

**Daily Report****Tuesday, 20 March 2018**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 20 March 2018 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 20 March 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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ ACAS: Undocumented Workers

Paul Blomfield:

[\[132142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many cases of migrants working undocumented were (a) found and closed and (b) passed from Acas to Immigration Enforcement in each of the last five years.

Andrew Griffiths:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy does not collect data on how many migrants are working undocumented in the UK.

Acas does not make referrals from their individual conciliation service to Immigration Enforcement.

■ Gratuities

Stella Creasy:

[\[132797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 30 October 2017 to Question 109411, what the timetable is for the publication of his Department's response to the 2016 consultation into tipping, gratuities, cover and service charges.

Andrew Griffiths:

The Government will provide a response to the consultation shortly. This will set out next steps on Government policy, taking into account evidence collected by the consultation and subsequent developments in the sector such as the publication of a voluntary Code of Practice.

■ Laboratories: EU Law

Ruth George:

[\[132900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Government's policy is on UK laboratories continuing to be able to be certified to EU standards under the ATEX directive after March 2019.

Andrew Griffiths:

The UK is working towards a comprehensive future agreement with the EU which includes securing the freest and most frictionless trade possible in goods. The UK wants to ensure a smooth exit which minimises disruption for businesses and consumers when goods are placed on the UK and EU market. With regards to third party conformity and certification procedures, the Government's aim is to provide maximum legal certainty and confidence to citizens, consumers and businesses.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Carillion****Rushanara Ali:**[\[127484\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, which (a) completed and (b) ongoing public sector contracts in (i) Bethnal Green and Bow, (ii) Tower Hamlets and (iii) Greater London involved Carillion in the last three years for which figures are available.

Oliver Dowden:

Information on public sector suppliers within a specific constituency is not held centrally.

■ **Civil Servants: Equality****Afzal Khan:**[\[128781\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the workforce plan 2016-2020 for improving the diversity and inclusiveness of the Civil Service, whether any meetings were held by the Diversity Champion with external groups when setting key targets for her work.

Oliver Dowden:

The Civil Service Workforce Plan is our strategy for readying the workforce to respond to the challenges and the opportunities of today, and in the years to come. As part of this, five key strands of activity were identified, including becoming the most inclusive employer in the UK. The Civil Service is committed to being a role model for other UK employers and to continue to be a great place to work.

The Permanent Secretary Diversity Champions, which includes Sue Owen as lead Champion for Diversity & Inclusion, engaged with a number of external groups on the contents of the workforce plan. These included engagement with Civil Service Diversity Expert Advisors and other external stakeholders on embedding diversity and inclusion within our Civil Service workforce plans and the development of the Civil Service Diversity & Inclusion Strategy.

■ **Cybercrime****Jon Trickett:**[\[128087\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how his Department's cyber-security awareness campaigns take account of behavioural and social sciences; and whether his Department has worked with the Behavioural Insights Team on cyber-security awareness.

Oliver Dowden:

HM Government cyber security awareness campaigns are underpinned by qualitative and quantitative research to ensure effective targeting and drive individuals and organisations to improve their cyber security behaviours. The Cabinet Office has received advice from the Behavioural Insights Team since 2014. This has enabled

the Department to add to its evidence base to support behavioural change incentives in priority Government areas including cyber security.

■ **Government Communication Service**

Jon Trickett: [128335]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many agencies applied to be included in the Campaign Solutions Framework for GCS; and when he plans to reopen the framework for new agencies.

Oliver Dowden:

157 individual bidders applied to be included on the Crown Commercial Service's Campaign Solutions Framework (RM3774).

We will review the framework before it expires on 15 December 2020.

■ **Government Departments: Buildings**

Jon Trickett: [127521]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to comments made by the Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet Office at the London School of Economics on 24 January 2018, which 600 Government buildings will be closed.

Oliver Dowden:

The government hubs strategy will create a modern, efficient office estate for central government. Hub locations will be informed by departments' workforce plans.

Details of central government property and land are published on data.gov.uk.

Mr Kevan Jones: [127752]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the size of the Government estate was, by Department, in square metres of floor space in each of the last five years.

Oliver Dowden:

The State of the Estate report, published annually, provides information on the efficiency and sustainability of the central civil estate, including the size and cost of the Estate.

The State of Estate reports from 2010 - 2014 are available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/state-of-the-estate>

The State of the Estate report 2015 -2016 is available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-estate-report-2015-to-2016>

A departmental breakdown is available at Annex B for each corresponding year.

The State of the Estate report 2016 - 2017 is due to be published shortly.

■ Government Departments: ICT

James Gray:

[\[128067\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to support British digital and cloud services its companies through procurement policies.

Oliver Dowden:

Public sector procurers are required to seek value for money through fair and open competition and in line with our current international obligations.

The Government wants UK companies to be successful in public procurement, and we are seeking to ensure the huge purchasing power of government supports the task of boosting growth, and enables us to actively shape the UK market for the long term.

■ Life Expectancy

Chris Ruane:

[\[132757\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what information his Department holds on changes in the level of life expectancy of living (a) males and (b) females in each local authority area in the last 10 years.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ 132757.pdf]

■ One Public Estate Programme

Jon Trickett:

[\[132080\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the total amount of capital receipts received by local authorities as a result of the One Public Estate programme; and if he will provide that same data by local authority area.

Oliver Dowden:

Since 2013/14, the One Public Estate programme has directly supported the release of £41.96m in capital receipts from local authority-owned land and property. One Public Estate partnerships must provide accompanying evidence when reporting benefits to the programme. A higher number of capital receipts has currently been reported and is undergoing validation. As such, the total number of capital receipts delivered to date is expected to rise.

One Public Estate has previously released total verified data to media outlets and will publish up-to-date data in future programme publications.

One Public Estate partnerships are made up of multiple public sector partners and led by local authorities. Data is collected at a partnership level and the programme does not hold information on capital receipts raised by individual local authorities. To

provide as much data as possible, the table below sets out local government capital receipts raised by One Public Estate partnerships.

| OPE PARTNERSHIP | LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPITAL RECEIPTS RAISED TO JANUARY 2018 |
|------------------------|--|
| Bristol | £6,409,927 |
| Cheshire & Warrington | £7,496,112 |
| City of York | £4,611,500 |
| Cornwall | £1,595,000 |
| Dorset | £1,420,000 |
| Herefordshire | £1,480,000 |
| Kent | £3,448,854 |
| LB Barnet | £1,619,678 |
| Liverpool | £1,600,000 |
| North Somerset | £325,000 |
| Sheffield City Council | £1,699,000 |
| Southampton | £2,440,000 |
| Worcestershire | £7,815,986 |
| Total | £41,961,057 |

■ Pay

Stephen Timms: [\[127592\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of the workforce are paid (a) weekly, (b) less frequently than weekly but more frequently than monthly and (c) monthly.

Oliver Dowden:

Cabinet Office pays all members of its workforce on a monthly basis.

■ Productivity

Grahame Morris: [\[128957\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will discuss with Cabinet colleagues the potential use by government departments of the what3words geocoding addressing system to improve departmental efficiency.

Oliver Dowden:

Cabinet Office is not currently reviewing what3words for use by departments. However government does monitor emerging technologies and approaches across private and public sectors, looking to trial, adopt and scale innovation where beneficial and appropriate.

■ Proof of Identity: Photographs**Stephen Timms:**[\[131339\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of adults in (a) England, (b) England and Wales and (c) the UK who do not hold any form of photo identification.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ131339.pdf]

■ Public Sector: Recruitment**Ben Lake:**[\[131947\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 13 November 2017 to Question 111417, on Public Sector: Recruitment, which civil service roles were not identified as suitable for removal of the box under the ban the box initiative.

Ben Lake:[\[131948\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 13 November 2017 to Question 111417, on Public Sector: Recruitment. what criteria are used to assess whether a civil service role is suitable for removal of the box under the ban the box initiative.

Oliver Dowden:

As a default position, the Civil Service will 'Ban the Box' when it advertises job vacancies.

