last five years.

Steve Brine:

The information requested is not centrally held, as the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) database contains records of hospital episodes and attendances rather than people.

A count of finished admission episodes with a primary or secondary diagnosis of pulmonary hypertension in England and one of the four clinical commissioning groups located in South Yorkshire, for the years 2012-13 to 2016-17 is as follows:

Activity in English National Health Service Hospitals and English NHS commissioned activity in the independent sector

| REGION | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| South Yorkshire | 3,496 | 3,570 | 4,047 | 4,391 | 4,397 |
| England | 35,624 | 38,334 | 42,160 | 46,293 | 49,558 |

Source: HES, NHS Digital

Stephanie Peacock: [121141]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to reduce incidences of pulmonary hypertension.

Steve Brine:

Pulmonary hypertension (PH) is caused by changes to the pulmonary arteries, but as these changes can be caused by a number of internal structural changes and medical conditions, it is difficult to target a reduction in incidence of PH.

However, where PH is caused by an underlying lung condition such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), the Department's action to reduce incidence of the condition also contributes to a reduction in incidence of PH. The Department is taking action to prevent cases of COPD in the first place, through initiatives including the recently published tobacco control plan and its commitment to tackling obesity.

■ **Shingles: Vaccination**

Stephen Morgan: [121160]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he is taking to improve the take-up of the shingles vaccine by people aged over 70.

Steve Brine:

The shingles vaccination programme is for the vaccination of patients who become eligible for the vaccine from their 70th and 78th birthdays and remain eligible for vaccination (if not previously vaccinated) until their 80th birthday. Vaccination can be offered to those patients who are eligible for the vaccine on an opportunistic basis.

Public Health England provides communication materials to both patients and healthcare professionals to better illustrate eligible cohorts. This includes guidance for those in age groups with previous eligibility who have missed the opportunity to receive the vaccine, up to their 80th birthday. Guidance is available to view here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/shingles-vaccination-programme>

NHS England has a focus on reducing variation in all Section 7a immunisation programmes and works with local teams to seek assurance that low uptake and variation are addressed, and to identify good practice that can be shared.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Brain: Tumours

Kevin Brennan:

[\[122045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department's Task and Finish Working Group on brain tumours plans to publish its report.

Steve Brine:

The Task and Finish Working Group on brain tumour's latest estimate is that their work will be complete before the end of January 2018. The Working Group is undertaking a challenging task in this difficult area. Inputs are being sought from many stakeholders in order to produce a useful and impactful report. Some of these stakeholders are very busy clinicians, and need to be given sufficient time to formulate their inputs – we are committed to involving them.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Reorganisation

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[121676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost of changing the name of his Department to the Department of Health and Social Care.

Kevin Brennan:

[\[121678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of renaming his Department including signage, stationery, website, business cards and any other associated costs.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[121742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of the renaming of his Department.

Stephen Barclay:

The costs of changing the name 'Department of Health' to 'Department of Health and Social Care' will be kept to an absolute minimum. The current estimate for costs associated to the name change will be no more than £1,000.

Stationery, such as business cards and headed paper, will only be changed when stock is used up.

Signage in the Department's London headquarters is digital only. Physical signage in the Leeds headquarters will only be changed later in 2018, as part of a planned refurbishment of the building.

Amends to the website and intranet have not incurred additional costs.

■ Health Professions: Migrant Workers

Layla Moran: [\[122032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many specialist cancer staff in (a) Oxfordshire and (b) England are non-UK EU citizens.

Steve Brine:

The specific level of detail required to answer this question is not available in the information held by NHS Digital relating to the National Health Service workforce.

■ Health Services: Lancashire

Sir Mark Hendrick: [\[121759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) general consultant-led outpatient clinics dealing with suspected cancer and Crohn's disease and (b) nurse-led speciality colorectal clinics are held each week by (i) Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, (ii) University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, (iii) Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and (iv) East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust.

Steve Brine:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Health Services: Oxfordshire

Layla Moran: [\[121970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the causes of absence of NHS staff in Oxfordshire due to (a) stress and (b) mental health-related illnesses.

Stephen Barclay:

Employers across the National Health Service including those in Oxfordshire are responsible for tackling the causes of absence of their staff including stress and mental health related illnesses.

The Department is supporting the NHS in tackling these causes of absence through its mandate with NHS England which has a Commissioning for Quality and Innovation (CQUIN) incentive programme ¹ to improve staff health and wellbeing, and publishes the annual NHS Staff Survey.

NHS England's CQUIN programme should encourage trusts to, where appropriate, introduce new services for employees to give them the support they need including quicker access to mental health services.

The NHS Staff Survey ² helps trusts benchmark the percentage of staff feeling unwell due to work related stress in the last 12 months against their peers which should inform local improvement plans.

The Department also commissions NHS Employers³, which is working with NHS England, NHS Improvement and Public Health England to help the NHS tackle the

causes of absence due to stress and mental health related illness through advice, guidance and good practice as well as tools and resources such as their emotional wellbeing toolkit “How are you feeling NHS”.

Notes:

¹<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-staff-health-wellbeing-commissioning-for-quality-and-innovation-cquin-2017-19-indicator-1-implementation-support/>

²<http://www.nhsstaffsurveys.com/Page/1006/Latest-Results/2016-Results/>

³<http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/retain-and-improve/staff-experience/health-work-and-wellbeing>

■ Heart Diseases: Surgery

Jonathan Ashworth:

[122072]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation were available to the NHS in England and (b) were occupied in each week from 20 November 2017 to 7 January 2018.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[122074]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation beds have been available to the NHS in England in each of the last five years.

Stephen Barclay:

Since April 2013, NHS England has commissioned 15 adult respiratory extra corporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) beds per annum from five providers. In periods of high demand, capacity can be increased in line with an agreed standard operating procedure.

During the period 1 November to 31 March, NHS England monitors capacity on a weekly basis (increasing this frequency if required). The number of adult beds occupied in each week from 20 November to 7 January, as recorded on a Monday afternoon (unless otherwise indicated), was as follows:

| DATE | NUMBER OF ADULT BEDS OCCUPIED |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 20 November | 10 |
| 27 November | Fewer than 10 |
| 4 December | 17 |
| 11 December | Fewer than 10 |
| 18 December | 12 |
| 22 December (Friday) | 14 |
| 27 December (Wednesday) | 15 |

| DATE | NUMBER OF ADULT BEDS OCCUPIED |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 29 December (Friday) | 17 |
| 2 January (Tuesday) | 16 |

To help protect patient identity, in the weeks where the number of beds occupied was fewer than 10, it is not possible to give the exact number of beds occupied.

As with adult ECMO beds, from April 2013 NHS England has also commissioned paediatric respiratory ECMO beds from five providers. In periods of high demand, capacity at these providers can be increased in line with an agreed standard operating procedure. There is no set number of beds per provider because the number of paediatric cases is very small. It is not possible to give information about the number of paediatric beds occupied in each week from 20 November to 7 January due to patient confidentiality.

■ Influenza: Vaccination

Sir Kevin Barron: [R] [\[121836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the take-up of the new enhanced influenza vaccine for the over-65s by (i) GPs and (ii) pharmacies in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 influenza seasons.

Steve Brine:

The adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine was not available for use in 2017/18.

General practitioners (GPs) and pharmacies are responsible for ordering and purchasing flu vaccines for the adult seasonal flu programme (eligible individuals aged 18 years and over) directly from manufacturers.

Information on what vaccines are being ordered by these independent contractors is not routinely collected. Information on vaccines used by pharmacies and GPs will be available after the end of a flu season when practice/pharmacies claim reimbursement for the cost of the vaccines they have used.

Sir Kevin Barron: [R] [\[121837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to encourage the take-up of the new enhanced influenza vaccine for the over-65s for the 2018-19 influenza season with GPs and pharmacies.

Steve Brine:

Public Health England has updated their advice in the Green Book chapter on influenza so that clinicians are aware of the advice of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation in relation to the adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine.

In addition, NHS England wrote to general practitioners and clinical commissioning groups (via NHS England local teams) in December 2017 to provide an update on the use of the adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine for 2018/19.

This update will also be made available to community pharmacies as part of confirming that the Advanced Influenza Vaccination service has been recommissioned in early 2018. Community pharmacies are able to order relevant vaccines as detailed in the service specification, including the enhanced vaccine for patients within the relevant cohort.

Sir Kevin Barron:

[R] [121838]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with representatives from (a) GPs, (b) patient organisations and (c) manufacturers on the availability of the new enhanced influenza vaccine for the over-65s for the 2017-18 and the 2018-19 season.

Steve Brine:

Officials at the Department and Public Health England have regular discussions with manufacturers on a range of issues. This has included discussion with Seqirus, the company that has produced the new adjuvanted trivalent flu vaccine (aTIV).

Officials have had no discussions with general practitioner representatives or patient groups on the aTIV.

Officials also attend meetings of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, which includes a lay member.

Jim Shannon:

[122088]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of provision of FLUAD for those aged over 65 this winter.

Jim Shannon:

[122089]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date he informed GPs and pharmacies of the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation on FLUAD.

Jim Shannon:

[122090]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to increase the availability of FLUAD for those aged over 65 in 2018-19.

Steve Brine:

The adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine was not available for use in 2017/18.

However, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) considered the effectiveness of this vaccine for future years in October 2017. The minutes of the JCVI meeting are available at:

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

Following the JCVI meeting, Public Health England updated their advice in the Green Book chapter on influenza so that clinicians are aware of the advice of the JCVI in relation to the adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine.

In addition, NHS England wrote to general practitioners (GPs) and clinical commissioning groups (via NHS England local teams) in December 2017 to provide an update on the use of the adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine for 2018/19. This update will also be made available to community pharmacies as part of confirming that the Advanced Influenza Vaccination service has been recommissioned in early 2018. Community pharmacies are able to order relevant vaccines as detailed in the service specification, including the enhanced vaccine for patients within the relevant cohort.

GPs and pharmacies are responsible for ordering and purchasing flu vaccines for the adult seasonal flu programme (eligible individuals aged 18 years and over) directly from manufacturers based on the published advice.

■ **Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**

Luciana Berger:

[121854]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Local Transformation Plans to improve the provision of local mental health and wellbeing services for child and young people.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

NHS England published a comprehensive quantitative analysis of Local Transformation Plans (LTPs) in March 2016, and a thematic review in August 2016.

This review included detailed analysis of developing models and approaches to identification and management of children and young people with extra vulnerability to mental health problems including those who have experienced abuse or neglect.

The review showed that all LTPs included evidence that clinical commissioning groups and local authorities are working together in the design of the transformation plans; that 90% evidenced partnership with public health colleagues; that 90% evidenced collaboration with education colleagues or consultation with local primary and secondary schools; and that 80% engaged with youth offending teams.

The analysis and the thematic review are both available at:

www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/cyp/transformation/

Luciana Berger:

[121856]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children in England were referred to CAMHS in each year since 2010.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

The information is not available in the format requested.

■ Mental Health Services: Pregnancy

Luciana Berger:

[\[121853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of in-patient care available to women suffering from severe perinatal mental health illnesses in England.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

This Government is committed to improving perinatal mental health services for women during pregnancy and in the first postnatal year, so that women are able to access the right care at the right time and close to home.

NHS England is leading the programme of work to transform specialist perinatal mental health services, so that by 2020/21 at least 30,000 more women each year are able to access evidence-based specialist mental health care during the perinatal period. This includes access to psychological therapies and specialist community or inpatient care.

NHS England has reviewed the provision, access to and local availability of Mother and Baby units. This work resulted in the publishing of a revised service specification in late 2016, and the commissioning of four new Mother and Baby units within underserved areas of the country. These units are due to come on line during 2018/19.

■ NHS Walk-in Centres: Closures

Luciana Berger:

[\[121855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many walk-in centres have closed in England since 2010; and in which locations those centres closed.

Stephen Barclay:

This information is not held centrally.

■ NHS: Negligence

Mr John Baron:

[\[121978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will list the solicitors instructed to defend clinical negligence claims against the NHS where the claim has resolved, and for each such firm (a) what fees were paid, (b) how many claims were made and (c) how many of those were successful as denoted by payment of damages whether by court award or settlement in the last 12 months.

Stephen Barclay:

NHS Resolution manages clinical negligence claims against the National Health Service in England on behalf of member organisations. NHS Resolution has provided the following information:

The data extract is for the last audited financial year 2016/17. The 2017/18 data has not yet been audited.

The table below shows the number of clinical claims closed (or settled as a Periodical Payment) 2016/17 as at 31 March 2017 by panel firm.

| PANEL FIRM | NUMBER OF CLAIMS | NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL CLAIMS | DEFENCE COSTS PAID |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Bevan Brittan LLP Solicitors | 1,078 | 609 | 12,213,899 |
| BLM Solicitors | 109 | 58 | 823,468 |
| Browne Jacobson Solicitors | 927 | 520 | 10,244,176 |
| Capsticks Solicitors | 1,123 | 657 | 12,279,667 |
| Clyde and Co Solicitors | 397 | 238 | 4,187,710 |
| DAC Beachcroft LLP Solicitors | 2,255 | 1,357 | 22,851,953 |
| Hempsons Solicitors | 1,309 | 792 | 15,747,577 |
| Hill Dickinson Solicitors | 885 | 527 | 9,172,560 |
| Kennedys Solicitors | 964 | 558 | 9,403,916 |
| Ward Hadaway Solicitors | 366 | 178 | 4,247,966 |
| Weightmans Solicitors | 900 | 513 | 8,620,341 |
| Total | 10,313 | 6,007 | 109,793,233 |

Notes:

- Defence costs include profit, costs and disbursements such as counsel, expert fees and court fees. It would not be correct to say that these are the sums received by those firms for the services that they alone provide.
- The variability in the numbers for the firms is caused by the number of offices the defence firm has on the panel.

■ **Nurses: Oxfordshire**

Layla Moran:

[121973]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the reasons for shortages in chemotherapy nurses in Oxfordshire; and if he will make a statement.

Steve Brine:

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust continues to meet operational standards for providing cancer care to its patients. The most recent figures for Q2 2017/18 show:

- Two Week Wait from GP Urgent Referral to First Consultant Appointment: 96.9% (operational standard 95%);
- One Month Wait from a Decision to Treat to a First Treatment for Cancer: 97.0% (operational standard 95%); and
- Two Month Wait from GP Urgent Referral to a First Treatment for Cancer: 85.1% (operational standard 85%).

We are committed to improving the capability and capacity of the cancer workforce in England. Health Education England (HEE) published its first ever Cancer Workforce Plan on 5 December 2017, setting out plans to increase the numbers working in cancer care, speeding up diagnoses and treatment.

Macmillan Cancer Support are currently carrying out a Specialist Adult Cancer Nurse Census

to understand the current size and location of the specialist cancer nurse workforce. This will

enable HEE to develop a much more comprehensive picture of how many specialist nurses are working in cancer and what further action and investment might be required to ensure timely and good quality patient care and experience.

■ Ophthalmology**Jim Shannon:**[\[122094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will identify ophthalmology as a priority therapy area in its next mandate to NHS England.

Steve Brine:

The Government is currently developing its approach to the mandate to NHS England for 2018-19, in light of the extra £2.8 billion to 2019/20 provided through the autumn Budget to support the National Health Service. Both NHS England and Healthwatch England are involved in its development as statutory consultees.

Jim Shannon:[\[122097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of workforce capacity in ophthalmology.

Steve Brine:

The ophthalmology consultant workforce employed in the National Health Service has grown consistently in recent years, averaging 4.3% per year over the period March 2012 to March 2017.

NHS Digital Workforce Statistics for September 2017 show that the full time equivalent number of ophthalmologists in training in England is 797.

Education and training provision for healthcare systems in the NHS in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales is a matter for each of the devolved administrations.

■ **Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: Cancer**

Layla Moran: [\[121969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has had discussions with Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on the recruitment and retention of specialist cancer staff in that trust; and if he will make a statement.

Steve Brine:

I spoke to Dr Bruno Holthof, Chief Executive of Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, on Wednesday 11 January. We discussed how the Trust is not currently changing cancer treatment regimes for its patients, or considering any change outside the standards set out by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. I also sought reassurance from the Trust that it is communicating effectively to patients, families and staff that there are no changes to cancer treatment programmes.

Layla Moran: [\[121971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with the hon. member for Oxford West and Abingdon to discuss the availability of chemotherapy treatment offered by Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Steve Brine:

I will shortly be writing a detailed letter to the hon. member for Oxford West and Abingdon addressing her concerns about chemotherapy treatment at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

■ **Social Services: Children**

Angela Rayner: [\[121768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his ministerial responsibilities include children's social care.

Caroline Dinanage:

Children's social care is the policy responsibility of the Department for Education.

■ **Soft Drinks: Children**

Rosie Cooper: [\[121787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he makes of the health effects of energy drink products on children aged 16 and under.

Rosie Cooper:

[121788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to restrict the sale of energy drink products to children under 16.

Steve Brine:

Energy drinks can be high in caffeine and sugar. Based on the current evidence on the safety of caffeine, the Food Standard Agency advises that children, or other people sensitive to caffeine, should consume caffeine only in moderation.

In its review of the evidence on “Carbohydrates and Health” (2015), the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) concluded that the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, as compared with non-calorically sweetened beverages, results in greater weight gain and increases in body mass index. Consuming too many sugary drinks can also cause tooth decay. In light of these findings, SACN recommended that the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (for example, sugary fizzy drinks, soft drinks and squash) should be minimised by both children and adults.

Key measures in our world-leading childhood obesity plan, launched in August 2016, include the soft drinks industry levy and sugar reduction and wider reformulation programme, which will encourage the food and drink industry to reduce the amount of sugar in products popular with children, including energy drinks.

The Government will continue to monitor the situation and any new emerging scientific evidence on the consumption of energy drinks.

“Carbohydrates and Health” is available at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-carbohydrates-and-health-report

■ Urinary Tract Infections

Catherine West:

[121977]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which minister in his Department will have responsibility for urological conditions.

Steve Brine:

Long-term conditions, such as, urological conditions are currently part of my portfolio.

■ Visual Impairment

Jim Shannon:

[122091]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of people with sight loss.

Steve Brine:

The reasons for sight loss are multiple. They include lifestyle factors such as smoking and obesity as well as medical conditions. Prevention and early detection, along with access to timely treatment are all therefore important. On reduction of smoking and

obesity, both key long terms risk factors for vision loss, the Government has well established programmes.

Action is also being taken to reduce sight loss caused by medical conditions. On diabetic retinopathy, a common complication of diabetes which can lead to sight loss, a diabetic retinopathy screening programme led by Public Health England offered screening to 2.4 million eligible people in 2015/16.

Early detection is also key and free National Health Service sight tests are available to those at increased risk of eye disease or likely to be deterred from seeking private tests on grounds of cost.

HOME OFFICE

■ Abortion: Clinics

Laura Smith:

[\[121770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the review of harassment and intimidation near abortion clinics announced on 26 November 2017 will include meetings with organisations that protest near abortion clinics.

Mr Nick Hurd:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave to the Hon. Member for Congleton on the 20th December 2017, UIN 119787.

■ Action Fraud

Bill Wiggin:

[R] [\[121626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will investigate the time taken to investigate cases at Action Fraud; and if she will ensure Action Fraud has the resources necessary to investigate such cases.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Action Fraud is the national reporting point for fraud and cyber crime.

Crime reports received by Action Fraud are considered by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB), both of which are operated by the City of London Police, the UK's lead force for fraud. Reports are evaluated to assess the information available that could assist an investigation. Where there is enough evidence available and a viable lead, actionable intelligence packages are created and sent to the appropriate local police force to consider whether enforcement activity should take place. Action Fraud does not investigate any cases.

Demand into Action Fraud continues to rise. Action Fraud report that there are approximately 1,000 additional crime reports being reported per month, compared with 12 months ago. From the Crime Survey for England and Wales we are aware that the nature of this type of crime is changing; the Survey from October 2017 estimates that there were 10.8 million fraud and computer misuse offences in the year ending June 2017.

The increase in demand and some recruitment delays have led to a backlog in assessing crimes reported, and therefore in disseminating them to local police forces. City of London Police are monitoring this. All crime reports are still being automatically assessed. The Home Office Chairs the Action Fraud/ NFIB Tactical Governance Group, which scrutinises performance, including Action Fraud reporting and NFIB referrals.

The cyber threats we face continue to grow in scale and sophistication, which is why we continue to invest in fraud and cyber crime. The Action Fraud/ NFIB grant has increased from £6,943,000 in 2016/17 to £8,000,000 in 2017/18. City of London Police also receive National Cyber Security Programme funding. This has increased from £3,153,296 in 2016/17 to £4,801,300 in 2017/18.

The Home Office have also invested in a new IT analytics engine for the Action Fraud / NFIB capability, which is expected to improve the reporting and reviewing process. It is due to go live in 2018. The victim reporting process will be greatly improved through the implementation of a streamlined, more intuitive online portal for crime reporting and individuals will be able to 'track my crime' for the first time. Also, the analytics engine within the NFIB will be significantly upgraded, and we will see more automation of scoring, more disseminations to forces, and better identification of vulnerable victims. The system will also be linked live with forces, so data, and intelligence is shared in real time.

■ Asylum

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[121078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether immigration detention centres receive extra funding for their involvement in routine processing of asylum claims.

Caroline Nokes:

Asylum Intake & Casework are responsible for considering asylum claims and are responsible for considering claims from those in detention through the Detained Asylum Casework (DAC) process. This is separate from the work of the Immigration Removal Centres. The Government believes that the process provides claimants with the necessary time and opportunity to enable their applications to be justly decided. The DAC unit is adequately resourced and funded to do this work and all DAC claimants are entitled to free legal representation through the Duty scheme operated by the Legal Aid Authority.

Alex Sobel:

[\[121352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many decisions to cease asylum support were made in 2017.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office publishes data on the number of applications for asylum support, and on those asylum seekers who are currently in receipt of support in the Immigration Statistics Quarterly Reports. The current information is correct as to September 2017. This information can be accessed via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2017/list-of-tables#asylum> The Home Office does not publish data on the number of decisions made to cease support.

Alex Sobel:

[121353]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many residents were accommodated in each asylum reception centre in the UK at the end of 2017.

Caroline Nokes:

Asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute can apply for free accommodation and cash support to cover their essential living needs whilst their cases are considered. If they have an emergency need for accommodation they can ask to be put in initial accommodation whilst their support applications are being processed. Quarterly data, correct as to September 2017, regarding the number of residents in initial accommodation is included in the published statistics, which can be found on data table volume 4 at; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2017/list-of-tables#asylum> The Home Office does not publish data for each separate initial accommodation.

Alex Sobel:

[121354]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum applicants were granted permission to work in the UK in 2017.

Alex Sobel:

[121355]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum applicants granted permission to work were employed in Government Departments in 2017.

Caroline Nokes:

Asylum seekers are not allowed to work in the UK unless their claim has been outstanding for at least 12 months through no fault of their own. Those who are granted permission to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List, which can be found in the Immigration Rules Appendix K: shortage occupation list (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-k-shortage-occupation-list>)

The data requested on the number of asylum seekers granted permission to work is only held on paper case files or within the notes sections of the Home Office's databases. Therefore the number of asylum seekers granted permission to work who are employed in other Government Departments is not aggregated on a national level nor is it held in a reportable format.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[121649]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the reasons for the rise in the number of asylum applications in the last 12 months that have failed to receive a decision within six months.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office has, for 39 months, met its Service Standard to make decisions on 98% of straight forward asylum claims within six months.

Notwithstanding this, we are aware that the number of older cases awaiting decision is increasing. As noted by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration in his recent report on Asylum Intake and Casework, this is partly caused by issues relating to staff retention. We recruit high quality and highly skilled people to be asylum caseworkers and they are able to progress their careers quite quickly. However, plans are in place to address this and to reduce the number of older cases awaiting a decision.

Afzal Khan:[\[121749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's report, Asylum Migration and Integration Fund, List of Actions allocated funding, published in July 2017, which actions will continue to receive funding; and whether she plans to support those actions in other ways after the UK leaves the EU.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office will continue to evaluate the merits of each Action on a case by case basis and will consider, in due course, the options to continue support for each Action after the UK leaves the EU.

■ Asylum: Children**Lilian Greenwood:**[\[121988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information she holds on the number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in EU countries who have a family connection to the UK.

Caroline Nokes:

Under the EU Dublin III Regulation, it is the responsibility of the Member State where the unaccompanied asylum-seeking child is currently present to identify the Member State responsible for processing their asylum claim. Where there is evidence the responsible Member State is the UK based on qualifying family connections, we work closely with Member States to transfer eligible children to the UK where it is in their best interest to do so. We continue to meet our commitments under the Dublin III Regulation and work closely with EU Member States and partners to ensure it operates efficiently in respect of both adults and children.

Outside of the Dublin III Regulation, our Family Reunion Immigration Rules allow children to join their refugee parents, and there are also specific provisions 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.

■ Asylum: Detainees**Gareth Thomas:** [121652]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers classified as having special reception needs were detained in the UK by type of special reception need in 2017.

Caroline Nokes:

The department currently does not record the information on the criteria as set. However, anyone who is classed as a vulnerable adult, including pregnant females and minors, are not detained for asylum purposes.

The number of asylum applicants who were detained in the first three quarters of 2017 is available in table dt_01_q of the detention tables in the latest release of the 'Immigration Statistics, July to September 2017', available from the Home Office website at; <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2017-data-tables>

■ Asylum: DNA**Thangam Debbonaire:** [121565]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to reinstate Government funding for DNA testing when it is required for asylum applications.

Caroline Nokes:

Asylum claimants and their dependants are not required to provide DNA evidence to support an asylum claim lodged in the UK.

Those applying for refugee family reunion are not required to provide DNA evidence to prove their family relationship and can rely on other evidence to support their application. Our guidance on considering family reunion applications highlights the challenges that applicants may face in obtaining documents to support their application and makes clear the types of evidence that can be provided. This is available on Gov.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-reunion-instruction>.

■ Asylum: Employment**Thangam Debbonaire:** [121578]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will allow asylum seekers to work while awaiting a decision on their application for refugee status.

Thangam Debbonaire: [121582]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will remove the limitation that asylum seekers are only able to work in jobs on the shortage occupation list, when granted permission to work.

Caroline Nokes:

Asylum seekers are not allowed to work in the UK unless their claim has been outstanding for at least 12 months through no fault of their own. Those who are allowed to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List. This policy is designed to protect the resident labour market so that access to employment is prioritised for British citizens and lawful residents, including those granted refugees status. We have no plans to change this policy.

Asylum seekers do not need to work whilst their claim is considered – they are provided with accommodation and support to meet their essential living needs if they would otherwise be destitute.

■ Asylum: Housing**Afzal Khan:****[122054]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will provide details of the different stages of the procurement process for the Asylum Accommodation and Support Services Contract; and when she plans to award that contract.

Caroline Nokes:

All Home Office contracts are tendered in compliance with the EU Procurement Directives, which ensure that there is a transparent and equitable procurement process. The Asylum Accommodation and Support Services Contracts, which will be replacing the current suite of contracts from 2019 is utilising the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation procedure.

Contract details and procurement timescales are available at:

<http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:461664-2017:TEXT:EN:HTML>

■ British Nationality: EU Nationals**Dr Philippa Whitford:****[121295]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU nationals, both adults and children, have been refused citizenship in each year between 2010 and 2017.

Caroline Nokes:

The available published information on the total number of decisions to refuse applications for British citizenship is published in Home Office's Immigration Statistics, July – September 2017, Citizenship tables cz_01 and cz_01_q available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2017/list-of-tables#citizenship>

■ Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

Sarah Champion: [\[121590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government has taken towards formal ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office is satisfied that the UK is compliant with the articles of the Lanzarote Convention, and has received confirmation from devolved administrations that they support ratification of the Convention. The Home Office will shortly write to the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories (CDOTs) to extend an invitation to ratify alongside the rest of the UK. Whilst it is not possible to provide a specific timescale, the Home Office aims to achieve ratification in the first half of 2018.

■ Developing Countries: Females

Jon Trickett: [\[121116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of state for the Home Department, with reference to the Cabinet Office report on Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals published on 14 December 2017, what steps her Department is taking to implement the element of Sustainable Development Goal 5 on violence against women and girls.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is committed to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG), which supports the wider work to address gender inequality and support female empowerment. In March 2016 we published an updated Ending VAWG Strategy, and we have made much progress since the original Call to End Violence against Women and Girls in 2010.

The Government has committed increased funding of £100million to 2020 to continue to provide a bedrock of critical services for VAWG, and to support a transformation in local service delivery to enable local areas to build coherent pathways of support for victims at every stage. In addition, the Queen's speech committed to publishing a draft domestic abuse bill to protect and support victims, recognise the life-long impact domestic abuse has on children and make sure agencies effectively respond to domestic abuse.

■ Domestic Violence

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[121692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on what date the Government plans to publish the draft Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill.

Victoria Atkins:

As announced in the Queen's speech, we will publish a draft Bill this session once we have thoroughly consulted with partners and analysed responses.

We are committed to consulting widely as we develop the proposals for the Bill. We are keen to hear from experts, including charities and service providers, and parliamentarians to understand their views and ensure that the voices of domestic abuse victims and survivors are heard.

■ **Dual Nationality: Republic of Ireland**

Danielle Rowley:

[\[122057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on the right of dual nationals of the UK and Ireland to bring a spouse or other family members into the UK.

Caroline Nokes:

The Withdrawal Agreement between the EU and the UK will protect the spouses and other family members of EU citizens, including Irish nationals, who have relied on their free movement rights in the UK at the time of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, on 29 March 2019. Those spouses or family members who fall outside the scope of the Withdrawal Agreement will be subject to alternative immigration arrangements, which will depend on their circumstances.

■ **Dublin Regulations**

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[121989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to replicate Dublin III obligations within UK legislation once the UK has left the EU; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Nokes:

The Dublin III Regulation is an EU reciprocal agreement which requires agreement by both sides, and cannot be replicated unilaterally. We intend to continue to cooperate with the EU on asylum and illegal migration issues when we leave, and the exact nature of this cooperation will be a matter for negotiations.

■ **Emergency Services: Road Traffic Offences**

Jack Lopresti:

[\[121567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answers of 21 December 2017 to Question 120441 on Police: Road Traffic Offences and Question 120442 on Fire and Rescue Services: Road Traffic Offences, if she will take steps to begin the centralised collection of that data.

Mr Nick Hurd:

There are no plans to collect this information centrally.

■ Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage

Sarah Champion: [\[121587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps have been taken by the female genital mutilation unit and Forced Marriage Units to conduct outreach work among communities to highlight issues of female genital mutilation and forced marriages since 2016.

Sarah Champion: [\[121588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will bring forward proposals to hold collaborative discussions with victims and families affected by female genital mutilation in order to (a) gain insight into their perspectives on current female genital mutilation policies and efforts and (b) include victims' narratives in existing and future female genital mutilation policies and efforts.

Victoria Atkins:

So called 'honour-based' violence, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, is a terrible form of abuse, and this Government is clear that we will not allow political or cultural sensitivities to get in the way of tackling it. No-one should suffer because of who they are or what community they are born into.

Work to tackle these crimes is an integral part of our cross-Government Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy, published in 2016, and we are clear that we will not end FGM and forced marriage until we change attitudes. Our dedicated FGM and Forced Marriage Units are delivering ongoing programmes of nationwide outreach, comprising more than 100 events every year, with communities and professionals to raise awareness of the warning signs and significant harms caused by these practices and how to access support.

The Home Office FGM Unit regularly engages with community based organisations and survivors, including through local forums, to ensure the views and insights of affected communities are considered in current and future policy development. This is done through a quarterly FGM stakeholders meeting, ongoing outreach events and engagement with community based organisations funded through the Building a Stronger Britain Together programme. It is important that any engagement with victims and families is done in a constructive and secure environment so that individuals are provided with the support they need.

■ Firearms: Licensing

Victoria Prentis: [\[121443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that Home Office guidance on firearms licensing law is complied with.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a power to enable the Secretary of State to issue statutory guidance to the police on their firearms licensing functions. The

police will be required to have regard to this guidance. We intend to consult on this guidance publically before it is finalised.

■ **Home Office: Brexit**

Stephen Doughty:

[\[120522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what funding her Department has set aside by (a) division, (b) inspectorate, (c) non-ministerial government department and (d) non-departmental public body for contingencies relating to the UK leaving the EU.

Caroline Nokes:

We have agreed with HM Treasury additional funding of £60m to support Brexit planning and implementation work in 2017/18. Future year's requirements are still under discussion with HMT and announcements will be made in due course.

■ **Home Office: Written Questions**

Frank Field:

[\[121523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to answer Questions 18035 and 118036 tabled on 6 December 2017 and Question 118101 tabled on 7 December 2017.

Victoria Atkins:

UIN 118035, 118036 and 118101 were responded to on the 15th January 2018.