There are some business areas across the Civil Service where it will be inappropriate to apply Ban the Box. This will only occur where there is a clear, justifiable business need to understand a candidate's conviction history at the application stage in the recruitment process. An exception is most likely to apply to roles that are particularly sensitive in nature, for example; work with children and vulnerable adults of positions connected to public safety. Permanent Secretaries are accountable for the exceptions process. The Cabinet Office do not hold a central record of which civil service roles were not identified as suitable for the Ban the Box initiative.

■ Regulatory Futures Review

Jon Trickett:

[132475]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to paragraph 7.4 of his Department's report, Regulatory Futures Review, published in January 2017, whether it is his policy that arms-length bodies should operate under models of full cost-recovery where possible.

Chloe Smith:

The Government's policy on cost recovery is set out in Chapter 6 of HM Treasury's publication *Managing Public Money*, available on GOV.UK at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/686462/MPM_2018.pdf

■ Social Mobility Commission

Jo Platt:

[127843]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many meetings he has had with the Social Mobility Commission since his appointment.

Oliver Dowden:

[Holding answer 20 February 2018]: The Minister for the Cabinet Office has not met with the Social Mobility Commission since his appointment.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Bullying

Jamie Stone:

[132094]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many instances of bullying have been recorded in the armed forces in each year since 2013.

Jamie Stone:

[132095]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many instances of homophobic bullying have been recorded in the armed forces in each year since 2013.

Jamie Stone:

[132096]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many instances of racially-motivated bullying have been recorded in the armed forces in each year since 2013.

Jamie Stone:

[132097]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many instances of gender-related bullying have been recorded in the armed forces in each year since 2013.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Statistics on the number of Service complaints for bullying are published annually and can be found at the link below. This does not differentiate between types of bullying.

<https://www.servicecomplaintsombudsman.org.uk/service-complaints-ombudsman/publications-and-reports/annual-reports/>

Statistics for 2017 will be published in spring 2018.

■ **Armed Forces: Retirement**

Jamie Stone:

[132099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many people have voluntarily retired from (a) the Army, (b) the Navy and (c) the RAF in each year since 2012.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Defence Statistics publish information on a regular basis showing voluntary military outflow.

Outflow statistics for the 12 months ending 31 March 2014 through to the 12 months ending 31 December 2017 are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/quarterly-service-personnel-statistics-2018>

Outflow statistics prior to 31 March 2014 are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-monthly-service-personnel-statistics-2017>

■ **Early Warning Systems**

Mrs Madeleine Moon:

[132296]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to put the prime contract for the Airborne Warning and Control System replacement programme out to tender.

Mrs Madeleine Moon:

[132297]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what level of funding his Department has allocated for the replacement of the RAF's Airborne Warning and Control System fleet.

Mrs Madeleine Moon:

[132489]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to run a competition to replace the RAF's airborne early warning aircraft.

Guto Bebb:

No decision has been made with regard to the future delivery of the UK's Airborne Warning and Control capabilities, although a range of options are being explored. I am withholding details of the level of funding allocated for the future delivery of the RAF's Airborne Warning and Control System as releasing them would prejudice commercial interests.

■ Gulf War Syndrome: Public Inquiries

Grahame Morris: [\[132061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will implement the recommendations of Lord Lloyd's report entitled Independent Public Enquiry into Gulf War Illnesses, published in November 2004.

Grahame Morris: [\[132062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he last assessed the findings the Lord Lloyd's report entitled Independent Public Enquiry into Gulf War Illnesses, published in 2004.

Grahame Morris: [\[132064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will invest in research to improve recovery outcomes for veterans who have from Gulf War Syndrome.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Ministry of Defence remains aware of the recommendations in Lord Lloyd's report. The report was studied carefully at the time and steps were taken to address a number of its key points. The recommendation to set up a fund for ex-gratia payments was not accepted and we have no plans to change this position.

The UK has undertaken a substantial amount of research into Gulf veteran's illness which concluded that there is no illness which is specific to Gulf veteran's. We continue to keep a watching brief on Gulf illness, but have no plans to institute further research either on causation or clinical management.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

Jonathan Edwards: [\[132336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost of upgrades to the F-35 in the next seven years.

Guto Bebb:

The F-35 future development programme will see the aircraft upgraded from the baseline capability standard (Block 3F) to the first agreed set of new capabilities (Block 4). The F-35 Joint Program Office is currently determining the scope of this development programme and its associated cost. The UK's contribution will be around 4.5% of F-35 Program common upgrade costs, from which the UK gains 100% of the benefit. Approval for upgrade funding will be sought at the appropriate points in the programme.

■ Ministry of Defence: Scotland

Douglas Chapman: [\[131530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the proportion of (a) military personnel and (b) civilian support staff based in Scotland have an annual salary of £33,000 or less.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

[Holding answer 12 March 2018]: As at 1 October 2017, 59% of military staff and 73% of civilian support staff based in Scotland had an annual salary of £33,000 or less. The tables below provide further detail of salaries paid.

MILITARY PERSONNEL

| Salary Range | Headcount | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Below £26,000 | 3,080 | 31% |
| £26,000 - £33,000 | 2,750 | 28% |

CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

| Salary Range | Headcount | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Below £26,000 | 2,393 | 58% |
| £26,000 - £33,000 | 581 | 14% |

Notes: Figures include Ministry of Defence Main and Defence Equipment and Support personnel.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Basketball****Stephen Kerr:****[131936]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has plans to increase the funding for basketball at grassroots level across the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Tracey Crouch:

Sport England has invested over £31 million in grassroots basketball since 2009, and is investing £5,140,000 in Basketball England across the 2017-21 period.

Sport England makes funding for grassroots sport available through a series of investment programmes, details of which are set out on its website, and which are open for individual organisations to apply for. It has also recently launched a new grant finding service on a one year trial to help organisations access the right type of funding opportunities that are appropriate to them:

<http://www.idoxopen4community.co.uk/sportengland/>

Sport England is the arms length body of government that supports and invests in grassroots sport and physical activity in England. Support for grassroots sport and physical activity in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the respective Home Nations Sports Councils.

■ Carillion: Insolvency**Chris Stephens:**[\[131884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the liquidation of Carillion on their facilities management contract at the British Museum; whether that contract included clauses to deal with potential liquidation; whether there are plans to bring that work back in-house; and if he will make a statement.

Michael Ellis:

Our assessment is that the liquidation of Carillion will require British Museum to replace their former facilities management (FM) contract with a revised strategy which continues to maintain uninterrupted and resilient operations. We have not seen, and would not expect to see, the terms of the museum's contract with Carillion, but it is likely that such clauses exist. At present services continue to be run by the Official Receiver post liquidation. The museum is currently exploring short-term outsourced solutions to transition itself away from Official Receiver reliance, and is separately planning its long-term response to ensure that it has a robust and resilience FM service.

■ Charitable Donations**Mr Steve Reed:**[\[132787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has made an estimate of the charity sector's income from 1p and 2p coin donations; and if he will make a statement.

Tracey Crouch:

The British public donate around £10 billion to charity each year. We do not have an estimate of the charity sector's income derived from 1p and 2p donations, however, cash remains the most common way for people to donate and the average given is around £40 per donation. The Government has launched a call for evidence to better understand the role of cash and digital payments and encourages charities and their representative bodies to respond to this consultation.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Buildings**Jon Trickett:**[\[132087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of his Department's estate is (a) rented, (b) owned and (c) occupied through any other type of agreement.

Margot James:

The breakdown of DCMS' estate is as follows: 9% rented, 91% occupied by agreement with other government departments. We do not own any of the buildings we occupy or operate from.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Camelot Group**

Philip Davies:

[131993]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on how many occasions he or Ministers or staff of his Department met with Camelot representatives since March 2016; and how many of those meetings dealt with the Consultation on Prohibiting Third Party Betting on the Outcome of non-UK EuroMillions.

Tracey Crouch:

The Department meets regularly with Camelot as operator of The National Lottery. Discussions cover topics of interest to both parties and this has included the consultation on prohibiting third party betting on the outcome of non-UK EuroMillions. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=department-for-digital-culture-media-sport&publication_type=transparency-data) at this link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=department-for-digital-culture-media-sport&publication_type=transparency-data

■ **Gambling**

Philip Davies:

[131992]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the (a) National Audit Office Investigation report entitled National Lottery funding for good causes, published in December 2017 and (b) Gambling Commission report entitled Gambling participation in 2017, published in February 2018.

Tracey Crouch:

We take seriously the findings of the recent NAO investigation into National Lottery funding for good causes and the trends shown in the Gambling Commission's report.

The Department is working closely with the Gambling Commission, Camelot and the Lottery Distributors to achieve the strongest possible National Lottery. Actions include a full strategic review by Camelot of its National Lottery business, alongside other work to encourage participation. Conclusions and findings of these reports have contributed to these discussions, and will continue to be taken into account going forward.

■ **Lawn Tennis Association: Equal Pay**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[132764]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will take steps to rectify the 31 per cent mean gender pay gap in the Lawn Tennis Association.

Tracey Crouch:

It is important that women and men are recognised and paid equally for doing the same work. We welcome the positive step that has been taken to ensure that all companies in Great Britain with more than 250 employees are required to report their gender pay gap to the Government Equalities Office.

We know there is some work to do to narrow the gender pay gap across the sport sector. If this is to happen progress must continue to be made in the wider culture of sport to ensure women are treated equally to men at all levels. I know that the LTA are committed to using this opportunity to look at how they can most effectively tackle the gap that exists.

■ Telephone Operator Services: Fees and Charges

Grahame Morris:

[\[132073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to require 118 directory enquiries phone lines to (a) have an automated message stating the call charges prior to connecting and (b) provide customers an opportunity to terminate a call prior to being connected and charged.

Grahame Morris:

[\[132074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to (a) regulate the cost of calling 118 directory enquiries and (b) set a maximum price cap for each such call.

Margot James:

Ofcom and the Phone-paid Services Authority (PSA) are responsible for the regulation of directory enquiry services delivered over the 118 number range (118 services). 118 services have to comply with the PSA's Code of Practice which is approved by Ofcom and regulates the promotion and operation of Premium Rate Services (PRS) including 118 services. The Code of Practice includes a requirement that consumers of PRS should be fully and clearly informed of all information likely to influence their decision to purchase including cost, before any purchase is made. Companies that breach the Code of Practice can be sanctioned, including in serious cases through fines of up to £250,000 per breach of the Code. Ofcom is responsible for the allocation of 118 numbers and for regulating the tariffs that providers of 118 services may charge.

Following concerns about the rising cost of 118 services, Ofcom launched a review of the cost of calling directory enquiry services in May 2017. Ofcom expects to publish a consultation about the findings of their review and any proposed remedies in spring 2018. In parallel, PSA intends to consult on potential additional consumer protection measures that could be taken under its Code of Practice.

■ Voluntary Work

Kate Green:

[\[131916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to change the status of full-time volunteers from not being in education, employment or training.

Tracey Crouch:

The recently published Review of Full Time Social Action by Young People considered the legal status of young people who could be recorded as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) while taking part in full time social action.

The Government will publish its response to the Review's report in due course.

■ **Young People: Voluntary Work****Kate Green:**[\[131915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which youth full-time social action programmes have received statutory funding in each of the last five years.

Tracey Crouch:

Government is committed to increasing the quality and quantity of social action opportunities available to young people. The below table outlines the main funding pots and programmes that have been established to provide these opportunities:

| 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | LIVE PROGRAMMES/FUNDS |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund | Uniformed Youth Social Action Fund | National Youth Social Action Fund | National Citizen Service |
| | | Local Youth Social Action Fund | #iwill fund |
| | | | European Voluntary Service (EU funded) |

These funds and programmes are not specifically designed to increase the number of full time social action opportunities available, and as such, we do not collect data on the duration of the social action activities provided.

Steve McCabe:[\[132938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the independent review of full-time social action, published in January 2018, whether the Government plans to allocate money raised from dormant accounts to fund youth full-time social action programmes.

Tracey Crouch:

Government recently announced that £90m of dormant assets will support disadvantaged and disengaged young people access employment.

The Big Lottery Fund (BLF) is named in the dormant assets legislation as the distributor of this money and Government is working closely with them to develop plans and their funding programme. There will be an open engagement process with young people, youth organisations, businesses and others later in spring to inform this work.

EDUCATION**■ Academies: Alternative Education**

Jo Platt: [\[132093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 6 March 2018, to Question 129771 in which local authority the 117 alternative provision academies and free schools are located; for which years between 2013 to 2017 those academies have been open; and whether those such academies are new schools or convert academies.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As at end of February 2018, there are 117 open AP academies and free schools; 79 are schools that have converted as academies and 38 have opened as new free schools. The tables attached provide figures on the number of these establishments, split by local authority and the year they opened between 2012 and 2018.

Attachments:

1. Table 1 [Table 1 132093.docx]
2. Table 2 [Table 2 132093.docx]

■ Adult Education: Finance

Chi Onwurah: [\[132176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what arrangements the Government plans to put in place from 2018-19 to support adult education providers which operate both in Mayoral Combined Authority areas and also in areas which do not have a devolution deal.

Anne Milton:

2018/19 will be a transitional year for the Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) in preparation for devolution, where the Adult Education Budget will continue to be administered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, ahead of devolution to MCAs in 2019/20. We are working closely with MCAs to support them on their journey to full devolution. The department has encouraged MCAs to communicate their future plans and skills priorities to providers.

■ Childline

Andrew Gwynne: [\[132030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2018 to Question 130467, on Childline: Finance, when his Department plans to respond to the NSPCC's Are You There campaign.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department for Education will give due consideration to the issues raised by the 'Are You There' campaign, but does not routinely respond publicly to voluntary and community sector campaigns.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families is expected to meet the Chief Executive of the NSPCC, Peter Wanless, later this month.

■ Childline: Expenditure

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[132029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2018 to Question 130466, Childline: Finance, how much funding his Department has provided to the NSPCC's Childline in each year since the inception of that service.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The department has provided a grant funding to the NSPCC since 2007. Childline became part of the NSPCC in 2006.

| TIME FRAME | TYPE OF AGREEMENT | GRANT SIZE |
|------------|------------------------|---------------|
| 2007-2011 | 4 year grant agreement | £25.8 million |
| 2011-2015 | 4 year grant agreement | £11.2 million |
| 2015-2016 | 1 year grant agreement | £2 million |
| 2016-2020 | 4 year grant agreement | £8 million |

There was additional transformation £1 million funding across 2014-15 and 2015-16.

The grant funding covers both funding for Childline (a phone and online advice service for children) and the NSPCC's National Helpline (for anyone with concerns or worries about a child). Whilst the majority is used to fund Childline, the department does not require a breakdown of how the NSPCC uses the grant and therefore does not hold data solely for Childline.

■ Children: Refugees

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[132032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2018 to Question 130484, on Children: Refugees, whether his Department has plans to allocate departmental resources, in addition to those resources that are allocated by local authorities, to children who are resident in a women's refuge with a parent.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The department has no current plans to allocate additional resources to children resident in a women's refuge. On 8 March 2018 the government launched a consultation on our approach to dealing with domestic abuse and the department will consider responses relating to relevant policy areas.

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[132034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2018 to Question 130484, on Children: Refugees, whether his Department has undertaken any

cross-departmental projects with the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to children living in refuges with a parent.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The department has not undertaken any cross-departmental projects on this issue with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Ministers and officials from both departments attend cross-government meetings where domestic abuse, and proposals to deal with it, are discussed.

■ **English Language: Education**

Jared O'Mara:

[\[131906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding has been allocated from the public purse to English for Speakers of Other Languages classes in each of the last five years.

Jared O'Mara:

[\[131907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding has been allocated from the public purse to English for Speakers of Other Languages classes in each of the next five years.

Anne Milton:

Funding for adult education, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), is not allocated by subject at the national level. Instead, education providers have the freedom and flexibility to use their Adult Education Budget (AEB) allocation to meet the needs of their local communities, including through the provision of ESOL classes. Unemployed adults who are looking for work are eligible for full funding; all other learners are co-funded with the government contributing 50% of the course fee.