■ **Hunting: Cheshire**

Mike Amesbury:

[\[121711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the extent of illegal foxhunting in Cheshire; and what steps her Department is taking to prevent illegal foxhunting in that county.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The enforcement of the Hunting Act is an operational matter for the police. This is in line with their duties to keep the peace, protect communities and prevent the commission of offences, working within the provisions of the legal framework set by Parliament.

It is for individual Chief Constables to determine how their resources are deployed and it is for locally elected PCCs to hold their forces to account, including on how they tackle the crimes that matter most to residents and businesses in rural and urban areas alike.

■ **Immigrants: Commonwealth**

Emma Reynolds:

[\[121792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Commonwealth citizens legally residing in the UK have been (a) deported and (b) detained in error by her

Department in each of the last five years; and what her Department's policy is on issuing apologies to those detained in error.

Caroline Nokes:

Providing the information requested would require a manual check of individual records which could only be done at disproportionate cost.

All complaints to Immigration Enforcement are investigated. An apology will be offered where it is found that an error has been made.

■ **Immigration**

Alex Sobel:

[121343]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate he has made of the contribution to the public purse of applications for immigration after all costs to the Department are covered in the last 12 months.

Caroline Nokes:

We have not calculated this on anything other than a financial year basis. This information on income vs full cost is published each year in the HO annual report and accounts (see 3.2 on page 90 in the link below).

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/627853/ho_annual_report_and_accounts_2016_2017.pdf

Afzal Khan:

[121752]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of her Department's monitoring procedures for legal compliance by private firms delivering immigration-related services.

Caroline Nokes:

The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) was established by the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 to regulate the provision of immigration advice and services by those who are not practising lawyers and are therefore not regulated by another body, such as the Solicitors Regulation Authority. The OISC's powers are set out on their website <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-immigration-services-commissioner>. The OISC, which is operationally independent of the Home Office, is responsible for ensuring the organisations it regulates are fit and competent to provide immigration advice and services, and for taking appropriate action, including criminal prosecution, if organisations or individuals are found to be providing immigration advice or services illegally. The OISC do this by carrying out a robust proactive programme of risk based premises audits and operating a complaints scheme. The OISC reports quarterly to the Home Office on the regulatory scheme and successful prosecutions.

■ Immigration: Appeals

Afzal Khan:

[\[121751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made for the adequacy of the performance of UK Visas and Immigration in regard to the (a) number of initial decisions not appealed, (b) number of initial decisions overturned on appeal and (c) cost to her Department of unsuccessful appeals in each year since 2010.

Caroline Nokes:

UK Visas & Immigration has established arrangements for assessing the quality of decision making, including reviewing allowed appeals. Information on the cost to the Home Office of unsuccessful appeals in each year since 2010 is not centrally held and can only be provided at disproportionate cost through the examination of individual case records.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[121296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU nationals have been refused the right to remain in each year between 2010 and 2017.

Caroline Nokes:

An EU national's right to remain in the UK is not dependent upon a grant of leave to remain from the Secretary of State for the Home Department (SSHD). The Free Movement of Persons Directive (2004/38/EC) allows EU nationals to reside freely in the UK whilst they satisfy the conditions laid down in the Treaty. EU nationals are not granted leave to remain in the UK. The number of EU nationals refused the right to remain between 2010 and 2017 is therefore nil.

The Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016 defines how an EU national can be considered to be a qualified person. A qualified person, is a person considered to satisfy the conditions laid down in the Treaty.

EU nationals may apply to the SSHD for confirmation of their status as a qualified person.

A Registration Certificate confirms that an EU national has demonstrated that they are currently a qualified person.

A Document Certifying Permanent Residence confirms that an EU national has resided in the UK as a qualified person, for a continuous period of 5 years.

Statistics on outcomes of applications for Registration Certificates and Documents Certifying Permanent Residence for European Union (EU) nationals are published quarterly in the Immigration Statistics. These include data for certificates/documents issued, refusals and applications deemed invalid and hence rejected. The most recent edition (Immigration Statistics July to September 2017) is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2017/list-of-tables#european-economic-area-eea>

Bill Esterson: [122100]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent representations she has received on behalf of EU citizens who have married a UK citizen on their right to remain in the UK after the UK has left the EU.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office has been undertaking an extensive programme of engagement and evidence gathering with many parties interested in the rights of EU citizens in the UK, after the UK has left the EU. These include grassroots organisations, community interest groups, homelessness charities and many others.

Bill Esterson: [122101]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations she has received from organisations on behalf of EU citizens who (a) are homeless and b) have caring responsibilities on their right to remain in the UK after the UK has left the EU.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office has been undertaking an extensive programme of engagement and evidence gathering with many parties interested in the rights of EU citizens in the UK, after the UK has left the EU. These include grassroots organisations, community interest groups, homelessness charities and many others.

■ Lancashire Constabulary: Finance

Mr Nigel Evans: [121681]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to make a decision on whether to award Special Grant Funding for the Lancashire Constabulary to cover the costs of the anti-fracking protests in the area.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Lancashire PCC has submitted an application for Special Grant funding for the costs of policing the anti-fracking protests in Lancashire. This is currently being reviewed by HMICFRS and a decision will be made in due course.

■ Licensing Act 2003

Deidre Brock: [106287]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Government plans to respond to the House of Lords Select Committee's post-legislative scrutiny report on the Licensing Act 2003, published on 4 April 2017.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is carefully considering the detailed recommendations made by the House of Lords Select Committee's post-legislative scrutiny report on the Licensing Act 2003 and published its response on the 6 November.

■ Members: Correspondence**Helen Goodman:**[\[121966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter from the Hon. Member for Bishop Auckland dated 19 December 2017 on an asylum case.

Caroline Nokes:

A response will be sent to the Hon. Member's enquiry by 19 January in line with published service standard of responding within twenty working days.

■ Police Custody: Sanitary Protection**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[121764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the provision of tampons and sanitary towels is for women in custody at each police station in each constabulary in the West Midlands.

Mr Nick Hurd:

This information is not held centrally by the Home Office.

■ Radicalism**Afzal Khan:**[\[122051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications were received for the post of Lead Commissioner for the Commission for Countering Extremism and when that appointment will be made.

Afzal Khan:[\[122052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timescale is for appointing commissioners to the Commission for Countering Extremism.

Victoria Atkins:

In September 2017 the Government launched a public recruitment campaign to appoint a Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism. The deadline for applications was 15 October 2017. We received 44 applications for the role. Once the recruitment process is complete an announcement will be made. The successful candidate for Lead Commissioner will in due course advise the Home Secretary on the Commission's future role and shape, including the appointment of any further commissioners.

■ Refugees: Sponsorship**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[121571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to amend immigration legislation to allow adult refugees in the UK to sponsor any dependent relative.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[121572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to amend the immigration legislation to allow unaccompanied child refugees in the UK to sponsor their parents and siblings.

Caroline Nokes:

We already have a comprehensive framework for refugees and their families to be safely reunited in the UK. Our refugee family reunion policy allows immediate family members of those granted protection in the UK to reunite with them here. The family provisions in the immigration rules provide for relatives with protection in the UK to sponsor children when there are serious and compelling circumstances.

Our policy is also clear that where an application fails under the rules, we will consider whether there are exceptional reasons to grant leave outside the rules. In addition, refugees with family members in the UK may be eligible for resettlement under the Mandate and Gateway Scheme.

Our family reunion policy is designed to provide a safe and legal route for close, dependent family members to join their refugee family in the UK. This avoids the need for family members to make dangerous journeys in order to seek protection.

■ Slavery

Frank Field:

[\[121515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the terms of reference for the inquiry into the awarding of a contract for the national modern slavery helpline.

Frank Field:

[\[121519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the timescale for the inquiry into the awarding of a contract for the national modern slavery helpline.

Victoria Atkins:

The Modern Slavery helpline is funded by the private sector. The Home Office had no involvement in any aspect of the tender for the helpline, including the process through which funding was awarded. The tender was carried out by Polaris, a US-based NGO. Polaris runs a similar helpline in the US. There is no inquiry into the awarding of this contract.

Sarah Champion:

[\[121592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many copies of her Department's leaflet entitled Help for adult victims of Modern Slavery: Your immigration options if you've been trafficked into exploitation in the UK have been distributed; where and how those leaflets were distributed; and into which languages that leaflet has been translated.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office produced a leaflet to raise awareness about immigration options for victims of modern slavery in September 2017.

The leaflet is currently available in English at the link below on the Government's website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/help-for-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery>

Key stakeholders including Border Force, UK Visas and Immigration, the National Crime Agency, and the Salvation Army have been made aware of the leaflet and encouraged to share copies with victims where appropriate.

Stakeholders will currently print the leaflet from Gov.UK or share a link to the leaflet as needed and as such the Home Office has no central records of how many leaflets have been distributed.

Sarah Champion:[\[121595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether potential victims of trafficking who are destitute and who have consented to a referral into the National Referral Mechanism will be accommodated under the victim care contract.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is committed to ensuring that all potential victims of modern slavery receive the appropriate specialist support that they require. If an individual is destitute when they are identified, and has no other options for accommodation, they will be accommodated through the Victim Care Contract, through which support is provided to adult victims. This will happen before a decision is taken as to whether there are reasonable grounds to believe that the person is a victim of slavery and trafficking .

■ Slavery: Victims**Frank Field:**[\[118035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much victims of modern day slavery and human trafficking received in subsistence support in each week of 2016-2017.

Frank Field:[\[118036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what her policy is on the amount per week that victims of modern slavery and human trafficking will receive in subsistence support in 2018-2019.

Frank Field:[\[118101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much victims of modern slavery and human trafficking are set to receive in subsistence support each week in 2017-2018.

Victoria Atkins:

In 2016-17 and to date in 2017-18, the subsistence rates paid to adult potential victims of modern slavery was at the level initially tendered in the Adult Victims of Modern Slavery Care and Co-ordination Services Contract.

In October 2017, Government announced that it would change the level of financial support paid to potential victims of modern slavery, using the methodology that determines the subsistence rates paid to asylum seekers to ensure that individuals with comparable living needs receive the same level of support, regardless of their immigration status. There will be a higher level of support if victims are pregnant or have young children. The asylum rates are currently being reviewed so it is not possible to say how much they will be in 2018/19.

Victims will continue to receive dedicated and expert support, which is tailored to their unique needs as victims of modern slavery. This includes access to legal aid, counselling, NHS medical and dental services. This will ensure there is a fair and consistent approach for all individuals receiving similar government support. Furthermore, more money is being made available to treble the period of “move on” support, which will help people leaving victim support with their transition to other arrangements. It is essential that we target support to confirmed victims, at the point they need it most.

■ Trimega**Louise Haigh:**[\[116753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Written Statement of 21 November 2017, HCWS265, on toxicology, whether her Department distributed details of contract renewals and tenders to Trimega through the Pipeline Monitoring System (a) before 10 July 2013 and (b) after 11 April 2014; and if she will make a statement

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Home Office did not distribute details of contract renewals and tenders to Trimega through the Pipeline Monitoring System.

The Pipeline Monitoring System was a non-contractual framework management process adopted under the National Forensic Framework Agreement (NFFA) and the National Forensic Framework Next Generation (NFFNG). Trimega worked in the family law sector and were not on the NFFA or the NFFNG.

■ Visas: Overseas Students**Afzal Khan:**[\[121748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much was paid by non-EU applicants for student visas; and what the average cost to the public purse was to process those applications in each of the last seven years.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office does not hold the information in the format requested. Visa income is not differentiated between the various categories in which they are received. Our ledger will not allow us to provide this level of detail. In order to provide the cost of processing non EU student visa applications, would involve sifting through all student applications data which would exceed the £850 cost limit.

The cost of processing visa applications varies by application type and these are set out in the published unit costs and fees table, which can be accessed via the links attached. Tier 4 main application fees payable by Non EU students and the estimated unit costs of each application for the last seven financial years. Information regarding application fees and unit costs for all immigration routes from April 2014 onwards can be found via the following links:

FY 2014/15 :

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141221142623/https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/279536/Fees_Table_April_2014.pdf

FY 2015/16 :

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/768/pdfs/ukxiem_20150768_en.pdf

FY 2016/17 :

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/503759/2016_Unit_Costs_Table.pdf

FY 2017/18 :

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/606616/Unit_cost_table_2017.pdf

Afzal Khan:**[121887]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unsuccessful student visa applications have been overturned on appeal in each of the last five years; and what was the average time taken between receiving the initial application and overturning the initial rejection in that same period.

Caroline Nokes:

A student visa application does not have a right of appeal, instead a student can apply for an administrative review when they feel the decision is incorrect. The information pertaining to the numbers and average times of administrative reviews is not released publicly.

Information on the number of Study entry clearance visa applications and decisions (i.e. grants, refusals, withdrawn and lapsed cases) are published quarterly in the Home Office's Immigration Statistics, Visas data tables volume 1, table vi_01_q, latest edition at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2017> ”

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION■ **House of Commons: Written Questions****Chris Ruane:**[\[120336\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many and what proportion of the Commission's Answers to Written Parliamentary Questions in the 2017-18 Session to date have referred to the information requested not being (a) collected or (b) collated centrally.

Tom Brake:

In the Session to date, the House of Commons Commission has received 30 Written Parliamentary Questions. Three of those questions – representing 10% of the total answers – have referred to the information not being (a) collected or (b) collated centrally: they referred to reported failures to wear a security pass, Specialist Adviser vacancies and average download speeds.

■ **Portcullis House****John Mann:**[\[121284\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, what discussions have taken place with the architect Ian Ward about the use of Portcullis House as a possible temporary Chamber.

Tom Brake:

The Commission has no record of any such discussions having taken place.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT■ **Asylum: Housing****Stuart C. McDonald:**[\[121908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reasons the Supporting the asylum dispersal scheme invitation for funding published on 23 November 2017, issued jointly by his Department and the Home Office is not open to equivalent asylum dispersal local authorities in other regions and constituent parts of the UK; and if she will make a statement.

Stuart C. McDonald:[\[121909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans to extend the Supporting the asylum dispersal scheme, or an alternative scheme, to local authorities in (a) Northern Ireland, (b) Scotland and (c) Wales.

Stuart C. McDonald:

[\[121910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Supporting the asylum dispersal scheme will result in Barnett consequential for the devolved governments in (a) Northern Ireland, (b) Scotland and (c) Wales.

Stuart C. McDonald:

[\[121911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will publish details of her plans for the national evaluation exercise of the Supporting the asylum dispersal scheme including but not limited to (a) whether and (b) in what ways evidence from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will be collated and applied in the pilot to inform the new arrangements for asylum seeker support across the UK from 2019.

Stuart C. McDonald:

[\[121913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government is providing for the Supporting the asylum dispersal scheme; and for how long his Department plans to provide such funding.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Government is providing funding of up to £2.5 million from the local services element of the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) which is administered by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The funding made available for this scheme comes from an existing MHCLG budget; it is not new funding. Therefore Barnett consequential do not apply.

The Government has no plans or remit to extend the scheme to local authorities in the devolved nations, which have their own funding arrangements in this area including through the Immigration Enforcement part of the CMF.

Funding is available for 2018/19 and the Government intends to publish its plans for the national evaluation of the scheme in due course. We expect all participating local authorities to contribute to the evaluation exercise so that lessons can be learned to inform the new arrangements for asylum seeker support from 2019.

Stuart C. McDonald:

[\[121912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which local authorities in England will be eligible to apply for the Supporting the asylum dispersal scheme; what criteria determines eligibility; which local authorities applied for the scheme by its deadline of 21 December 2017; what the outcome is of such applications; what the contractual requirements on local authorities are in terms of refused asylum seekers, and if she will make a statement.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government invited local authorities with the highest numbers of asylum seekers receiving Government support to apply to the scheme. Ten local authorities applied by the 21 December 2017 deadline – Bradford, Coventry, Kirklees, Leeds, Liverpool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield and Wolverhampton. Additional applications have been

received from Birmingham and Sandwell. Successful local authorities will be notified in due course.

Participating local authorities are expected to work with asylum seekers awaiting a decision and make them aware of the support available once a decision has been made, as well as preparing them for the consequences of a negative decision by supporting a voluntary return to their home countries.

■ Economic Regions: Government Assistance

Wayne David:

[\[121762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the Government's plans are for the development of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Jake Berry:

My Department is continuing to develop the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which aims to improve productivity and reduce economic inequalities across all four nations of the Union. The new Fund affords a fresh opportunity to focus investment according to our own priorities. We will engage the devolved administrations on the design and priorities of the Fund at the earliest opportunity, before consulting widely later in the year.