The table attached sets out the funding spent on ESOL from the AEB over the past five years based on what providers delivered. The table also shows the funding for English language projects by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The department cannot show future subject-specific allocations, as this is for each provider to determine based on local demand and need on an annual basis. In addition, from 2019/20, the government is devolving approximately 50% of the AEB to eight Combined Authorities and London (subject to meeting readiness conditions). These areas will have responsibility for determining adult English language and other adult further education provision in their local areas.

There are a number of other funding sources for ESOL and English language provision, including through Home Office funding for English language as part of its commitment to help vulnerable people integrate into their local communities.

Attachments:

1. ESOL from AED Funding Table [131906 131907 Table.docx]

■ Music: GCSE**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:****[132105]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many secondary schools in England offered GCSE Music in (a) 2010 and (b) 2017.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is not held centrally. The Department does not collect information about which subjects are offered by individual schools. Instead, the Department holds information on each exam entry taken in a school, in each subject, which provides a proxy[1] for the subjects offered by that school.

The number of schools[2], with pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 who sat an exam in music[3] in 2010 and 2017 were:

| ACADEMIC YEAR | SCHOOLS WITH AT LEAST ONE EXAM ENTRY IN MUSIC |
|---------------|---|
| 2009/10 | 3,127 |
| 2016/17 | 2,975 |

[1] In any given year, a pupil may sign up to a subject but not sit any exams in it, leading to that subject not being counted. Also, a school may offer a subject, but have no pupils signed up to take the course, or sit an exam in it for that year.

[2] Includes all schools, except further education sector institutions, converter academy (alternative provision) and sponsor led academy (alternative provision).

[3] Only includes entries that were eligible for inclusion in performance tables, were full GCSE courses, that were not discounted (in 2010, the pupil's best entry was included, all others were discounted. In 2017, the pupil's first entry is included, all others are discounted: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-4-qualifications-discount-codes-and-point-scores>). This means that a pupil may study music and enter an exam in either 2010 or 2017, but the entry won't be included as part of these figures as the entry was discounted. This is in line with performance tables methodology and enables comparison to published figures.

■ Music: Primary Education**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:****[132107]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many Primary Schools in England did not employ a specialist music teacher in (a) 2010 and (b) 2017.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Pupils: Mental Illness

Preet Kaur Gill:

[132608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to tackle (a) eating disorders and (b) body image issues among young people in schools.

Nick Gibb:

[Holding answer 19 March 2018]: Poor body image is a factor in eating disorders and other mental health problems. The additional £1.4 billion the Government is making available for children and young people's mental health services up to 2020, includes £150 million specifically targeted at improving support for young people with eating disorders. The green paper 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision' set out proposals for new mental health support teams to provide further trained and clinically-supervised support to young people in school.

The Government has also funded the provision of information and advice to schools. MindEd (<https://www.minded.org.uk/>) is a free online portal that provides training for all adults working with children and young people about mental health problems. It includes specific information on eating disorders. The Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Association has also produced advice on how to teach pupils in all four Key Stages about mental health. This includes specific advice on age-appropriate teaching about body image and eating disorders in secondary school.

The Government has sought views, via a thorough engagement process, on the content of Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education, and on the status of PSHE – including on issues such as body image and eating disorders. The findings will inform draft regulations and guidance for schools, which will be subject to further consultation.

■ Schools: Governing Bodies

Mr David Lammy:

[132022]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much the GovernorLine service cost his Department to operate in each of the last five years; and how many people have used that service in each of the last five years.

Nadhim Zahawi:

GovernorLine was created in 2000 as a free, confidential telephone service for Governors, multi academy trust trustees and clerks to the board of government. Its use has been in decline for several years.

The table below shows the cost to the department and usage of the GovernorLine service in each financial year since 2012-13.

| | CALLS | EMAILS | COST |
|---------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2012-13 | 4,333 | 1,130 | £142k |
| 2013-14 | 4,187 | 767 | £142k |

| | CALLS | EMAILS | COST |
|---|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2014-15 (8 months) | 2,326 | 541 | £94.7k |
| The GovernorLine service did not operate between November 2015 and July 2016. | | | |
| 2016-17 (9 months) | 454 | 89 | £76.5k |
| 2017-18 (10 months to end January 2018) | 515 | 111 | £93.5k |

■ **Schools: Police**

Chris Ruane:

[\[131873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of school police liaison officers on (a) pupil's behaviour, (b) truancy rates and (c) youth crime rates in areas where such officers are deployed.

Nick Gibb:

[Holding answer 19 March 2018]: The Department has not conducted an assessment and does not hold statistics about the effect of school police liaison officers on pupils' behaviour, truancy rates and youth crime rates in areas where such officers are deployed.

It is a matter for local police forces to decide their strategy for working with schools. However, we do recognise that police working with schools through initiatives such as the Safer School Partnerships are a proven method for achieving effective joint working between schools and police.

■ **Schools: Standards**

Rosie Cooper:

[\[132766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it is mandatory for (a) local education authorities and (b) school management boards to (i) consult and (ii) inform School Governing Bodies when actions plans are developed between authorities and boards as a result of a school's performance.

Nadhim Zahawi:

There are no statutory consultation requirements in relation to the development of an action plan to raise standards where a school is underperforming. Nevertheless, we would expect that all bodies involved in the implementation of such an action plan would also be involved in developing the content of the plan.

■ **Sign Language: GCSE**

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[132115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will enable schools to teach British Sign Language to GCSE level; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has introduced a number of recent changes to GCSEs, AS and A levels in England that will affect schools in the coming years. The Department knows that extensive changes need time to settle in to schools, and that school leaders will want stability to bring in the new qualifications. There are no plans to introduce new GCSEs, AS or A levels in this Parliament.

Schools are free to teach British Sign Language and there are existing qualifications available which schools can enter pupils into at any point of their school career. These include a Level 1 award, Level 2, 3 and 4 certificates and a Level 6 NVQ certificate. British Sign Language is also now an alternative to a Level 1 and Level 2 qualification in English when studying an apprenticeship, where British Sign Language is the apprentice's primary language. This enables those who use British Sign Language to complete their apprenticeship without having to achieve another English qualification, such as GCSE or Functional Skills.

STEM Subjects**Henry Smith:**[\[904441\]](#)

What steps his Department has taken to increase the take-up of STEM subjects.

Nick Gibb:

[Holding answer 19 March 2018]: The Government is committed to tackling our shortage of STEM skills so we can grow the workforce we need for a dynamic economy. We are doing this by investing in programmes to increase the take-up of maths, by incentivising schools using the recently launched advanced maths premium and supporting better teaching of maths, physics and computing in schools, including a new £84 million programme to improve computing teaching.

To improve the development of technical STEM skills, the Government is introducing T levels, which will be developed with employers, and provide progression opportunities into skilled work or higher level study, including degrees.

Teachers: Pay**Gordon Marsden:**[\[132705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information his Department holds on the number of teachers on each point of the main pay range.

Gordon Marsden:[\[132706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information his Department holds on the number of teachers on each point of the upper pay range.

Nick Gibb:

[Holding answer 19 March 2018]: Pay spine points for teachers were discontinued in 2013 and replaced by pay ranges. A teacher can be paid any salary within their range, the amount paid being at the discretion of the employing school. An academy

may elect not to use the standard pay ranges but may instead pay teachers using their own range.

The number of teachers in state funded schools paid on each pay range, as at November 2016, is shown in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. 132705 132706 attachment [132705 132706 attachment.docx]

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Air Pollution

Dr David Drew:

[\[132657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which of the sites listed in the Particulate Numbers and Concentrations Network monitors emissions of particulate matter of less than 2.5 microns.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Particles below 2.5 microns are measured at monitoring sites located at Chilbolton Observatory, London Marylebone Road and London North Kensington.

■ Air Pollution: Greater London

Catherine West:

[\[132582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Mayor of London on steps to tackle air pollution.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Secretary of State for Environment met with the Mayor on 19th July 2017 where air pollution was discussed. I also met the deputy Mayor for the Environment on 14th December 2017 where air pollution was discussed. There is frequent correspondence with the Mayor on the subject of air pollution and Defra officials are in regular contact with the GLA.