■ Forests: Conservation

Dan Jarvis:

[\[121776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2017 to Question 117148 on forests: conservation, what criteria are used to decide whether the benefits of development outweigh the loss of ancient woodland.

Dominic Raab:

The Forestry Commission and Natural England produce the standing advice for planning applications that impact on ancient woodland. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not specify the criteria, as the local authority is best placed to determine what the needs of their area are. The existing policies already provide a high bar, however this government remains committed to deliver the manifesto commitment to provide stronger protections for our ancient woodland. My Department are liaising with DEFRA, HMT and other stakeholders. The revised NPPF will be consulted on in the Spring.

■ Homelessness

Melanie Onn:

[\[121663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on what date the first meeting of the Government's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Implementation Taskforce will take place.

Melanie Onn:

[\[121664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on what date the first meeting of the Government's Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel will take place.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The date for the first Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel meeting is set for 1 February 2018 and will be chaired by the Minister for Housing and Homelessness.

Kevin Brennan:

[\[121679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of renaming his Department including signage, stationery, website, business cards and any other associated costs.

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[121781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of changing his Department's name.

Jake Berry:

Building the homes our country needs is an absolute priority for this government. The name change for the department reflects this government's renewed focus to deliver more homes and build stronger communities across England.

Any necessary changes will be done in a cost-efficient way with expenditure being kept to a minimum.

This would be a fraction of the cost of splitting up the Ministry as proposed by the opposition.

Stephen Timms:

[\[122068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reasons the name of his Department has changed; and if he will make a statement.

Jake Berry:

Building the homes our country needs is an absolute priority for this government. The name change for the department reflects this government's renewed focus to deliver more homes and build stronger communities across England.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Written Questions

Craig Mackinlay:

[\[121881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to answer Question 116503, tabled on 29 November 2017.

Dominic Raab:

The question [116503] was answered on 15 January 2018 with the answer:

We are standing up for England's churches. National planning policy already sets out that businesses should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established.

We are minded to amend the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to give greater emphasis to this matter, by setting out that planning policies and decisions should take account of existing businesses and other organisations, such as churches, community pubs and music venues, when locating new development nearby.

We consulted on proposals for this as part of the Housing White Paper published on 7 February 2017 and we intend to publish a revised draft NPPF for consultation as early as possible in 2018. At that stage we will host a round-table with representatives from the sector to invite their input into this important matter.

We continue to work with other departments, to ensure local authorities support existing businesses, organisations or activities that are an integral part of local communities, at the same time as supporting new housing and local growth.

■ Regional Planning and Development: EU Grants and Loans

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[122001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will offer assistance across the whole of the UK.

Jake Berry:

My Department is continuing to develop the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which aims to improve productivity and reduce economic inequalities across all four nations of the Union. The new Fund affords a fresh opportunity to focus investment according to our own priorities. We will engage the devolved administrations on the design and priorities of the Fund at the earliest opportunity, before consulting widely later in the year.

■ Sleeping Rough

Melanie Onn:

[\[122069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many Safeguarding Adults Reviews local authorities have commissioned as a result of the death of a rough sleeper in each of the last five years.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

My Department does not collect this information.

However I am clear that no one should ever have to sleep rough. That is why this Government has committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it altogether by 2027.

The recently announced Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Reduction Taskforce will drive forward the implementation of a cross-Government strategy to achieve this.

At Budget, we announced £28 million of funding to pilot the Housing First approach for some of the country's most entrenched rough sleepers. This funding forms part of the £1 billion that the Government has allocated until 2020 to prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Building Regulations: Disability

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[121277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what progress has been made by his Department on implementing the outcome of the research it carried out in 2016 on evaluating the adequacy of the guidance in the relevant building regulations for providing toilets equipped with changing facilities for people with disabilities; and whether a review of that guidance was an outcome of that research.

Dominic Raab:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government commissioned research into the effectiveness of the guidance which supports the Building Regulations' requirements relating to access to and use of non domestic buildings. The research has been completed and we are considering its publication. We will be taking the research into account in considering whether any changes need to be made to the guidance on the provision of toilet facilities for people with disabilities.

■ Churches: Bellringing

Craig Mackinlay:

[\[116503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken within planning and other guidance to local authorities to support the continued ringing of church bells and traditional chimes.

Dominic Raab:

We are standing up for England's churches. National planning policy already sets out that businesses should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established.

We are minded to amend the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to give greater emphasis to this matter, by setting out that planning policies and decisions should take account of existing businesses and other organisations, such as churches, community pubs and music venues, when locating new development nearby.

We consulted on proposals for this as part of the Housing White Paper published on 7 February 2017 and we intend to publish a revised draft NPPF for consultation as early as possible in 2018. At that stage we will host a round-table with representatives from the sector to invite their input into this important matter.

We continue to work with other departments, to ensure local authorities support existing businesses, organisations or activities that are an integral part of local communities, at the same time as supporting new housing and local growth.

■ **Department for Communities and Local Government: Brexit**

Tom Brake:

[120828]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the (a) amount of time and (b) resources that his Department allocated to the production of impact assessments on the UK leaving the EU; and on what date work on those impact assessments started.

Rishi Sunak:

Impact Assessments, typically related to specific new primary legislation before Parliament, are narrowly defined. For example, the Government laid an impact assessment alongside the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill, which can be found on our website.

Civil servants conduct any Impact Assessments related to legislation as business as usual. Our broader analysis continues.

■ **Ground Rent: Leasehold**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[121502]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to tackle the issue of exploitative ground rent charges being levied on leaseholders of non-new build properties.

Daniel Kawczynski:

[121504]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the roll-out of the ban on ground rent for new build homes to leaseholders of non-new build properties.

Dominic Raab:

I am committed to tackling all forms of leasehold abuse and promoting fairness and transparency for the growing number of leaseholders. On 21 December 2017, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government) published its response to the consultation on 'Tackling unfair practices in the leasehold market'.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/tackling-unfair-practices-in-the-leasehold-market>).

This set out a range of measures to crackdown on unfair leasehold practices, including introducing legislation to restrict ground rents for newly established long leases of houses and flats to a peppercorn (zero financial value). This will apply to new and non-new build properties.

A full impact assessment will be published ahead of legislation being brought forward.

■ Local Government

Andrew Gwynne:

[120652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what representations he has received from English local authorities on the UK's withdrawal from the EU in the last six months; and if he will make a statement.

Rishi Sunak:

The Department is working to support a smooth and orderly Exit from the European Union which delivers an outcome that works for local communities across the country.

This work has involved on-going engagement with local authorities, including roundtables in Cornwall and Great Yarmouth.

My Department will continue to engage with stakeholders as we begin discussions with the European Union on our deep and special future partnership.

■ Local Government Finance

Andrew Gwynne:

[120643]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, how many representations he received from business groups prior to the announcement of the local government finance settlement; and if he will publish those representations.

Rishi Sunak:

A summary of responses to the Local Government Finance Settlement 2018-19 technical consultation can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-finance-settlement-2018-to-2019-technical-consultation>

■ Local Government: Elections

Andrew Gwynne:

[120651]

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to encourage young people to seek election to local councils; and if he will make a statement.

Rishi Sunak:

Local authorities have an important role in encouraging young people's participation in local democracy. Political parties also have a part to play in encouraging and recruiting young people. The British Youth Council's network of forums of youth councils often mirror their adult counterparts at local authority and parish council level, providing young people with a positive experience of local representation.

Local Government: Training**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[120654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans to improve the training offered to (a) leaders of local authorities and (b) local authority cabinet members; and if he will make a statement.

Rishi Sunak:

Through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government grant funding, the Local Government Association (LGA) provides a broad range of support to the local government sector, including LGA Local Leadership Academy programme, through to one-to-one mentoring for Lead and Cabinet members by other member peers. The Centre for Public Scrutiny also provides direct support to members on overview and scrutiny to individual authorities.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Reorganisation**John Healey:**[\[121625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what changes are planned for the (a) structure and (b) personnel of his Department as a result of its re-branding as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Jake Berry:

[Holding answer 11 January 2018]: Building the homes our country needs is an absolute priority for this Government. The name change for the Ministry reflects this Government's renewed focus to deliver more homes and build stronger communities across England.

The Ministry will have additional capacity with a newly established Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Housing and Homelessness.

Non-domestic Rates**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[120658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has conducted an impact assessment of the effect on high streets of changes to business rates.

Rishi Sunak:

Valuations for the purposes of rating are carried out independently by the Valuation Office Agency. The majority of ratepayers have seen no change or a fall in their bills. However, for those facing increases as a result of the 2017 revaluation we have provided a £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme.

At the 2016 Budget, the Chancellor announced the biggest ever cut in business rates – worth nearly £9 billion across the next five years, taking 600,000 small businesses out of paying rates. In the Spring 2017 Budget, we announced £435 million support to businesses seeing increases in rates bills. In the Autumn 2017 Budget, the

Chancellor announced that he will bring forward the switch of the annual indexation of business rates from RPI to the CPI by two years, which is worth £4.1 billion by 2023.

The Government is committed to supporting small and medium size businesses on our high streets. Since 2010, we have given over £18 million to struggling town centres through the High Streets Innovation Fund and launched successful initiatives such as “Love Your Local Market”.

■ Prosperity Fund

Jon Trickett:

[\[121225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what spending controls apply to projects funded through the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Jake Berry:

My Department continues to develop the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Government will consult widely on the design of the new Fund later this year, as we announced in the Industrial Strategy White Paper.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Department for International Development: Public Expenditure

Tommy Sheppard:

[\[121956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which fruitless payments in excess of £30,000 her Department has made by (a) recipient of each such payment, (b) purpose of each such payment, (c) value of each such payment and (d) reason that payment was classified as fruitless in the 2017-18 financial year to date.

Alistair Burt:

There have been no fruitless payments in excess of £30,000 made by Department for International Development (DFID) in the 2017-18 financial year to date.

■ Developing Countries: Females

Darren Jones:

[\[121429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether she plans to support the charity Theirworld's #RewritingTheCode campaign on attitudes and behaviours that prevent girls and women from succeeding and leading.

Alistair Burt:

We welcome any action that supports girls and women to succeed and lead and therefore applaud TheirWorld's campaign. DFID is committed to challenging and changing the negative attitudes and discriminatory practices that hold women and girls back throughout their lives. UKaid funded programmes have secured pledges from more than 8 million people to abandon female genital mutilation and have reached over 750,000 girls at risk of child marriage. UKaid also supports women and

girls to achieve their full potential through education, supporting more than 5.3 million girls in school and helping over 36 million women access financial services.

■ **Rohingya: Refugees**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[121933]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many charities and non-governmental organisations received funding from her Department for projects relating to the Rohingya refugee crisis; and which of those charities and organisations are based locally or nationally in the regions where those refugees are located.

Alistair Burt:

DFID provides funding direct to eight NGOs responding to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh. Six of these have a permanent presence in Cox's Bazar, which is the region of Bangladesh where the refugees are located. We are not funding any NGOs within Burma's northern Rakhine State.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[121934]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much her Department has spent in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis to date.

Alistair Burt:

The UK led the way in the scale and speed of our response to the refugee crisis in Bangladesh and remains one of the largest donors. Since August 25th DFID has stepped up efforts with an additional £59 million to support refugees and the communities hosting them in Bangladesh. We have also provided £1 million to the Red Cross and £2 million to the World Food Programme (WFP) to provide assistance in northern Rakhine, and stand ready to provide more once access restrictions are lifted. This brings the UK's contribution to £62 million.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[121936]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent discussions she has had with her counterparts in other countries on prioritising financial support in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis.

Alistair Burt:

UK leadership was instrumental in securing another £220 million of international support at the landmark Geneva pledging conference on 23 October 2017. In discussions with counterparts in key donor governments, ministers from DFID and the FCO continue to stress the importance of stepping up funding to the UN's Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), and to disburse those funds quickly. This includes emphasising the importance of planning for long-term support for the crisis, and the need to begin mobilising multi-year planning and funding.

■ South Sudan: Humanitarian Aid

Sammy Wilson:

[121850]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of humanitarian access to South Sudan.

Harriett Baldwin:

Physical and bureaucratic impediments continue to affect the ability of organisations to deliver lifesaving humanitarian aid in South Sudan. Over 1,900 humanitarian access incidents have been reported since the start of 2016, and at least 95 aid workers have been killed since the conflict began; this makes South Sudan one of the most dangerous operating environments in the world for humanitarian actors.

The continued obstruction of humanitarian aid by the Government of South Sudan is completely unacceptable. We are engaging with South Sudan's leaders at the highest level, alongside international partners, to make clear they have a direct responsibility to improve access and stop the suffering of their people.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Arms Trade: Trade Fairs

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[122006]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the cost to the public purse was of chaperoning foreign delegations in UK sponsored arms fairs; how many military escort officers chaperoned such delegations in each of the last five years; how such officers are selected; and which Department pays the cost.

Graham Stuart:

There is no cost to the public purse. All additional costs are met in full by the respective commercial event organisers. Escort Officers respond to a call from their military chain of command to volunteer for the task. The number of military Escort Officers used to chaperone foreign delegations at UK sponsored defence exhibitions in each of the last five years is shown in the table below.

| EXHIBITION | YEAR | NUMBER OF MILITARY ESCORT OFFICERS |
|---|------|------------------------------------|
| Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) | 2013 | 98 |
| Farnborough International Airshow (FIA) | 2014 | 59 |
| Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) | 2015 | 94 |
| Farnborough International Airshow (FIA) | 2016 | 54 |

| EXHIBITION | YEAR | NUMBER OF MILITARY ESCORT OFFICERS |
|---|------|------------------------------------|
| Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) | 2017 | 79 |

■ David Cameron

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[\[120875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to his Department's factsheet entitled 9th UK China Economic and Financial Dialogue 16 December 2017, whether David Cameron's new role on investment between the UK and China is a Government appointment.

Greg Hands:

The new UK-China bilateral investment fund, of which David Cameron will be Vice-Chairman, is a private sector initiative, and not a government appointment. The fund has not received public money. The Department for International Trade welcomes initiatives which support innovative and sustainable commercial growth opportunities between the UK and China.

■ Department for International Trade: Equal Pay

Jon Trickett:

[\[121246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the UKEF Gender Pay Gap Report 2016-2017, if she will break down the pay gap data for (a) median, (b) mean and (c) bonus pay by (i) grade and (ii) profession.

Graham Stuart:

UK Export Finance (UKEF) published its first Gender Pay Gap report on Monday 18 December, 2017. The full report can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-export-finance-ukef-gender-pay-gap-report-2016-to-2017/ukef-gender-pay-gap-report-2016-to-2017>

UKEF's pay gap for 2016/17 was (a) median: 16.26%, (b) mean: 15.97% and (c) bonus pay: 22.36%. The breakdown of the UKEF pay gap data is below. Figures which are preceded by a minus sign identify grades where female members of staff are paid more on average than male counterparts in the same grade.

| GRADE | MEAN | MEDIAN | BONUS |
|-------|------|--------|-------|
| AA | -11% | -11% | N/A |
| AO | 0% | 0% | N/A |
| EO | -5% | -4% | -79% |
| HEO | -6% | 0% | -53% |

| GRADE | MEAN | MEDIAN | BONUS |
|---------|------|--------|-------|
| SEO | 1% | 2% | -19% |
| Grade 7 | 5% | 5% | 34% |
| Grade 6 | 1% | 0% | -26% |
| SCS | 7% | 4% | 39% |

To ensure figures are robust and meaningful, gender pay gaps within professions are presented where at least 100 men and 100 women are recorded in a profession. This is not possible for UKEF given our relatively small size.

Jon Trickett:

[121249]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the 2016-17 data on the gender pay gap in his Department, if he will break down the pay gap data for (a) median, (b) mean and (c) bonus pay by (i) grade and (ii) profession.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) published its first Gender Pay Gap report on Monday 18 December, 2017. The full report can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-international-trade-dit-gender-pay-gap-report-and-data-2016-to-2017>

DIT's pay gap for 2016/17 was (a) median: 2.7%, (b) mean: 3.6% and (c) bonus pay: -14.4%. The pay gap can be broken down by grade as follows:

| GRADE | MEDIAN PAY GAP | MEAN PAY GAP | BONUS PAY |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|-----------|
| AO | -0.29% | 1.28% | 44.00% |
| EO | -1.47% | -2.83% | 8.21% |
| HEO | 2.51% | 2.31% | -41.67% |
| Fast Stream | -12.61% | -2.36% | 18.22% |
| SEO | 1.80% | 0.46% | 25.70% |
| Grade 7 | 3.82% | 3.97% | -22.88% |
| Grade 6 | -0.23% | -0.02% | -31.48% |
| SCS1 | -1.46% | 1.39% | -25.00% |
| SCS2 | 23.36% | 4.31% | N/A |

| GRADE | MEDIAN PAY GAP | MEAN PAY GAP | BONUS PAY |
|-------|----------------|--------------|-----------|
| SCS3 | -21.05% | -21.05% | N/A |

To ensure figures are robust and meaningful, gender pay gaps within professions are presented where at least 100 men and 100 women are recorded in a profession. This is not possible for DIT due to the relative size of our workforce.

■ Department for International Trade: EU Law

Priti Patel:

[\[120906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which EU (a) Directives, (b) Regulations and (c) other legislation affecting his Department he is planning to propose (i) revocation and (ii) amendment of after the UK leaves the EU.

Greg Hands:

The European Union (Withdrawal) Bill will retain EU law as it applies in the UK on exit day.

We expect between 800 and 1000 statutory instruments will be required across Government to correct this retained EU law to ensure the statute book functions appropriately outside the EU. All Departments are engaged in this. Once we leave the EU, we will make our own laws. As we leave the EU, the Government's EU exit legislative programme is designed to cater for the full range of negotiated and non-negotiated outcomes.

■ Department for International Trade: Public Expenditure

Tommy Sheppard:

[\[121957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which fruitless payments in excess of £30,000 his Department has made by (a) recipient of each such payment, (b) purpose of each such payment, (c) value of each such payment and (d) reason that payment was classified as fruitless in the 2017-18 financial year to date.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade has not made any fruitless payments over £30,000 in the 2017-18 financial year to date.

■ Iron and Steel: Dumping

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[121136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what process for receiving evidence on steel dumping will be established after the UK leaves the EU.

Greg Hands:

When the UK begins to operate its own independent trade remedies framework, UK steel producers will be able to bring complaints and evidence of dumping directly to the dedicated Trade Remedies Authority (TRA), which is established in the Trade Bill. The aim of the legislation contained in the Trade Bill is to ensure that UK businesses, including in the steel industry, can continue to be protected against unfair and injurious trade practices, such as dumping and subsidy. The TRA will then assess whether there is sufficient evidence, according to the framework set out in the Taxation (Cross-border Trade) Bill, to start an investigation. These processes will adhere to the specific requirements contained in the relevant WTO Agreements.

We are working to make our system as easy as possible for businesses to engage with, including developing an online digital tool to underpin these processes.

■ Iron and Steel: EU Law**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[121135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many of the existing EU measures on steel and steel product dumping the Government plans to maintain after the UK leaves the EU.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) is preparing a UK trade remedies framework, in readiness for the UK leaving the EU.

In support of this, a call for evidence was published on 28 November 2017 and its aims are to identify which UK businesses produce goods currently subject to anti-dumping, or anti-subsidy measures, or to on-going investigations related to these.

It asks those businesses to state whether they support, are neutral to, or oppose the maintaining of those measures, when the UK begins to operate its independent trade remedy framework. It asks for data about those businesses' production and sales, and total UK production and sales.

We invite other interested parties to provide relevant information for measures of interest to them. This will enable us to make an accurate assessment of applications to maintain measures.

■ Trade Agreements**Mr Roger Godsiff:**[\[121983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to his article in The Times of 9 January 2018, which the 14 trade working groups across 21 countries are; how much funding the Government provides to each of those working groups; and for what reason no details will be made available to Parliament on the meetings of those groups.

Greg Hands:

The Government has announced 14 trade working groups across 21 countries to explore the best ways of progressing our trade and investment relationships, details of which have been made public. These form part of the daily work of the teams that run them and are not accounted for separately.

We will work with Parliament and stakeholders to identify the vital role they will play in scrutinising, implementing and ratifying the UK's future trade agreements. We will return to Parliament with proposals in due course.

Mr Roger Godsiff:[\[121984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to his article in The Times of 9 January 2018, whether representatives of any (a) NGOs, (b) trades unions, (c) consumers' rights organisations or (d) environmental organisations will be invited to join the Trade Policy Strategic Advisory Group; and who is responsible under which criteria for deciding that group's membership.

Greg Hands:

The Trade Policy Strategic Advisory Group is only one part of the Department for International Trade's stakeholder engagement activities.

The Trade Policy Strategic Advisory Group will ensure that a range of voices are contributing to developing our trade policy. We will seek to include representation of individuals capable of taking views from across business communities, civil society, consumer groups and academia from across the UK. Further details on the criteria and membership will be decided on in due course.

■ Trade Promotion: Conflict of Interests**Dr David Drew:**[\[122007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what measures he has put in place to ensure that people acting as trade ambassadors separate that role from any personal commercial activities they have arising from which there might be a conflict of interest.

Greg Hands:

Prime Minister's Trade Envoys are parliamentarians and as such are duty bound to declare their interests on the parliamentary register.

The Department for International Trade officials provide all PM Trade Envoys with a copy of the terms of reference for the programme, which includes a section on conflicts of interest.

■ USA: Trade Agreements**Layla Moran:**[\[121127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps he is taking to ensure (a) Parliamentary and (b) public scrutiny of future British-American trade talks.

Greg Hands:

The Government will ensure Parliament has an appropriate role to play in the scrutiny of new UK trade treaties, including any future deal with the US, as it always has.

As outlined in the White Paper, *Preparing for our future UK trade policy*, the Government remains committed to a transparent, fair, and rules-based approach to international trade. We invited views on the UK's approach to its future trade policy, including future trade agreements, and have published our response to feedback received. We will continue to engage with a wide range of stakeholders from across the UK to help shape our emerging trade policy.

JUSTICE**■ Asylum: Legal Aid Scheme****Ruth Cadbury:**[\[121371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many requests for legal assistance were made by asylum applicants during the first instance procedure in 2017.

Ruth Cadbury:[\[121372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many requests there were for legal assistance by asylum applicants during the first instance procedure in the UK in 2017 by type of procedure concerned.

Ruth Cadbury:[\[121373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many requests for legal assistance by asylum applicants during the first instance procedure in 2017 resulted in a grant of legal assistance.

Lucy Frazer:

The legal aid statistics published quarterly by the Ministry of Justice include figures on the volumes of new matters started. These figures are broken down by category of law, including asylum. The latest statistics, covering the period up until September 2017, are published at the following location

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/legal-aid-statistics>. Statistics for the period October – December 2017 will be published on 29 March 2018 at the same location.

The LAA does not hold information in relation to the volume of requests not granted, nor is it able to break down the data on asylum matters to isolate those relating to the “first instance procedure”.

■ Coroners**John Spellar:**[\[121252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what guidance is issued to Coroners on respect for religious beliefs which require speedy burial following death.

Dr Phillip Lee:

Guidance for coroners is issued by the Chief Coroner.

The needs of those faiths which require early burial can only be fully met if coroners provide an out of hours service. In his Annual Report for 2016-2017 the Chief Coroner recommended that coroner areas should provide an out of hours service but that they should normally do so on a 'light touch' basis. He went on to say however that "in some areas an out of hours service will require more, particularly in order to assist families who seek early burial for their loved ones".

In addition, the Ministry of Justice's *Guide to Coroner Services*, which is available on gov.uk and is aimed in particular at bereaved families, says that "the coroner's office will take account where possible of individuals' views and expectations, including family and community preferences, traditions and religious requirements relating to mourning, post-mortem examinations and funerals".

Courts: Sunderland**Bridget Phillipson:****[121812]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will meet the hon. Member for Houghton and Sunderland and the hon. Member for Sunderland Central to discuss the future of the Sunderland Court Estate.

Lucy Frazer:

The letter sent by the Minister of State on 12 December to the Hon. Member for Sunderland Central and the Hon. Member for Houghton and Sunderland outlined the improvements being made to the court estate in Sunderland.

The decision to integrate court and tribunal sites in Sunderland into the Magistrates' Court building will enable us to focus investment into a single building in Sunderland. This will result in a better standard of accommodation and improve the experience of those who use the court.

I am still considering future meetings and visits but in the meantime, I would be happy to consider any comments the Hon. Member may have regarding these plans through correspondence.

HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Temporary Employment**Richard Burgon:****[121830]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 20 December to Question 119017, how much HM Courts and Tribunal Service has spent on agency staff pay in each year since 2010.

Lucy Frazer:

HM Courts & Tribunals Service expenditure on agency staff is published each year in their annual report and accounts.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=hm-courts-and-tribunals-service&publication_type=corporate-reports

■ Liverpool Prison: Safety

Imran Hussain:

[121041]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the recent report of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons on HMP Liverpool, what steps his Department will take to address safety concerns expressed therein.

Rory Stewart:

[Holding answer 12 January 2018]: The levels of violence and self-harm in our prisons are too high. Our immediate priority in HMPPS is to make prisons safer for everyone who lives or works in them. We are working with a newly appointed Governor and her Senior Management Team to improve the approach to safety at HMP Liverpool and achieve immediate improvements.

As part of strengthening the approach the prison has also appointed a new Head of Safety who is being supported by the Regional Safer Custody Team. This will allow Liverpool to learn from the best practice undertaken at other sites and have additional resources to support implementation activity.

Arrangements for managing and supporting prisoners at risk of suicide and self-harm have been improved, including an improved risk screening tool in operation on reception and a new practice which increases support and encourages prisoners to engage effectively. This approach is supported by the additional significant increases in staff which Liverpool has seen over the last year. The updating of Suicide & Self Harm Training (SASH) and ACCT Case Manager training has commenced and will be rolled out to all staff over the coming year.

A review of the substance misuse strategy has been undertaken by a national expert and a new Head of Substance Misuse has been appointed to take forward the recommendations and to tackle the challenges posed by NPS and other drugs.

A new daily regime for prisoners which allows them to spend more time out of their cells and access better education, work and healthcare has been implemented which should reduce their frustration.

■ Ministry of Justice: Regulation

Priti Patel:

[120879]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the title was of each set of regulations introduced by his Department in each month since May 2010; which of those regulations have been (a) subject to the (i) one in one out and (ii) one in two out procedure and (b) (i) revoked and (ii) amended; and what the net cost to (A) the public purse; and (B) business of those regulations is.

Priti Patel:

[120910]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what processes his Department has put in place to (a) monitor, (b) collate cost information on, (c) review and (d) respond to requests to amend or revoke regulations introduced by his Department.

Rory Stewart:

[Holding answer 12 January 2018]: The changes to regulations affecting business during the 2010-15 Parliament are recorded in Statements of New Regulation that were published every six months. These are available on <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/one-in-two-out-statement-of-new-regulation>.

For the 2015-17 Parliament, the Government will shortly publish its final report on the savings to business delivered during that Parliament.

For the current Parliament, the Government is committed to maintaining a proportionate approach to regulation to enable business growth while maintaining public protections. This will be monitored through the target that the Government is required to set under the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015.

■ Parole Board: Finance**Richard Burgon:****[122013]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the budget for the Parole Board has been in each year since 2010.

Rory Stewart:

The annual resource budget allocated - for the years 2010/11 to date - by the Ministry of Justice to the Parole Board is published each year in the Parole Board annual report and accounts, and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=parole-board>

■ Prison Officers**Richard Burgon:****[121821]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 8 January to Question 120488, for what reasons that Answer did not provide information on what categories of information the Government collects on detached duty.

Rory Stewart:

The answer to Question 120488 by my honourable friend, the member for East Surrey, sought to make clear that detached duty is driven by operational decisions and assessments based on a wide range of information. The discrete data that HMPPS currently collates in relation to detached duty is designed for administrative use only, to assist and support the management of detached duty. In the broadest terms it relates to staffing levels and demand and supply levels of available staff.

The data is drawn from a number of sources and it is necessarily dynamic and often time limited with a number of caveats. The data and a number of other dynamic dependencies are brought together in the context of the need at a particular time when detached duty is being planned and implemented. At present, there is no intention to routinely publish such data relating to detached duty.

■ Prisoners' Release

Lady Hermon:

[121861]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners serving an indeterminate sentence of imprisonment for public protection have been freed by the Parole Board in each of the last two years; and if he will make a statement.

Rory Stewart:

The latest published first release statistics for prisoners serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences are provided in the table below.

| 2015 | 2016 | Q1 & 2 2017 |
|------|------|-------------|
| 562 | 576 | 315 |

The Ministry of Justice publishes quarterly data on IPP sentences as part of the Offender Management Statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>

The release of IPP sentence prisoners is solely a matter for the Independent Parole Board, based on a thorough assessment of risk. The Board will direct the release of these prisoners only if it is satisfied that the levels of risk posed to the general public are reduced enough to be safely managed in the community under supervision by the National Probation Service and its partner agencies.

Public protection is our priority and no changes have been made to the IPP release test. All IPP prisoners will continue to be rigorously assessed by the Independent Parole Board as to whether they are safe to be released.

■ Prisons: Crimes of Violence

Richard Burgon:

[121827]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much was paid from the public purse in compensation to prison staff as a result of injuries suffered in a violent attack on the prison estate in the most recent financial year for which such information is available.

Rory Stewart:

Some £450,000 was paid to prison staff in damages in 2016/17 who had brought personal injury claims following alleged assaults.

■ Prisons: Expenditure

Richard Burgon:

[122014]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 8 January 2018 to Question 120491, for what reasons his Department is unable to provide a year-to-year comparison of the budget for prisons in England and Wales broken down as requested in that question.

Richard Burgon:

[\[122016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 8 January 2018 to Question 120491, on Prisons: Expenditure, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of answering the Question.

Rory Stewart:

The requested information is not recorded centrally as this is not a business requirement nor is it required under any accounting regulation. However, as suggested in my previous answer, our published prison unit cost data, where web details were enclosed, provides resource cost figures for previous years. Within the data, the most recent cost information contains restated figures to enable a more fair comparison between the two years.

In respect of cost related to collate the information requested, we would need carry out a revaluation pricing exercise for all prisons for each year since 2010 to provide any accurate comparable data. This would exceed the Department's cost limit of £850 for answering a parliamentary question. We estimate a minimum cost of around £3,000 to create and collate this information separately.

■ Prisons: Overcrowding

Jo Stevens:

[\[121575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department has taken to reduce overcrowding on the prison estate in the last six months.

Rory Stewart:

[Holding answer 11 January 2018]: Prison numbers can fluctuate, which is why we have a robust set of plans in place to ensure we will always have enough places for offenders committed to custody by the courts. This includes modernising the estate and building new accommodation.

We will modernise the prison estate, closing older prisons that are not fit for purpose and creating in their place high-quality, rehabilitative establishments. We have started to redevelop the prisons at Glen Parva (Leicestershire) and Wellingborough (Northamptonshire). We are building a new houseblock at Stocken prison (Rutland). Additionally, we plan to build four modern prisons which includes the development of sites at Full Sutton (East Yorkshire), Hindley (Greater Manchester), Rochester (Kent) and Port Talbot (Neath Port Talbot, South Wales).

The Verne, a former HM Prison and Probation Service operated immigration removal centre in Dorset, will be reopening as a prison as early as possible this year and is expected to house 580 offenders.

■ Prisons: Smoking

Philip Davies:

[\[120611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will pause the roll-out of the smoke-free prison scheme in the light of the judgement of the Supreme Court of 19 December 2017 on smoking in prisons.

Rory Stewart:

[Holding answer 12 January 2018]: There are no plans and no reason to stop the roll out of smoke free prisons.

The legal position on the application of the Health Act 2006 to public sector prisons has not changed, since the Supreme Court simply upheld the findings of the Court of Appeal. Indeed, the Supreme Court judgment contemplated that the government would take voluntary action as a matter of policy to fulfil the underlying purposes behind the Health Act 2006. The government remains of the view that the existing policy ambition is the right approach, given the acknowledged health harms associated with passive smoking. HMPPS will continue to roll out smoke-free provision in public sector prisons that are planned to go smoke-free, subject to operational and health readiness.

■ Prisons: Staff

Richard Burgon:

[\[120679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, on how many occasions wings of publicly-owned prisons have been closed due to insufficient staff levels in the last 12 months.

Rory Stewart:

[Holding answer 12 January 2018]: The information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

This Government is fully committed to making our prisons safe and is actively taking the measures necessary to ensure that. We are boosting the number of prison officers by 2,500 and we have already reached the halfway mark over the past year with a further 1,211 candidates who have received job offers. In addition to that, we are also giving officers the tools they need to manage violent offenders – investing in body-worn cameras, new style handcuffs and piloting PAVA incapacitant spray.

■ Reoffenders

Richard Burgon:

[\[121825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people losing custody of children following their recall to prison in each of the last three years.