■ Chemicals: EU Law

Ged Killen:

[\[130111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has undertaken an impact assessment on the consequences of the UK changing its regulatory standard away from the REACH chemical use and transport regulations for chemicals produced or imported into the UK once the UK leaves the EU.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The EU (Withdrawal) Bill will convert current EU law into domestic law. This will include REACH as well as other related chemicals regulation. This will mean that the standards established by REACH will continue to apply in the UK.

We will continue publishing impact assessments to accompany legislation, where appropriate. An impact assessment was published alongside the EU (Withdrawal) Bill.

■ Incinerators

Dr David Drew: [\[132658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how the Government monitors emissions of persistent organic pollutants by waste incineration facilities.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The relevant persistent organic pollutants for waste incineration facilities are dioxins and furans, dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and poly-cyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

Monitoring of these substances in the emissions from waste incinerators is done on a quarterly basis in the first year of the incinerator's operation and twice a year thereafter. The monitoring contractors and equipment that they use must be approved or certified under the Environment Agency's Monitoring Certification Scheme to ensure reliable results.

■ Poultry Meat: Imports

Mr Roger Godsiff: [\[132429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals to prevent the import of chicken dosed with the antibiotic colistin after the UK leaves the EU.

George Hollingbery:

When we leave the European Union, we will maintain our current standards. We will keep our existing UK legislation, and the EU Withdrawal Bill will convert EU law into UK law as it applies at the moment of exit. Any future trade agreements must work for consumers, farmers, and businesses in the UK. We will not water down our standards on food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection as part of any future trade deals.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Borders: Northern Ireland

Hugh Gaffney: [\[132745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what plans the Secretary of State has to visit the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in the next 12 months.

Suella Fernandes:

The Secretary of State's future travel programme takes into account a range of high priority issues. The Secretary of State has been to the border, prior to his appointment to his current role, and is very much apprised of the sensitivities and importance of this critical issue.

He previously visited Northern Ireland in September 2016 meeting with the then Northern Ireland Executive and stakeholders. Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Robin Walker MP, visited Northern Ireland with former Northern Ireland Office Minister Chloe Smith in September 2017, visiting the border and meeting with Re-Gen waste and InterTradeIreland.

Northern Ireland Office Ministers have also conducted an extensive programme of engagement in Northern Ireland on EU exit with a wide range of stakeholders. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland visited the border earlier this month.

■ Brexit: Bureaucracy**Catherine McKinnell:**[\[132806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, if he will make an assessment of the implications for the Government's policies of the Oliver Wyman report entitled The Red Tape Cost of Brexit, published on 12 March 2018.

Mr Steve Baker:

The Government is undertaking a wide range of analysis and preparatory work that will contribute to our exit negotiations with the EU, to define our future partnership with the EU, and to inform our understanding of how EU exit will affect the UK's domestic policies and frameworks.

It is not our usual practice to comment publicly on individual external publications, however we recognise the importance of contributions to the public debate.

I would note that the analysis to which the Hon. Member refers considers the scenario in which we do not reach a deal with the EU. The Government is clear that we want our future relationship with the EU to be a deep and special partnership, taking in both economic and security cooperation. We are confident that this is in the interests of both sides, so we approach these negotiations anticipating success. We do not want or expect a no deal outcome.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ British Nationals Abroad: Offences Against Children****Sarah Champion:**[\[132092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on the number of UK nationals who have been arrested for child sex offences overseas in the last five years; and in what countries such nationals have been arrested over that period.

Harriett Baldwin:

From 2013 to 2017 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) responded to 361 requests for consular assistance from UK nationals who had been arrested for child sex offences. The FCO are not routinely notified of the arrest of all UK nationals overseas. The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963 (Article 36) provides for an embassy to be informed of an arrest only if the individual requests it.

The attached file contains a breakdown of these arrests by country and year.

Attachments:

1. 132092 attachment [PQ 132092 attachment.xlsx]

■ Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting: Religious Freedom**Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson:**[\[132802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will ensure that the Commonwealth Heads of Government joint communique makes reference to the right to freedom of religion and belief.

Alistair Burt:

We are working with fellow member states to negotiate the communiqué for next month's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. While it would be inappropriate to comment on those negotiations, the UK considers freedom of religion and belief to be one of the Commonwealth's core values.

Encouraging member states to uphold the values and principles enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter – which include freedom of religion as well as democracy, freedom of expression, the rule of law and opposition to all forms of discrimination – will be an important part of April's summit.

■ Football: Russia**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[132928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect UK fans planning to travel to Russia this year, ahead of the Football world cup.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is responsible for supporting all British nationals overseas and their safety and security is our primary objective. In June 2017, we launched our 'Be on the Ball' travel campaign page for the 2018 World Cup, in addition to our travel advice for Russia. We continue to update this with practical information for all fans travelling to Russia. FCO officials are working very closely with the Football Association, UK Police, Football Supporters Federation and local organisers who share our same objective.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Religious Freedom

Fiona Bruce:

[\[132967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to develop religious literacy among its staff in the past two years.

Harriett Baldwin:

Given the importance in global affairs, the FCO would expect British diplomats to be conversant with religious issues as part of their general professional expertise. However, we also offer specific support, notably a course on "Religion and Diplomacy", delivered by the London School of Economics Faith Centre, which has run 4 times in the past two years. Geographic Directorates and posts also arrange ad hoc activities such as courses, seminars and roundtables to allow their staff to explore religious themes with academic experts and faith leaders. Examples include a seminar by General Sir Nicholas Carter, British Army, Chief of the General Staff on 29 March 2017, a course on political Islam organised in January 2017 by FCO's South Asia and Afghanistan Directorate, and a seminar on Islamist ideology: history and contemporary developments in January 2018 by FCO's National Security Directorate.

■ Gui Minhai

Sammy Wilson:

[\[132965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to (a) the Government of Hong Kong and (b) the Government of the People's Republic of China on the status of the Hong Kong bookseller, Gui Minhai.

Mark Field:

I remain concerned at the developments surrounding Swedish National Gui Minhai, who was first detained, along with British national Lee Po and three others, in late 2015. We have raised these cases at the most senior levels with the authorities in Hong Kong and Beijing. Following Mr Gui's latest detention in January 2018, our Ambassador in Beijing raised the case with Vice Minister at the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Wang Chao, and my officials continue to liaise closely with Swedish and other EU counterparts. The EU have released two statements calling for Mr Gui's release, which we fully support.

■ Hong Kong: Politics and Government

Richard Burden:

[\[132114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his counterpart in the Government of Hong Kong on the disqualification of lawmakers from the Legislative Council; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Field:

Since October 2016, six legislators have been disqualified from the Legislative Council. The FCO issued a statement in November 2016 which expressed concern about developments in the Legislative Council. The by-elections held on 11 March 2018 filled four of those seats. The remaining two disqualified legislators are appealing against the judgement, and it would not be appropriate for the Government to comment on an ongoing legal matter. My department will continue to monitor developments closely.

Sammy Wilson:[\[132964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Hong Kong as a result of the disqualification of lawmakers from its Legislative Council.

Mark Field:

Since October 2016, six legislators have been disqualified from the Legislative Council. The FCO issued a statement in November 2016 which expressed concern about developments in the Legislative Council. The by-elections held on 11 March 2018 filled four of those seats. The remaining two disqualified legislators are appealing against the judgement, and it would not be appropriate for the Government to comment on an ongoing legal matter. My department will continue to monitor developments closely.

■ Israel: Courts Martial**Chris Elmore:**[\[132493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on whether any UK citizens are serving as judges in Israeli military courts in the West Bank; and if he will make a statement.

Alistair Burt:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not hold any information on whether any British or British-Israeli citizens are serving as judges in Israeli military courts.

■ Israel: Palestinians**Chris Elmore:**[\[132346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Office, with reference to Children in Military Custody, published in June 2012, how many of that report's recommendations have been implemented by the Government.

Alistair Burt:

In June 2016, non-governmental organisations assessed that Israel had implemented only one of 40 recommendations outlined in the 2012 report by British lawyers. We continue to call upon Israel to fully implement all the recommendations and improve the conditions for Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention.

■ Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment

Alex Sobel:

[\[132260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he held discussions with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia on the number of executions in that country.

Alistair Burt:

Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary raised human rights issues with the Crown Prince during the course of his visit. In February, shortly before the Crown Prince's visit, our Ambassador in Riyadh raised the issue of the death penalty directly with Saudi counterparts.

We are firmly opposed to the death penalty and we raise our concerns at all levels and at all appropriate opportunities, including through our Ambassador, Embassy staff and through the EU. This is in line with the minimum standards set out in the EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty (2008), the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Arab Charter on Human Rights.

■ Sri Lanka: Armed Conflict

Wes Streeting:

[\[132457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the merits of the application of the principle of universal jurisdiction for alleged war crimes during the Sri Lankan civil war; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Field:

UK support for international criminal justice and accountability is a fundamental element of our foreign policy. The UK supports Sri Lanka's accountability commitments to the UN Human Rights Council through Resolutions 30/1 and 34/1 as the best way to establish truth, and to achieve justice, restitution and reconciliation. A national process, initiated by the Government of Sri Lanka and supported by all communities, offers the best route to achieve this.

■ United Arab Emirates

Tom Brake:

[\[132042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the agenda for the UK UAE Taskforce meeting in London in February 2018 was; who attended that meeting, how long that meeting lasted; and where that meeting was held.

Alistair Burt:

I hosted United Arab Emirates (UAE) Deputy Foreign Minister, Dr Anwar Gargash, for the UK-UAE Taskforce on the afternoon of 28 February at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Our discussion covered bilateral cooperation on consular matters; law enforcement and security; trade, investment and cultural matters; defence and humanitarian issues; as well as regional affairs.

■ Western Sahara: Peace Keeping Operations

Layla Moran:

[\[131985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has held with his counterparts in the Government of Morocco on (a) the work of the UN peacekeeping mission to Western Sahara and (b) proposals for a referendum on Saharawi self-determination.

Alistair Burt:

I discussed Western Sahara with the Moroccan Foreign Minister during my visit to Rabat in January. I have also discussed the work of the UN Peacekeeping Mission, MINURSO, and the political process with the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, former German President Horst Koehler. The UK supports the work of MINURSO, and UN-led efforts to reach a lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the Western Sahara issue that provides for the self-determination of the people of the territory.

■ Zimbabwe: Emigration

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[132469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK to return to Zimbabwe.

Harriett Baldwin:

[Holding answer 19 March 2018]: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office regularly meets representatives from the Zimbabwean diaspora to discuss the situation in Zimbabwe.

The UK continues to call for free and fair elections and has called on the Zimbabwean Government to forge a new path free from oppression and misrule and to deliver a full programme of political and economic reform.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[904465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care what assessment he has made of the effect of charging VAT on the affordability and accessibility of medicines.

Steve Brine:

Value Added Tax (VAT) paid by the National Health Service on the purchase of medicines is fully incorporated within the funding allocated to the NHS each year.

As is the case with many other goods and services, VAT is chargeable at 20% to members of the public when purchasing over the counter and non-prescription medicines.

■ Carers

Emma Hardy:

[132098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support local councils in developing improved support for carers across (a) Hull West and Hessle constituency and (b) the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Dinanage:

The Government is committed to supporting local areas to better plan and prioritise public services for the benefit of their local populations. This includes supporting carers, and to do so in a way that supports their own health and wellbeing and other life chances, and continue to support the improved rights for carers enshrined in the Care Act 2014. This includes legal rights to an assessment of, and support for, their needs where eligible.

Carers in England will be a fundamental part of our upcoming Green Paper on care and support for older people. Ahead of the Green Paper's publication, the Department will also shortly be publishing an action plan on carers, setting out a cross-Government programme of targeted work to support carers over the next two years.

In addition to the £2 billion at Spring Budget 2017, we have announced a further £150 million for 2018/19, giving councils access to up to £9.4 billion more dedicated funding for adult social care in total over three years.

■ Carillion: Insolvency

Mrs Louise Ellman:

[132786]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2018 to Question 129143 on Carillion: Insolvency, what discussions he has had with representative of Royal Liverpool University Hospital on a new contractor for the completion of the new Royal Liverpool University Hospital since 1 March 2018.

Stephen Barclay:

The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract between the Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust and the PFI Project Company is still in place, which means that the Company is still contractually obliged to manage the project and find a construction firm or subcontractor who can continue the building work.

The Royal Liverpool Hospital scheme is very well advanced. The PFI Project Company is continuing its discussions with PwC (on behalf of the official receiver), their lenders and with other service and construction companies to assess how best to continue delivering the contract. Officials from the Department and NHS Improvement are working very actively with all the parties to keep the delay as short as possible and provide the best value for money solution for the Trust and for the public sector as a whole.

■ Clinical Commissioning Groups and Salute: Lancashire**Rosie Cooper:**[\[132777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what representations his Department has received on recent work undertaken by East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group and the charity Salute.

Steve Brine:

NHS England has advised that following the hon. Member's letter to the Chief Executive of NHS England, they have launched an investigation.

They also have advised that they are unable to provide further information until the investigation is concluded.

■ Colorectal Cancer: Screening**Stephen Lloyd:**[\[904478\]](#)

What the timetable is for the implementation of the faecal immunochemical test for bowel cancer screening.

Steve Brine:

The UK National Screening Committee has recommended that the faecal immunochemical test (FIT) be the primary screening test for bowel cancer and NHS England remains absolutely committed to implementing FIT in 2018/19.

NHS England is working with Public Health England to finalise a number of practical arrangements around sensitivity, production and distribution of FIT kits, and diagnostic and pathology workforce capacity to ensure that when FIT is implemented, it is sustainable.

■ Diabetes and Obesity: Children**Jim Shannon:**[\[132035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to address diabetes and obesity in children.

Steve Brine:

The Government's initiative, Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action, has been supported by Public Health England. The initiative includes:

- The reduction and reformulation programme; challenging the food industry to reduce the levels of sugar in products contributing most to sugar intake in children, and reduce calories in products consumed by families;
- Setting the guidelines for local authorities to deliver the mandatory National Child Measurement Programme; and
- Publication of resources to support families, schools and health professionals to address childhood obesity.

■ Diabetes: Pakistan

Jim Shannon:

[\[132031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) address the risk of and (b) treat diabetes in people from a Pakistani background living in the UK.

Steve Brine:

NHS England, Public Health England, and Diabetes UK are working together on Healthier You: the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme (NDPP), the first diabetes prevention programme of its kind to be delivered at scale, nationwide. The NDPP aims to address all the population of England at risk of type 2 diabetes, including those of a Pakistani background.

As part of the National Diabetes Treatment and Care Programme, NHS England has invested £42 million in 2017/18 in four key evidence-based interventions. Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and providers within localities were invited to bid for access to this funding through submission of plans to show how use of the funding would lead to improved outcomes for their local populations. As part of this, they were asked to consider the specific groups within their populations who may have poorer diabetes outcomes and take these into account in their proposals. Therefore, where these included people from a Pakistani or other Asian background, localities were able to reflect this in their plans.

■ Food: Exports

Dr David Drew:

[\[131897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on implications for (a) the public health regulation of food companies' exports and (b) those companies' access to the single market after the UK leaves the EU.

Steve Brine:

My Rt. hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, has not had any discussions with his European Union counterparts on the implications for regulation of food companies and their access to the single market.

■ Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust: Private Patients

Justin Madders:

[\[132015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) profit and (b) loss Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust made from treating private patients in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Stephen Barclay:

The information requested is not collected.

■ Gender Recognition: Children**Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson:****[132800]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on the wellbeing of children who may be permitted to change gender below the age of 18 without parental consent.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

Valid consent to treatment is a central to all forms of healthcare, from providing personal care to undertaking major surgery. If a child is not competent to give consent for themselves, consent should be sought from a person with parental responsibility. This will often, but not always, be the child's parent.

Decisions about whether to give medical treatment in such cases before the age of 18 without parental consent are properly a matter for clinical judgment, having regard to the best interests and wellbeing of the patient. In exercising their judgment, clinicians will be guided by various pieces of evidence based guidance, such as that published in 2017, Endocrine Treatment of Gender-Dysphoric/ Gender-Incongruent Persons: An Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guideline. This is available on the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence website at the following link:

<https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=Transgender+conditions>

This guideline recognizes that there may be compelling reasons to initiate sex hormone treatment prior to age 16 years, but notes that there are minimal published experience treating prior to 13.5 to 14 years of age. For the care of peri-pubertal youths and older adolescents, the guideline recommends that an expert multidisciplinary team comprised of medical professionals and mental health professionals manage this treatment.

Any child under 18 thought to have gender dysphoria will usually be referred to a specialist child and adolescent Gender Identity Clinic. Staff at these clinics can carry out a detailed assessment of the child, to help them determine what support they need. Depending on the results of this assessment, the options for children and young people with suspected gender dysphoria can include family therapy, individual child psychotherapy and hormone therapy.

Psychological support offers young people and their families a chance to discuss their thoughts and receive support to help them cope with the emotional distress of the condition, without rushing into more drastic treatments. Further information on the laws and guidelines that protect transsexual people and outline how they should be treated by medical professionals is available on the NHS Choices website at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gender-dysphoria/guidelines/>

■ General Practitioners: ICT

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[132033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the use of online booking services for GP appointments on the ability of over 75 year olds to access GP care.

Steve Brine:

The Department prepared an equality impact assessment when introducing online booking services for general practitioner (GP) appointments. In addition, local NHS England, or the clinical commissioning group, where the responsibility is delegated to them, carry out their own assessments to take account of their GP practice populations' needs.

Online services are not a replacement for face to face or telephone interactions, but another complementary way to access services. NHS England's initial findings show that older people are more frequent users of online services and over 75s regularly register to use the service. In addition, carers of those who are much older are able to access appointment and order prescriptions on their behalf (with appropriate authorisation and safeguards).

The use of online services frees up staff to spend more time with those who do not wish to use online services and prefer to continue using the phone or come to the practice in person to make appointments.

■ Haematological Cancer

Jim Shannon:

[\[132060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to include blood cancer in the cancer dashboard.

Steve Brine:

Public Health England and NHS England developed the first iteration of the cancer dashboard in response to recommendations in the Independent Cancer Taskforce report 'Achieving world-class cancer outcomes: a strategy for England 2015-2020'. This includes data on breast, colorectal, lung and prostate cancers. Further cancer sites, including blood cancer, were not included because of the risk of making patients identifiable when viewing data for individual hospitals or clinical commissioning groups.

A second iteration of the dashboard is being considered by the National Cancer Transformation Board with a wider ambition to include rarer cancers and cancers with a lower incidence, such as blood cancers, as the dashboard develops.

■ Health Services: Immigrants

Mr David Lammy: [\[131945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the number of UK residents who have been not been given access to healthcare due to disputed immigration status in each of the last five years.

Stephen Barclay:

The Department does not hold data on the number of United Kingdom residents who have been not been given access to healthcare due to disputed immigration status in each of the last five years.

The UK is a residence based health care system and is predominantly based on being ordinarily resident in the UK.

A person who is ordinarily resident in the UK is entitled to receive free National Health Service healthcare services as long as they can prove they are in the UK lawfully, adopted voluntarily and for settled purposes as part of the regular order of his or her life for the time being, whether of short or long duration.

■ Heart Diseases: Young People

Maria Caulfield: [\[904479\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of deaths of young people from cardiac arrest.

Stephen Barclay:

The Government has provided £2 million to make Public Access Defibrillators more widely available and to increase the number of people trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

In addition, the Fetal Anomaly and the Newborn and Infant Physical Examination screening programmes offer heart screening to detect abnormalities early.

The Department's National Institute for Health Research welcomes funding applications for research in this area.

■ HIV Infection: Drugs

Diana Johnson: [\[132924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate has been made of the number of people with undiagnosed HIV, broken down by NUTS 1 region, in each year since 2013-14.

Diana Johnson: [\[132925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps (a) his Department, (b) NHS England and (c) Public Health England is taking to ensure the equity of access to antiretroviral therapy in the regions.

Diana Johnson:

[132926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of people diagnosed with HIV infection are not receiving antiretroviral treatment by NUTS 1 region in each year since 2013-14.

Diana Johnson:

[132927]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the reasons for regional differences in the uptake of antiretroviral therapy.

Steve Brine:

Estimates of undiagnosed HIV infection are not available by Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 1 region.

There may be some regional differences in treatment rates or drugs used based on variations in patient demographics or the available drug contracts.

Regional HIV networks determine prescribing guidelines which align with national commissioning policies for antiretroviral therapies. These guidelines are overseen by the HIV Clinical Reference Group – which includes strong patient representation - who provide clinical advice on HIV treatment issues and raise concerns from the community should there be perceived issue around equitable access.

Working closely with Public Health England (PHE), NHS England has produced a clinical dashboard that summarises clinical performance at the trust level. PHE prepares and analyses all the data that feeds into the Clinical Reference Group HIV dashboard. Two dashboard indicators measure anti-retroviral therapy coverage among all people accessing HIV care and among people with a low CD4 count (indicative of immunosuppression). Further information on the dashboard is available here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/spec-services/npc-crg/spec-dashboards/>

Data are not available by NUTS for the proportion of people living with diagnosed HIV infection who are not receiving antiretroviral therapy treatment.

Antiretroviral therapy is now so effective that people receiving treatment can expect to have a near normal life expectancy. Consequently, the proportion of people receiving treatment continues to rise each year since death rates remain low. The higher antiretroviral therapy coverage rate observed in some regions is partially due to the longer history of the epidemic in these areas.

British HIV Association guidelines have progressively reduced the threshold at which patients may begin antiretroviral therapy. In 2018, NHS England announced routine commissioning of 'Immediate Access to Antiretroviral Therapy' from 1 April 2018.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/clinical-commissioning-policy-immediate-antiretroviral-therapy-for-treatment-of-hiv-1-in-adults-and-adolescents/>

This enables all patients to access treatment at the point of diagnosis or at the time the patient wishes to commence treatment. It has also clarified the position on the

funding of antiretroviral therapy for immediate treatment among patients newly diagnosed with HIV.

NHS England and PHE keep under review data on the rates of uptake of antiretroviral treatment and will continue to do so to identify any unwarranted variation.

■ Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Melanie Onn:

[R] [132917]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that GPs receive a copy of Crohn's & Colitis UK's latest Inflammatory Bowel Disease toolkit to improve (a) awareness, (b) early diagnosis and (b) treatment plans for that condition.

Steve Brine:

In August 2017, Crohn's and Colitis UK in partnership with the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) launched a new Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) toolkit: an online resource for general practitioners (GPs) and healthcare professionals designed to improve understanding of Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis, collectively known as IBD. The Toolkit was developed as part of a 12 month project on IBD, and includes a range of resources for GPs to improve detection of inflammatory bowel disease and to support primary care clinicians in treating, managing and referring patients with the condition.

The Toolkit was promoted at events across the United Kingdom and an IBD Twitter chat with an expert panel was held in February 2018. The Toolkit, regional events and Twitter session were all promoted to GPs via the RCGP website and newsletter and more widely by Crohn's and Colitis UK. The Toolkit can be found at the following link:

www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/resources/toolkits/inflammatory-bowel-disease-toolkit.aspx

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Luke Hall:

[904476]

What steps he is taking to improve the provision of mental health services for children and young people.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

We are making an additional £1.4 billion available until 2019/20 in order to transform services and ensure access to specialist mental health services for 70,000 additional children and young people each year by 2020/21.

Our recent Green Paper published jointly with the Department for Education, will revolutionise services in schools, bolster links between schools and commits us to pilot a four week waiting time for National Health Service specialist services.

■ Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit

Rosie Cooper:

[\[132778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the validity of Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit's policy of allowing themselves up to 40 working days to respond to constituent casework regardless of whether an investigation is needed.

Steve Brine:

It is important that clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) should respond to constituent casework in a timely manner.