Rory Stewart:

The information requested is not held centrally and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Victim Support Schemes**Richard Burgon:** [\[121757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Victim Contact Officers have been employed in each region in each year since 2010.

Richard Burgon: [\[122010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the budget of the Victim Contact Scheme has been in each year since 2010.

Dr Phillip Lee:

Our priority is to support victims, which is why the allocation of resources to victim liaison units has increased since the creation of the National Probation Service, with more staff and a greater investment in victim contact services.

The National Probation Service (NPS) was created on 1 June 2014. Prior to that date, responsibility for liaison with victims lay with the 35 former Probation Trusts. A search for information about numbers of victim liaison officers (VLOs) employed by the Trusts, and the related budgets, would require an extensive examination of archived records and could not be undertaken without incurring disproportionate cost.

At the formation of the NPS, it was decided to maintain previous staffing levels across all divisions while tools were developed to determine precise staffing requirements. Since that point, the number of VLO posts has increased from 169 to 189 and there has been a significant increase in the number of administrative staff employed to support their work. The budget dedicated to this work has increased from £8.5 million to £9.6 million over the same period.

Richard Burgon: [\[122012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much his Department has spent on victims' support services in each year since 2010.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The government is committed to ensuring that victims of crime have access to a broad range of support services, to help them cope with and, as far as possible, recover from the effects of crime. Since 2010, the spend on victims' support services has increased significantly. From 2014, many of these services have been provided (with MoJ grant funding) by Police and Crime Commissioners. Further to this, the MoJ also funds national services, including the national homicide service and the court based witness service, as well as rape support centres across England and Wales.

Figures from 2014/15 onwards include total spend against the Victim and Witness Policy budget. This includes MoJ funding towards other victim and witness services, such as Registered Intermediaries, who provide assistance to the most vulnerable witnesses when attending court.

2010/11 - £48.43m*

2011/12 - £49.6m*

2012/13 - £50.26m*

2013/14 - £57.02m*

2014/15 - £89.37m

2015/16 - £97.99m

2016/17 – £96.51m

*Due to the length of time that it would take to retrieve these figures from archives, spend on victims' support service from these years was taken from the response to PQ226875.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ Sinn Féin: Finance

Lady Hermon:

[\[122105\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, what steps she is taking to review the representative money allocated to Sinn Féin after the conduct of the hon. Member for West Tyrone in relation to the Kingsmill massacre; and if she will make a statement.

Andrea Leadsom:

It is the Government's view that the issue of representative money for Members of Parliament is primarily a matter for the House itself to resolve.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ BBC Northern Ireland: Equal Pay

Lady Hermon:

[\[121860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what representations she has made to the Northern Ireland Equality Commission on ensuring equal pay for BBC employees in Northern Ireland.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

Neither the Secretary of State nor the previous Secretary of State has made representations to the ECNI regarding BBC pay.

■ Northern Ireland Assembly: Pay

Lady Hermon:

[\[121859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what plans she has to implement the recommendations made in the Reaney review of the salaries and staff allowances of members of the Northern Ireland Assembly; and if she will make a statement.

Karen Bradley:

I am considering Trevor Reaney's advice carefully and will respond to his recommendations in due course.

■ Northern Ireland Government**Lady Hermon:**[\[121862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the conduct of the hon. Member for West Tyrone in relation to the Kingsmill massacre on the talks to restore devolved government in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

The Kingsmill attack was a horrendous terrorist atrocity, and I recognise the pain and suffering of such an attack never diminishes for the families of the victims. My sympathies, at this present time, go out to the families who lost loved ones as a result of this barbaric attack.

Mr McElduff has now announced that he is standing down as an MP. The inquiry into Mr McElduff's actions now rests with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, who will determine any potential criminal proceedings, and the Commissioner for Parliamentary Standards has been alerted.

I assure you, the department remain determined and committed to get a Northern Ireland Executive back up and running as soon as possible, and I continue to urge the Northern Ireland parties to seek urgent resolution to restore the Executive.

■ Schools: North Down**Lady Hermon:**[\[121858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if she will make it her policy to visit (a) schools with an integrated ethos and (b) other schools in North Down; and if she will make a statement.

Karen Bradley:

I would be happy to consider any formal invitations which may be forthcoming from any sectors of the community, including those which focus specifically on education.

I understand that Northern Ireland Office Ministers have had a number of valuable and enjoyable visits to the honourable Lady's constituency in the past and I hope to be in a position to do likewise at some point in the future.

However, as I have made clear, my immediate focus will be to work with the Northern Ireland political parties, and the Irish Government, to secure the restoration of inclusive, stable, devolved government in Northern Ireland.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Ministers: Pay****Layla Moran:**[\[121813\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what the average salary is of (a) men and (b) women attending the Cabinet since the reshuffle on 8 January 2017.

Layla Moran:

[121814]

To ask the Prime Minister, what the average salary is for (a) men and (b) women in the Government following the reshuffle of 8 and 9 January 2017.

Mrs Theresa May:

Ministerial salaries are published online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministerial-salary-data>

Across each level of responsibility, male and female Ministers are paid the same.

Layla Moran:

[121817]

To ask the Prime Minister, how many unpaid members of her Government are (a) men and (b) women.

Layla Moran:

[121819]

To ask the Prime Minister, for what reasons she appointed an additional Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union on 9 January 2017.

Mrs Theresa May:

I refer the hon. Member to the press release issued on 9 January following the reshuffle and which is available on the gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ministerial-appointments-january-2018>

■ Prime Minister: Brexit

Deidre Brock:

[121412]

To ask the Prime Minister, who attended each meeting of (a) the European Union Exit and Trade Cabinet Committee, (b) the European Union Exit and Trade (Strategy and Negotiations) Cabinet sub-Committee, (c) the European Union Exit and Trade (International Trade) Cabinet sub-Committee, (d) the European Union Exit and Trade (Domestic Preparedness, Legislation and Devolution) Cabinet sub-Committee and (e) the European Union Exit and Trade (European Affairs) Cabinet sub-Committee.

Mrs Theresa May:

As has been the practice under successive Governments, information relating to the proceedings of Cabinet Committees is not disclosed.

TRANSPORT

■ A19: Safety

Mr Stephen Hepburn:

[121403]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve road safety on the A19 road in north-east England.

Jesse Norman:

The A19 is some 124 miles in length of which Highways England is responsible for the 67 mile section between Thirsk in North Yorkshire and Seaton Burn in Tyne and Wear with the remainder being the responsibility of local highways authorities.

Since 2011, Highways England have delivered safety improvements at ten locations on the A19, including improvements to traffic signals and road markings, provision of additional road capacity to reduce congestion, and improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Government provides the Integrated Transport Block funding for local highways authorities; this is aimed at small scale transport schemes and can be used for safety improvements. It is for each individual local highway authority to manage its network, based upon its local knowledge and circumstances.

■ Abandoned Vehicles**Rosie Cooper:**[\[121348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether there is a time frame in which the DVLA must (a) respond and (b) take action after the reporting of untaxed or abandoned vehicles on public roads.

Jesse Norman:

There is no specific timescale within which the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) must respond or take action after receiving a report of a potentially unlicensed vehicle.

The DVLA has an online service for members of the public to notify possibly unlicensed vehicles. A report of notifications received via this service is sent weekly to the DVLA's national wheel clamping contractor. The licensing status of any vehicles listed in the report will be checked, and appropriate action taken if they are seen on the public road.

The DVLA's database also automatically recognises when a vehicle is non-compliant and highlights this so that enforcement action can be taken. Often action is under way that may not be immediately visible to the public.

The DVLA is not responsible for the removal of abandoned vehicles. Local authorities are able to do so using powers contained in the Cleaner Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2006. Alternatively, the police can remove any vehicle that is causing an obstruction, is likely to cause danger, or is broken down or abandoned without lawful authority.

■ Cars: Overseas Trade**Royston Smith:**[\[121843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many cars were (a) imported and (b) exported by air freight over the past year.

Jesse Norman:

The Department for Transport does not collect or keep possession of data pertaining to the number of cars imported or exported by air freight.

Community Transport: Licensing**Drew Hendry:**[\[121184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to sections 19 and 22 of the Transport Act 1985, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of his Department's proposed changes to section 19 and 22 permits on community groups and schools.

Jesse Norman:

The Department will shortly consult on this issue and set out the changes proposed to legislation as well as guidance on the use of section 19 and 22 permits. The consultation will contain an impact assessment.

The effect of the changes to the regulatory regime, including those on schools and community groups, will form part of our considerations. The Department wants as many community transport providers as possible to continue to operate, and retain, service provision for vulnerable community transport passengers.

Department for Transport: Public Expenditure**Tommy Sheppard:**[\[121958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which fruitless payments in excess of £30,000 his Department has made by (a) recipient of each such payment, (b) purpose of each such payment, (c) value of each such payment and (d) reason that payment was classified as fruitless in the 2017-18 financial year to date.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Department for Transport made three fruitless payments over £30,000 between 1 April 2017 and 11 January 2018.

The table attached provides a breakdown in the specified format.

Attachments:

1. Table [121958 - Sheppard - table.docx]

Department for Transport: Travel**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[121022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department has spent on (a) taxis, (b) first class train tickets and (c) business class air travel in each of the last four years.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

It should be noted that it is not possible to make year-on-year comparisons over these four years due to significant changes in the way that the data requested is recorded, in particular due to a change in travel provider towards the end of 2015/16.

The change in travel provider has also made it difficult to obtain a full set of data for 2015/16 and prior years without incurring disproportionate cost.

All central Department staff, who incur most of the travel spend across the DfT family, are expected to travel standard class irrespective of grade except under very limited circumstances. With respect to air travel staff are allowed to book non-standard class flights if they are longer than eight hours in duration and with the expectation that the individual needs to carry out Departmental work as soon as they arrive at the destination. The majority of the central Department non-standard class air travel is incurred by aviation security officials flying to long-haul destinations around the world for sensitive aviation security operations.

Aside from the central Department, the vast majority otherwise of the business class air travel is incurred by the VCA and the MCA. However, for VCA the majority of overseas travel is chargeable to the VCA's clients and so any business class air travel spend by the VCA will result in only a minimal net cost to the taxpayer.

Similarly, MCA's Marine Surveyors are required to survey UK-registered ships on a regular basis wherever the ship may be at that time and they have to fly globally to those locations. The cost of the airfare is recovered as part of the fee paid by the shipping company for the regulatory work, so therefore any business class air travel by the MCA will result in only a minimal net cost to the taxpayer.

With respect to first class rail travel, all central Department staff must travel standard class irrespective of grade, except under two specific circumstances - temporary or permanent disability and pregnancy related reasons.

Over the four years in question, data is not available from either all parts of the Department or for all time periods. In addition, for the central Department for the years 2013/14 to 2015/16, due to the way that travel was booked at this time, it is not possible to obtain a complete record of spend. Therefore it is not possible to compare the spend data from year to year.

For 2013/14, available information covering the central Department, DVLA, VCA, DSA, the MCA and Highways Agency is: Taxi spend = £169,052 (though no information is available for the MCA); first class rail travel = £33,873 and business class air travel = £243,170. No information is available for VOSA.

For 2014/15, data is only available covering the first 8 months of the year except the central Department does have taxi spend data for 12 months. Data covering the central Department, DVLA, VCA, DSA, the MCA and the Highways Agency is: Taxi spend = £153,246 (though no information is available for the MCA); first class rail travel = £18,477 and business class air travel = £110,188. No information is available for VOSA.

For 2015/16, data is mainly only available covering the last 4 months of the year due to a change in travel provider, except the DVLA does have 12 months of data for all spend and the central Department, VCA and MCA do have taxi spend data for 12 months. Data covering the central Department, DVLA and VCA is: Taxi spend =

£182,099 (this also includes MCA spend); first class rail travel = £5,479 (no data available for the MCA); business class air travel = £167,420 (no data available for the MCA). No information is available for the DVSA and the Highways Agency is no longer an Executive Agency of DfT.

For 2016/17, data is available for the full 12 months of the year for the central Department, DVLA, VCA and MCA: Taxi spend = £191,307; first class rail travel = £10,503; business class air travel = £1,155,965. No data is available for DVSA and the Highways Agency is no longer an Executive Agency of DfT.

■ Driving Tests

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[121298]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to address safety concerns raised by driving test examiners in risk assessments in respect of the new driving test.

Jesse Norman:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) introduced the new practical driving test on 4 December 2017. The new elements of the test were trialed extensively before the launch.

DVSA conducted an internal risk assessment of the new test, which did not identify any unacceptable risk. It also commissioned an independent assessment of the test from The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). The RoSPA report concluded that all new parts of the driving test were low risk.

DVSA is closely monitoring the new driving test and as of 8 January 2018, there have not been any incident reports in relation to the new test elements.

■ Electric Vehicles

John Spellar:

[121254]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department taking with electric vehicle manufacturers to ensure that a common charging connection is used for all electric vehicles.

Jesse Norman:

We want all public chargepoints to be accessible and interoperable for all electric vehicle (EV) drivers across the UK, regardless of the vehicle they are driving. All Government-funded public chargepoints must meet a minimum common standard for chargepoint connectors and sockets, and include a 'pay as you go' functionality.

The recently introduced Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulations will ensure that all UK publicly accessible chargepoints are required to offer access to all users on an ad hoc basis without entering into a contract with the electricity supplier or operator concerned and also sets minimum standards for publicly accessible chargepoint sockets and outlets.

In addition, the Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill is designed to improve the accessibility and interoperability of public chargepoints further, by giving Government the powers to require chargepoint operators to ensure a standardised means of access and connection.

■ European Court of Justice: European Aviation Safety Agency

Tom Brake:

[\[121260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has sought legal advice on the relationship between the European Court of Justice and the European Aviation Safety Agency.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Government is considering carefully all the potential implications arising from the UK's exit from the EU, including the implications for continued or discontinued participation in the European Aviation Safety Agency.

The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) interprets EU law and is the ultimate arbiter of EU law within the EU and its Member States. The European Aviation Safety Agency is an EU regulatory agency and therefore comes under the remit of the CJEU. EASA performs a limited number of executive functions on behalf of the Union, but its primary role is to provide technical rulemaking advice for the Union to adopt harmonised safety regulations implemented at national level.

■ Govia Thameslink Railway: Tickets

Peter Kyle:

[\[121931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 4 November 2016 to Question 51330, what progress his Department has made on introducing (a) flexible ticketing and (b) rail season tickets tailored towards part-time workers on the Govia Thameslink Railway franchise.

Joseph Johnson:

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) undertook a trial on two routes (Horsham to London and Radlett to London) where passengers with a season ticket who travelled at off peak times were offered cashback for each journey undertaken. The results of that trial were that there was limited uptake of this offer and it did not deliver the outputs required. GTR will be rolling out wider enhancements to the Key smartcard throughout 2018, and the Department is working with GTR to consider alternative options and trials for introducing part time season tickets on the Key.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Jon Trickett:

[\[121117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the 100 metre residential impact figures for the proposed HS2 routes are for the number of properties affected at each location along the (a) M18 eastern route including the Blackwell spur, (b) 2013 consulted Meadowhall route, (c) full refined Meadowhall route from February 2016 and (d) two

alternative M18 eastern route options detailed on page 82 of his Department's July 2017 publication entitled HS2 Phase 2b route refinements - advice to Government.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The HS2 Ltd July 2017 route refinement advice ("High Speed Two Phase 2b Crewe to Manchester West Midlands to Leeds Route Refinements: HS2 Ltd's Advice to Government"), sets out a number of sustainability impacts along the M18/Eastern route, the 2013 consulted Meadowhall route and the refined Meadowhall Route. The advice provides (i) comparisons of the number of properties within 100m on the M18/Eastern route and the refined Meadowhall route, (ii) the number of potential demolitions associated with the M18/Eastern route, the 2013 consultation Meadowhall route and the refined Meadowhall route and (iii) an appraisal of the number of households that could experience a noticeable noise impact across each route. The information is set out at pages 69-71.

The publication "High Speed Two Phase 2b Crewe to Manchester West Midlands to Leeds Route Refinements: HS2 Ltd's Advice to Government", July 2017 is a HS2 Ltd publication.

Dame Cheryl Gillan:

[\[121374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 December 2017 to Question 120015 on High Speed 2 railway line, if he will name (a) all 12 applications made to the HS2 Community and Environment Fund, (b) the six successful applicants and (c) identify which of those applicants have accepted the terms and conditions.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

As stated in the answer given by the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the Hon Member for Blackpool North and Cleveleys (Paul Maynard) of 21 December 2017, it is anticipated that an announcement will be made in early 2018 with news of the first accepted awards made and their locations.

■ **M5**

Luke Pollard:

[\[121382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to make the M5 in the South West a smart motorway.

Jesse Norman:

Work to make the M5 from Junction 15 to Junction 17 near Bristol a smart motorway was completed in Spring 2014. Access to and from the South West has been further improved with completion of a Smart Motorway upgrade of the M5 from Junctions 4a (Droitwich Spa) to Junction 6 (Worcester) completed in Spring 2017.

There are no plans within the current Road Investment Strategy (RIS) (2015 – 2020) to upgrade further sections of the M5 to a smart motorway. Highways England continue to engage with local authorities and other interested parties on future

changes to the network. The need for further upgrades will be considered during the design of the next RIS for the period 2020-2025.

■ Ports

Royston Smith: [\[121839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many minor ports across the UK are currently in operation.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

There are currently 61 ports operating in the UK which the Department for Transport classifies as 'minor' for the purposes of the statistics it gathers.

■ Public Transport

Mr Stephen Hepburn: [\[121401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people have travelled to work using public transport in each year since 2010.

Jesse Norman:

The number of people in the United Kingdom who usually travelled to work by public transport in each year 2010-2016 is given in the table below, based on the Labour Force Survey.

| YEAR | NUMBER OF PEOPLE |
|------|------------------|
| 2010 | 4,350,000 |
| 2011 | 4,566,000 |
| 2012 | 4,679,000 |
| 2013 | 4,922,000 |
| 2014 | 5,080,000 |
| 2015 | 5,198,000 |
| 2016 | 5,336,000 |

Public transport includes the following: bus, coach, national rail, underground, light railway systems and trams

■ Railways

Gareth Thomas: [\[121773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Competition and Markets Authority's document on Competition in passenger rail services in Great Britain published in March 2016, what steps his Department has taken to increase the number of open access rail services; and if he will make a statement.

Joseph Johnson:

As the Secretary of State for Transport set out in his November 2017 document *A Strategic Vision for Rail*, the use of the Department's franchising powers through competitive public procurement will continue to be our central policy for train service operations, reflecting the significant benefits it has brought for passengers.

However, whilst it is for individual operators to consider potential applications, we have made clear that we welcome new open access applications where these do not significantly impact on affordability or the value for money from public investment in the rail network, and where they complement franchised services. Ultimately these applications are for the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to determine and government has no contractual relationship with open access operators.

As the Competition and Markets Authority made clear, a pre-condition for greater open access under their preferred Option 1 is that open access makes an appropriate contribution towards the costs of the railway. We are taking forward consideration of this option, both through working with the ORR on charging reform and the public service obligation (PSO) levy. We are therefore pleased that the ORR is taking forward reforms to the track access charging framework as part of its Periodic Review 2018 process.

We are considering the responses to the public service obligation levy consultation, and will continue discussions with the ORR on potential links between charging reform and the PSO proposals. We intend to publish our response shortly.

■ Railways: Social Enterprises**Gareth Thomas:****[121774]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage social enterprises and co-operatives to enter the rail industry; and if he will make a statement.

Joseph Johnson:

The Franchise Agreement contains an obligation for franchisees to identify schemes to develop currently redundant or under-utilised station buildings and facilities for use by community groups and social enterprise organisation or for commercial development including schemes which sustain and enhance the viability of existing facilities at Stations or lead to the development of new facilities including through appropriate sub leasing of station buildings.

The Association of Community Rail (ACoRP), which is the umbrella body for community rail partnerships and station adoption groups (for which DfT is the main funder) is currently developing a Social Enterprise handbook/guide in partnership with the train operator Cross Country. The guide due this spring should give good practice and guidance to those wanting to establish a social enterprise on our railways.

The Department is also currently undertaking a consultation on the principles that will inform a new community rail strategy:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-community-rail-strategy>.

■ Railways: Wifi**Stephen Morgan:** [\[121153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve the quality and reliability of WiFi on rail services to and from Portsmouth.

Joseph Johnson:

The Department has taken steps to improve the wifi on rail services to and from Portsmouth by putting in place requirements for the provision of wifi on the relevant franchises (Great Western, South Western and Southern). Good progress has been made, as over 50% of trains in these franchises are fitted with wifi equipment, and this work is due to be completed by 2020.

■ Roads: West Midlands**Mr Jim Cunningham:** [\[121766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve road safety in (a) the West Midlands (b) Coventry.

Jesse Norman:

The British Road Safety Statement sets out the Government's commitment to improve road safety and reduce the number of people killed or injured on the roads every year.

In 2017/18 the Department allocated £31.383 million to the West Midlands through the Integrated Transport Block for capital investment in small transport improvement projects, including road safety. £17.618 million of that is going to the West Midlands Combined Authority, of which Coventry is a member.

For maintenance of the local road network in 2017/18 the Department has allocated £95.523 million to the West Midlands, with £15.879 million of that going to the West Midlands Combined Authority.

It is for each authority to decide how it allocates its resources and which transport improvement projects to support.

■ Silvertown Tunnel**Stephen Timms:** [\[122067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he expects the Silvertown crossing to be completed.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

An application for a Developmental Consent Order for Silvertown Tunnel has been submitted by Transport for London and this is currently with the Secretary of State for a decision. The deadline for a decision is 10 May 2018. If consent is granted, it will be for Transport for London to decide timescales for the delivery of this scheme.

■ Travel

Mr Stephen Hepburn:

[\[121402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on the number of people who travel to work by (a) car, (b) bus and (c) rail in (i) the North East, (ii) Tyne and Wear, (iii) England and (iv) the UK.

Jesse Norman:

The number of people who usually travelled to work by car, bus and rail in Tyne & Wear, the North East, England, and the UK in 2016 are given in the table below (based on the Labour Force Survey).

| | CAR | BUS ¹ | RAIL ² |
|------------------------|------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Tyne & Wear | 335,000 | 72,000 | 33,000 |
| North East | 887,000 | 115,000 | 43,000 |
| England | 17,974,000 | 1,888,000 | 2,934,000 |
| UK | 21,675,000 | 2,230,000 | 3,106,000 |

1 Also includes coaches.

2 Includes national rail, underground, light railway systems and trams.

■ Travel: West Midlands

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[121765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on the number of people who travel to work by (a) car, (b) bus and (c) rail in (i) the West Midlands and (ii) Coventry.

Jesse Norman:

The number of people who usually travelled to work by car, bus and rail in the West Midlands and Coventry in 2016 are given in the table below (based on the Labour Force Survey). The rail figure for Coventry cannot be estimated reliably due to insufficient sample size.

| | CAR | BUS ¹ | RAIL ² |
|----------------------|-----------|------------------|-------------------|
| West Midlands | 2,124,000 | 160,000 | 87,000 |
| Coventry | 122,000 | 17,000 | * |

1 Also includes coaches.

2 Includes national rail, underground, light railway systems and trams.

■ West Midlands Rail Franchise**Mr Roger Godsiff:****[121739]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the conditions of the new West Midlands franchise require a second member of staff to be retained on every train.

Joseph Johnson:

The Department has not specified any particular staffing arrangement as train operating methods are a matter for the new franchise operator. However, with more passengers using our railways than ever before, I expect to see more staff on the network, not fewer.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Access to Work Programme: Hearing Impairment****Alex Sobel:****[121276]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the cap on Access to Work funding does not affect deaf employees (a) applying for a promotion or (b) developing a career.

Sarah Newton:

In March 2015 the Government announced a new annual limit (known as the cap) on Access to Work (AtW) awards, and set it at 1.5 times the median gross annual earnings for full-time employees (as published annually by the Office for National Statistics). By definition, this is more than most full-time employees earn. In April 2018, the cap will rise to £43,100 per person per year, in line with the latest published median gross annual earnings figure.

At the time of the announcement, we made it clear that customers whose awards were above the cap when it was introduced in October 2015 would retain their current award (subject to their needs remaining the same) until April 2018, to enable them to adjust to new levels of support.

Since 2015, we have written to all affected customers and established specialist teams of Access to Work advisers who will work with employers and customers to explore what extra advice and support those customers may need. We have offered customers workplace assessments to advise on:

- what adjustments an employer might reasonably make,
- the latest range of support and equipment available through AtW, and;
- other ways of meeting support needs – for example through better co-ordination of tasks and support.

AtW specialist advisers are also providing customers with information about:

- video relay services or other technological solutions, and;
- the forthcoming trial of managed personal budgets.

The Equality Analysis published in May 2015 identified 200 customers with awards exceeding the level of the cap. It also highlighted that the average annual award for BSL users is around £10,000 per year – less than a quarter of the level of the cap. Deaf people are the largest customer group and last year (2016/17) the number of deaf people with AtW support approved rose by 13%, compared to an 8% increase in customers with any AtW support approved overall.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Public Expenditure**

Tommy Sheppard:

[\[121959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which fruitless payments in excess of £30,000 her Department has made by (a) recipient of each such payment, (b) purpose of each such payment, (c) value of each such payment and (d) reason that payment was classified as fruitless in the 2017-18 financial year to date.

Kit Malthouse:

For 2017/18 that information is not yet available but will be disclosed when the Department publishes its 2017/18 Annual Report and Accounts.

■ **Employment and Support Allowance**

Rushanara Ali:

[\[121534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons an explanation and breakdown of allowances is not provided to people by his Department when the amount of their employment and support allowance is changed.

Sarah Newton:

DWP Employment and Support Allowance issues an award notice detailing the amount of benefit an individual will receive when any change to the amount of benefit is made. In the case of a change in award this is done automatically.

Where the claim has been terminated a letter is issued in place of the award notice with additional information ensuring we inform the individual of their options and right of appeal.

■ **Fracking: Ryedale**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[121376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 4 December 2017 to Question 115696 on fracking: Ryedale, whether Regulation 19 of the Offshore Installations and Wells (Design and Construction) Regulations 1996 has been adequately adhered to in relation to both the drilling and workover phases of the KM8 well in Ryedale as required under section 4A of the Petroleum Act 1998.

Sarah Newton:

The Health and Safety Executive has received the reports required by Regulation 19 of the Offshore Installations and Wells (Design and Construction, etc.) Regulations

1996 for both the drilling and workover operations carried out on the KM8 well. The operator has therefore complied with the requirements of Regulation 19.

■ **Housing Benefit: Refuges**

Melanie Onn: [122070]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much her Department spent on housing benefit for people living in refuge accommodation in (a) 2016-17 and (b) 2015-16.

Kit Malthouse:

The information requested is not available.

■ **Jobcentres**

Stella Creasy: [121672]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to publish information on the (a) the number of staff, (b) number of clients seen and (c) the average length of time in processing a claim at each job centre in the UK for each of the last five years.

Alok Sharma:

There are currently no plans to publish this information at Jobcentre level.

The Department routinely publishes information on its performance on Gov.uk in publications including the DWP Annual Report and Accounts, DWP benefits statistical summaries and DWP single departmental plan:

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-statistical-summaries-2017>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-work-and-pensions-single-departmental-plan/department-for-work-and-pensions-single-departmental-plan>

Stat-Xplore also provides a guided way to explore DWP benefit statistics, currently holding data relating to 16 different benefits/programmes::

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

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

■ **Jobcentres: Glasgow**

Mr Paul Sweeney: [121896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will carry out an assessment of the potential effect of the closure of Maryhill and Possilpark Jobcentre on levels of poverty in the area served by those jobcentres.

Kit Malthouse:

There are no plans to assess poverty levels in connection with closures of individual sites such as Maryhill Jobcentre.

I would stress that the office mergers are not about reducing services but about taking the opportunity to stop spending money on empty space so we can spend more on supporting those in need. The face-to-face support our work coaches offer at jobcentres will continue to be a core part of the service we deliver.

National statistics on the number of individuals in relative low income are set out in DWP's annual 'Households Below Average Income' publication. Latest 3-year estimates for Scotland in 2013/14 - 2015/16 show the rate of individuals in low income households at 15%, before housing costs. The number and proportion of individuals in relative low income is not available at a local authority or constituency level because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates at this geography. Estimates to 2016/17 have been pre-announced to be published in March 2018.

■ Jobcentres: Harassment**Stella Creasy:**[\[121671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information her Department holds on the number of reports of abuse and harassment of staff at jobcentres by location over the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

DWP takes any form of abuse and harassment of its staff by customers and claimants very seriously and has robust controls in place to mitigate the risk of Unacceptable Customer Behaviour (UCB), nonetheless there will be occasions when it does unfortunately occur. We encourage our people to report each and every instance of unacceptable behaviour and we do take action against the perpetrator, with measures proportionate to the seriousness of the incident.

Information collected includes:

- Details of Customer/Claimant details
- Events leading to Incident and location of incident
- Incident Category (Actual, Attempted, Verbal Assault, Threat, Written and Other)
- Incident Type (depending on category) but can include Face to Face, Telephone, Object Thrown. If Verbal Abuse / Threat then Abuse type (Ageist, Cultural, Disability, Emotional, Gender, Personal, Racist, Sexual) may also be recorded
- A narrative of the incident

■ Jobcentres: Location

Graham P Jones: [122043]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will place a set of electronic shapefiles showing in full the boundaries of all the areas of the UK covered by each different JobCentre Plus office in the Library.

Alok Sharma:

This **information is not currently held** by the Department in the format required. However, our systems are configured to map postcodes against offices.

There is a local office search page on GOV.UK, where the allocated Jobcentre Plus office and any relevant contact information can be obtained by entering a postcode

This is available at <http://los.direct.gov.uk/>

■ Jobcentres: Refugees

Thangam Debbonaire: [121550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans his Department has to provide training to JobCentre staff to support refugees.

Kit Malthouse:

Jobcentre Plus staff are trained to consider a person's circumstances and to tailor support according to their individual needs. Staff complete claimant awareness training that covers a wide range of claimant circumstances including refugees. Staff also have access to information on services and support available in their local area for vulnerable claimants including refugees.

■ Jobcentres: Training

Dan Jarvis: [121780]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 12 December to Question 118098, what proportion of work coaches received the mental health training set out in the Government's paper, Improving Lives: the Future of Work, Health and Disability, published on 30 November 2017.

Sarah Newton:

Each work coach receives comprehensive and tailored training based on their individual knowledge and requirements. This involves a number of packages that can come under the definition of mental health training, either in whole or in part.

Pursuant to question 118908 these are:

- Training on the Work and Health Conversation is now complete and all work coaches requiring this training have received it.
- The mental health route way forms part of the UC Full Service Work Coach training, and all work coaches working on Full Service will have undertaken this

- For the enhanced mental health training for work coaches, this training is ongoing and information on exact numbers is not currently available [but will be in due course].

■ Personal Independence Payment Independent Review

Dan Jarvis:

[121778]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 11 December to Question 117820, when her Department plans to respond to the recommendations of the second independent review of Personal Independent Payments.

Sarah Newton:

The Government's response to the second independent review of the Personal Independence Payment assessment was published on 18 December 2017 and can be accessed from here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-independence-payment-pip-assessment-second-independent-review-government-response>. The response outlines the Department's intentions in relation to the recommendations in the second independent review, which were all accepted or partially accepted. It also provides an update of the actions the Department has taken against the recommendations identified in the first independent review.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals

Douglas Chapman:

[121461]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the effect on claimants of having their personal independence payments suspended while awaiting an appeal to the Upper Tribunal requested by his Department.

Sarah Newton:

The payment of a tribunal's award of Personal Independence Payment will only be suspended where the Secretary of State considers that a tribunal's decision is wrong in law and that conclusion needs to be tested before the Upper Tribunal. Whilst it must be right not to implement the tribunal's award during this period, if a claimant can show that this will cause them hardship then any suspension imposed can be lifted and payment made.

Whilst no assessment has been made of this policy, this is a long-standing process which has ensured that benefit is paid only when provided for in law.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Forms

Grahame Morris:

[121453]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will provide (a) Hon. Members and (b) claimants with an email address by which personal independence payments claim forms can be sent to his Department in an electronic format, from which a proof of receipt be provided.

Sarah Newton:

The Personal Independence Payment Service Design does not currently incorporate email as a correspondence channel.

The use of email is insecure and therefore DWP does not ask people to send personal details by email.

DWP would only use email with a claimant when it is requested as a reasonable adjustment because of disability. This may be agreed when a claimant has a disability which means they find it more difficult to communicate through the standard communication routes. The risks of data loss must be explained, and the claimant agree to the use of email.

DWP will always provide an email address to any claimant who requires a reasonable adjustment due to a disability.

Personal Independence Payment: Tribunals**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[121643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much public money has been spent on tribunals relating to Personal Independence Payments in 2016-17.

Sarah Newton:

As per the answer to PQs 107049 and 109256, the information is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Social Fund**Anneliese Dodds:**[\[121721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect on low-income families in different local authorities of the devolution of control over the Social Fund; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

The reforms to the Social Fund in 2013 have allowed local authorities in England and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales to deliver their own local provision for people who are in need of urgent help.

Our 2014 review found that local authorities delivered support more effectively than the previous provision under the Social Fund, and that local authorities are best placed to ensure help is targeted at those who need it most, alongside their other local services.

Social Security Benefits: Bethnal Green and Bow**Rushanara Ali:**[\[121533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of assessments for (a) employment and support allowance and (b) personal independence payments went to appeal in Bethnal Green and Bow constituency in each year since 2010.

Sarah Newton:

The table below shows the proportion of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) decisions that went to appeal, by year of decision since the introduction of PIP in the Parliamentary Constituency of Bethnal Green and Bow.

Proportion of PIP decisions that went to appeal, by financial year of decision, in the Parliamentary Constituency of Bethnal Green and Bow.

| FINANCIAL YEAR OF INITIAL PIP DECISION | PROPORTION OF PIP DECISIONS THAT WENT TO APPEAL |
|--|---|
| 2013/14 | 0% |
| 2014/15 | 3% |
| 2015/16 | 7% |
| 2016/17 | 8% |
| Apr'17 to Oct'17 | 4% |

Latest available data to October 2017.

The information for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) is not readily available and can only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Glasgow**

Mr Paul Sweeney:[\[121897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will take steps to monitor trends in the level of sanction decisions at Springburn Jobcentre for 12 months after the divestment of Maryhill and Possilpark Jobcentre.

Alok Sharma:

As part of our preparations for divestment of jobcentres, we recognise that some claimants will be taking an unfamiliar journey to a new location. Therefore, arrangements are in place for work coaches to support claimants over a transitional period until they become accustomed to new travel arrangements.

Within our normal business activities, sanction levels are already monitored to identify trends. Imposing a sanction is not something we do lightly. In the small minority of cases when a sanction is used, claimants are given every opportunity to explain why they failed to meet their agreed conditionality requirements, before a decision is made.

■ Social Security Benefits: Motor Neurone Disease**Layla Moran:**[\[121151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions the Minister of State for Disabled People has had with (a) the Motor Neurone Disease Association and (b) people with motor neurone disease on improving support for people with that condition; and if he will make a statement.

Sarah Newton:

Over the last year we have engaged with stakeholders including the Motor Neurone Disease Association to gather suggestions and better understand their concerns on the Employment and Support Assessment and Universal Credit severe conditions criteria and guidance during the design phase. We have also committed to continue working with the stakeholders, I am meeting with the Motor Neurone Disease Association in February to discuss the implications of the introduction of the severe condition criteria.

In addition, we have engaged in correspondence with a number of MPs on behalf of Motor Neurone Disease sufferers in connection with their claims for benefit.

■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses**Drew Hendry:**[\[121185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many DS1500 forms his Department has processed since the introduction of universal credit.

Drew Hendry:[\[121186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average time taken by his Department was to process a DS1500 form since the introduction of universal credit.

Sarah Newton:

The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. The DS1500 is not a claim form and its use in providing evidential support for claims from people who are terminally ill claiming benefit is not obligatory.

■ Universal Credit**Gill Furniss:**[\[121205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to Answer of 21 December 2017 to Question 120097, what his definition of first contact is.

Alok Sharma:

Universal Credit entitlement starts from first contact, assuming the claim is declared and submitted on that day and followed through within a month. This contact could be online, over the phone, by attending a jobcentre for digital support, or via home visit where appropriate.

Caroline Lucas:

[121303]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the letter from the Minister for Employment to the hon. Member for Brighton Pavilion of 15 November 2017 on universal credit, what the evidential basis is for the Minister's statement that those on universal credit are moving into work significantly faster and working longer than under the previous benefits system.

Alok Sharma:

Three separate studies have provided evidence that people on Universal Credit move into work faster: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-estimating-the-early-labour-market-impacts-updated-analysis>.

In addition, latest analysis of the short term impacts of Universal Credit on labour market outcomes can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-employment-impact-analysis-update>.

Caroline Lucas:

[121377]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2017 to Question 117664, whether data on households in receipt of universal credit in which a child is or is about to be two years' old is currently included in the information on qualifying households provided by his Department to the Department for Education.

Alok Sharma:

The Department for Work and Pensions provides the Department for Education with lists of households who may potentially be eligible for its free early years education entitlement for disadvantaged 2-year-olds.

Households on Universal Credit Live Service and legacy benefits are currently included on these lists. Households on Universal Credit Full Service will be included on these lists from March 2018.

Stephen Timms:

[121712]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason Universal Credit live service has been closed to new claims from 1 January 2018; and if she will make a statement.

Alok Sharma:

The prototype Universal Credit live service has provided an invaluable platform for implementing Universal Credit. However changes to the live service system would be required to introduce the improvements announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Budget 2017, which were set out in Parliament by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on Thursday 23rd November 2017.

It would not represent value for money for taxpayers to invest in these required system changes as Universal Credit full service is steadily replacing the live service and will be available in every Jobcentre by December 2018. Making the Budget

changes in the live service would delay the implementation of those changes because of the timescales associated with introducing modifications to that IT system.

Stephen Timms: [\[121713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which Jobcentre Plus offices which accepted claims for Universal Credit before 1 January 2018 no longer accept claims for Universal Credit as a result of the closure of the live service.

Stephen Timms: [\[121714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to Jobcentre Plus offices which accepted claims for Universal Credit before 1 January 2018 but which are no longer doing so as a result of the closure of the live service, what the (a) shortest, (b) average and (c) longest period is for which Universal Credit claims will not be accepted on the basis of the roll-out plan.

Alok Sharma:

Offices still to roll out the Universal Credit full service are listed below in the attached excel table.

From 1 January 2018:

The shortest time before a site will get Universal Credit full service is 37 calendar days (5 weeks & 2 days) – delivery at these offices commences on 7 February 2018.

The average time to getting Universal Credit full service is 191 calendar days (27 weeks & 2 days).

The longest time before a site gets the Universal Credit full service is 345 calendar days (49 weeks & 2 days) – delivery at these offices commences on 12 December 2018.

Attachments:

1. UC Offices to Roll Out [121713 121714UC Offices to Roll Out FR.xlsx]

■ Universal Credit: Payments

Dr Philippa Whitford: [\[121900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the process is for splitting universal credit payments between adults in a household.

Dr Philippa Whitford: [\[121902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the option to split universal credit payments between adults in a household was decided; and what the process is for deciding how the constituent parts of universal credit are to be allocated to each person.

Alok Sharma:

In very exceptional circumstances, payment of Universal Credit can be divided between two members of the household. This is an Alternative Payment Arrangement known as a Split Payment. Split Payments are to prevent hardship to the claimant

and their family and should only be considered in certain specific situations, such as domestic violence, or where financial abuse occurs and one partner mismanages the Universal Credit payment. Payment Arrangements have always been available in Universal Credit.

Alternative Payment Arrangements can be considered at any point during the Universal Credit claim. They may be identified at the outset by the Jobcentre Plus Work Coach, or during it. They can also be triggered and put in place by information received from the claimant, their representative, their caseworker or their landlord.

The larger percentage of a Split Payment will be allocated to the person with primary caring responsibilities, such as child care. This is to ensure the health and well-being of the majority of the household.

Further information can be found at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662984/personal-budgeting-support-and-alternative-payment-arrangements.pdf.

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[121901]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether any applications for universal credit payments to be split between adults in a household have been declined.

Alok Sharma:

The information requested is not collected in a form that would allow it to be aggregated across all cases to provide the information required.

■ Universal Credit: Refugees

Thangam Debbonaire:

[121552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on ensuring that newly recognised refugees receive the first payment of universal credit within 28 days of their application.

Kit Malthouse:

DWP and the Home Office have recently introduced a supported handover process to assist newly recognised refugees needing assistance to claim benefits. This enables those participating in the process to access benefits by the end of the 28 day move on period, either through their claim to legacy benefits being processed by day 28, or through the offer of an advance payment of benefit that is made at their work-focused interview if they are being considered for Universal Credit. New claimants can already receive an advance of up to 50% of their estimated entitlement and this will increase to 100% later this month. Their repayment period may also move from six months to 12 months accordingly.

■ Universal Credit: Terminal Illnesses**Drew Hendry:**[\[121187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department has provided specific guidance to staff for dealing with terminally ill people claiming universal credit; and if he will place any such guidance in the Library.

Alok Sharma:

We are committed to ensuring that terminally ill patients are treated with the utmost sensitivity and care and receive the support they need to make a claim to Universal Credit.

Guidance is already available for all staff working on Universal Credit to assist them when working with claimants who have a terminal illness, a copy of which will be placed in the Library.

■ Universal Credit: Young People**Derek Twigg:**[\[121975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 21 December 2017 to Question 120356, what the reasons are for the Qualifying Young Persons criteria in Universal Credit not being aligned with the Qualifying Young Person criteria in both child benefit and tax credits.

Alok Sharma:

Universal Credit has been designed to be simpler than the benefits it replaces and provides support for young people aged 16-19 in full-time non-advanced education or approved training, through the child element paid to their parents. This can continue to be paid until 31st August following their 19th birthday.

The criteria in Universal Credit aligns with the academic year to allow most young people still in education or training under age 20 to finish their course and to be supported under their parents' claim to Universal Credit up to the point at which they would be able to claim in their own right. This will generally be at age 18, if they meet the conditions of entitlement.

■ Work Capability Assessment**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[121884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will undertake an end-to-end review of its approach to the work capability assessment process.

Sarah Newton:

We are committed to assessing people with health conditions and disabilities fairly and accurately, helping people to access the right support. We recognise the importance of getting reform in this area right. We therefore intend to focus on testing new approaches to build our evidence base for future reform. In the Improving Lives: The Future of health, Work and Disability command paper we committed to work with external stakeholders to inform future changes to the Work Capability Assessment.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Personal Independence Payment

Toby Perkins:

[109416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people who previously qualified for disability living allowance have not been awarded personal independence payments following assessments by Atos.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 1 November 2017. The correct answer should have been:

Penny Mordaunt

Sarah Newton:

DWP case managers make decisions on all claims based on the PIP2 questionnaire completed by the claimant, any additional evidence they have submitted, the report from the assessment provider and any additional information the assessment provider has requested, for example information from the claimant's GP.

Up to 31st July 2017, 649,480 claimants underwent a Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) reassessment with Independent Assessment Services (IAS), previously known as Atos. Of these claimants, 125,680 were disallowed PIP and 523,800 were awarded PIP by the department.

Source: PIP Computer System claimant records.

Notes:

~~1. The figures above are the outcome of the first DWP decision on each reassessment claim (i.e. prior to any reconsideration, appeal action and award review), where that decision was a disallowance after the claimant underwent an assessment by Independent Assessment Services (previously known as Atos).~~

~~2. Figures include decisions made between 8th April 2013 and 31st July 2017.~~

~~2. Figures include reassessment outcomes for individuals who were aged between 16 and 64 on 8th April 2013, and include both PIP Normal Rules and Special Rules for the Terminally Ill claims.~~

~~3. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.~~

~~4. Great Britain only.~~

The figures are the outcome of the first DWP decision on each DLA to PIP reassessment claim assessed under Normal Rules only, prior to any reconsideration, appeal action and award review, after the claimant underwent an assessment by IAS. Figures include decisions made between 8th April 2013 and 31st July 2017 as recorded on Department systems. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 and are for Great Britain only.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

TREASURY

■ Tax-Free Childcare rollout update

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Elizabeth Truss):

[\[HCWS401\]](#)

In April 2017 the Government launched Tax-Free Childcare, which helps working parents with the cost of childcare with up to £2,000 of support per child. Today we will open the scheme to parents whose youngest child is under 9, or who turn 9 today. We will be opening the scheme to all remaining eligible families on 14th February. This means all eligible parents will be able to apply for Tax-Free Childcare before the end of this financial year.

This government is giving more help with the cost of childcare to working parents than ever before. We introduced Tax-Free Childcare in April 2017, and have doubled the free childcare available to working parents of 3 and 4 year olds to 30 hours a week. In 2019/20 we will be spending around £6bn on childcare support – a record amount of support.

Since opening the childcare service, through which parents apply for 30 hours free childcare and Tax-Free Childcare, more than 325,000 customers have successfully applied and are now using the service. Of these, more than 295,000 parents are eligible for 30 hours free childcare. Over 170,000 have a Tax-Free Childcare account and we have begun activity to further raise awareness of Tax-Free Childcare. We want to encourage more parents to take up the offer they are entitled to.

DEFENCE■ **War Pensions Scheme Up-rating 2017****Under Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Tobias Ellwood):**[\[HCWS402\]](#)

The new rates of war pensions and allowances proposed from April 2018 are set out in the tables below. The Annual uprating of war pensions and allowances for 2018 will take place from the week beginning 9 April. Rates for 2018 are increasing by 3.0 per cent in line with the September 2017 Consumer Price Index.

War Pensions Rates

| | RATES | RATES |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| (Weekly rates unless otherwise shown) | 2017 | 2018 |
| WAR PENSIONS | | |
| Disablement Pension (100% rates) | | |
| officer (£ per annum) | 9,392.00 | 9,674.00 |
| other ranks (weekly amount) | 180.00 | 185.40 |
| Age allowances payable from age 65 | | |
| 40%-50% | 12.05 | 12.40 |
| over 50% but not over 70% | 18.55 | 19.10 |
| over 70% but not over 90% | 26.35 | 27.15 |
| over 90% | 37.10 | 38.20 |
| Disablement gratuity (one-off payment) | | |
| specified minor injury (min.) | 1,147.00 | 1,181.00 |
| specified minor injury (max.) | 8,559.00 | 8,816.00 |
| 1 – 5% gratuity | 2,862.00 | 2,948.00 |
| 6 – 14% gratuity | 6,363.00 | 6,554.00 |
| 15 – 19% gratuity | 11,128.00 | 11,462.00 |

SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCES

Unemployability allowance

| | RATES | RATES |
|---|----------|----------|
| Personal | 111.20 | 114.55 |
| adult dependency increase | 61.80 | 63.65 |
| increase for first child | 14.35 | 14.80 |
| increase for subsequent children | 16.90 | 17.40 |
| Invalidity allowance | | |
| higher rate | 22.00 | 22.65 |
| middle rate | 14.30 | 14.70 |
| lower rate | 7.15 | 7.35 |
| Constant attendance allowance | | |
| exceptional rate | 135.80 | 139.80 |
| intermediate rate | 101.85 | 104.85 |
| full day rate | 67.90 | 69.90 |
| Part-day rate | 33.95 | 34.95 |
| Comforts allowance | | |
| higher rate | 29.20 | 30.10 |
| lower rate | 14.60 | 15.05 |
| Mobility supplement | 64.80 | 66.75 |
| Allowance for lowered standard of occupation (maximum) | 67.88 | 69.92 |
| Therapeutic earnings limit (annual rate) | 6,240.00 | 6,526.00 |
| Exceptionally severe disablement allowance | 67.90 | 69.90 |
| Severe disablement occupational allowance | 33.95 | 34.95 |
| Clothing allowance (£ per annum) | 232.00 | 239.00 |

| | RATES | RATES |
|---|----------|----------|
| Education allowance (£ per annum) (max) | 120.00 | 120.00 |
| WIDOW(ER)S BENEFITS | | |
| Widow(er)s' - other ranks (basic with children) (weekly amount) | 136.50 | 140.60 |
| Widow(er) - Officer higher rate both wars (basic with children) (£ per annum) | 7,259.00 | 7,477.00 |
| Childless widow(er)s' u-40 (other ranks) (weekly amount) | 32.69 | 33.67 |
| Widow(er) – Officer lower rate both wars (£ per annum) | 2,521.00 | 2,597.00 |
| Supplementary Pension | 91.31 | 94.05 |
| Age allowance | | |
| (a) age 65 to 69 | 15.55 | 16.00 |
| (b) age 70 to 79 | 29.90 | 30.80 |
| (c) age 80 and over | 44.35 | 45.70 |
| Children's allowance | | |
| Increase for first child | 21.40 | 22.05 |
| Increase for subsequent children | 24.00 | 24.70 |
| Orphan's pension | | |
| Increase for first child | 24.50 | 25.25 |
| Increase for subsequent children | 26.80 | 27.60 |
| Unmarried dependant living as spouse (max) | 134.15 | 138.25 |
| Rent allowance (maximum) | 51.40 | 52.95 |
| Adult orphan's pension (maximum) | 104.90 | 108.05 |