NHS England has advised that the Chief Officer for Lancashire CCG, Mike McQuire, has written to the hon. Member about the role of NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit in working with NHS West Lancashire CCG to produce responses to correspondence from hon. Members.

We understand he has set out the process for dealing with letters and the responsibilities of the respective organisations involved in providing accurate responses to hon. Members or constituents, and has requested a further meeting with the hon. Member to discuss the matter further.

■ NHS Property Services

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[132122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which Minister of his Department has responsibility for NHS Property Services.

Stephen Barclay:

NHS Property Services is a limited company 100% owned by the Secretary of State for Health, to whom it is accountable. Within the Department, Ministerial responsibility for NHS Property Services is delegated to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health (Lord O'Shaughnessy).

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[132124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the outcome of the review undertaken of the administration and operational effectiveness of NHS Property Services in (a) West Sussex, (b) Mid Sussex and (c) England.

Stephen Barclay:

Review of the effectiveness of NHS Property Services' operations in all areas of England is an ongoing process by the Company's Board, and by officials in the Department's Commercial Division.

NHS Property Services meets regularly with its main customers for the West and Mid-Sussex area, including with the clinical commissioning groups, concerning accommodation requirements, operational functions at their sites and capital investment required in their buildings, as well as participating in wider strategic

planning through its contribution to the developing sustainability and transformation plan for Sussex.

■ NHS Trusts: Females

Justin Madders:

[\[132020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of NHS trust (a) Chairs and (b) Chief Executives are women.

Stephen Barclay:

NHS Digital publishes workforce statistics and the following table shows the proportion of Chairs and Chief Executives of National Health Service trusts and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) in England that are women.

NHS Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS): Staff with a Job Role 'Chair' and 'Chief Executive' in NHS trusts and CCGs in England by gender as at 30 November 2017, headcount

| | ALL STAFF | MALE | FEMALE |
|---|-----------|------|--------|
| Staff with a Job Role 'Chair' (Headcount) | 30 | 18 | 12 |
| Staff with a Job Role 'Chief Executive' (Headcount) | 272 | 149 | 123 |

Source: NHS Digital provisional NHS HCHS monthly workforce statistics

The majority of NHS Digital statistics are based upon Occupation Code. As Occupation Code doesn't allow the distinction of roles 'Chair' and 'Chief Executive', Job Role has been used for this analysis, as distinct values for 'Chair' and 'Chief Executive' exist. Job Role at individual trusts is subject to data quality and completeness issues, hence the apparently low numbers of staff.

The Job Role reproduced here is that submitted by individual NHS organisations and not subject to the types of validation procedures undertaken by NHS Digital for other data items used in official publications. As such, these figures should be treated with a degree of caution.

■ NHS Trusts: Loans

Justin Madders:

[\[132017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2018 to Question 129169, on NHS: Loans, which 10 NHS trusts received the highest level of new loans in (a) 2015-16 and (b) 2016-17.

Justin Madders:

[\[132018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2018 to Question 129169, on NHS: Loans, which 10 NHS trusts had the highest loan balances in 2016-17.

Justin Madders:

[\[132019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2018 to Question 129169, on NHS: Loans, which 10 NHS trusts made the highest level of loan repayments in 2016-17.

Stephen Barclay:

The 10 trusts with the highest level of new loans in 2015-16 and 2016-17:

Barts Health NHS Trust £219,900,000

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust £182,055,000

London North West Healthcare NHS Trust £136,300,000

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust £99,648,000

Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust £97,670,000

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust £94,591,000

Medway NHS Foundation Trust £82,834,000

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust £77,438,000

North Bristol NHS Trust £74,862,000

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust £70,800,000

The 10 trusts that had the highest level of new loans in 2016-17:

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust £145,468,000

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust £135,590,000

Barts Health NHS Trust £123,200,000

North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust £107,231,000

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust £87,698,000

North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust £79,861,000

Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust £70,965,000

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust £70,900,00

North Bristol NHS Trust £70,124,000

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust £61,790,000

The 10 trusts that had the highest loan balances in 2016-17 were:

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust £306,474,800

Barts Health NHS Trust £292,963,000

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust £212,560,220

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust £171,277,063

London North West Healthcare NHS Trust £174,728,000

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust £149,353,000

Medway NHS Foundation Trust £136,534,171

North Bristol NHS Trust £135,286,000

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust £134,072,400

Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust £131,934,040

The 10 trusts that made the highest loan repayments in 2016-17 were:

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust £129,336,000

London North West Healthcare NHS Trust £58,400,000

United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust £52,000,000

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust £40,000,000

Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust £39,200,000

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust £38,019,000

Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust £35,951,000

Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust £30,600,000

North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust £29,508,000

Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust £29,199,000

■ NHS Trusts: Private Patients

Justin Madders:

[\[132016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what safeguards his Department puts in place to ensure that NHS patients are not adversely affected by the treatment of private patients in NHS trusts and foundation trusts.

Stephen Barclay:

The principal focus for the regulator, NHS Improvement, is to drive and support both urgent operational improvements at the frontline and to ensure the long term sustainability of the healthcare system. Central to this is their role in ensuring that patient safety is embedded at the very heart of all National Health Service organisations. This includes consideration of a range of factors relevant to risks to quality of care, financial sustainability and operational performance.

■ NHS: Capital Investment

Bim Afolami:

[\[904481\]](#)

What steps he is taking to increase the level of capital investment in the NHS.

Stephen Barclay:

The spring and autumn budgets last year announced over £3.9 billion of additional capital investment for the National Health Service in England to upgrade existing buildings and facilities and build new ones. This will support better services for patients and drive efficiency improvements and better value for money for taxpayers.

■ NHS: Debts Written Off**Justin Madders:**[\[132007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much debt was written off by NHS (a) trusts and (b) foundation trusts in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and what proportion of that debt related to the treatment of private patients.

Stephen Barclay:

The information requested is not held centrally

■ NHS: Finance**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[132755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, from which Government budgets the £540m of additional funding for the NHS for 2018-19 announced on 2 February 2018 will come.

Stephen Barclay:

The additional £540 million will be made available by the Department from the recently announced increase in the migrant surcharge, other income, and some reprioritisation within its own Departmental budget. NHS England will receive this funding through the Mandate in 2018-19, and will invest it in core frontline services such as mental health and primary care.

■ NHS: Private Patients**Justin Madders:**[\[132006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS (a) trusts and (b) foundation trusts made a loss on the treatment of private patients in (i) all and (ii) some of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Stephen Barclay:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Justin Madders:[\[132008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the NHS received in income from private patients in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Stephen Barclay:

The question has been interpreted as requesting detail regarding the level of income generated from the treatment of private patients by National Health Service providers. The term 'NHS providers' incorporates both NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts (FTs).

The income generated from the treatment of private patients by NHS providers is reported as a separate line item in the Department's Annual Report and Accounts (ARA), notes to the accounts.

The NHS trust and FT figures which compose the provider totals given in the ARA are as follows:

| YEAR | NHS TRUSTS (£000s) | NHS FTs (£000s) | NHS PROVIDER TOTAL (£000s) |
|---------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 2010-11 | 175,399 | 253,076 | 428,745 |
| 2011-12 | 177,312 | 275,179 | 452,491 |
| 2012-13 | 127,197 | 351,452 | 478,649 |
| 2013-14 | 120,818 | 380,890 | 501,708 |
| 2014-15 | 130,217 | 395,921 | 526,138 |
| 2015-16 | 123,445 | 434,749 | 558,194 |
| 2016-17 | 121,929 | 462,054 | 583,983 |

Prior to 2010-11 the Department's ARA did not report 'income from private patients' as a specific line item and thus comparable information for prior years is unavailable.

Justin Madders:

[132009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much NHS trusts and foundation trusts paid in clinical negligence compensation to private patients in the last financial year for which figures are available.

Stephen Barclay:

NHS Resolution handles clinical negligence claims on behalf of National Health Service trusts and NHS foundation trusts in England.

NHS Resolution has advised that trusts' income generation's activities are indemnified under the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts. However, claims involving private patients are not coded separately in their Claims Management System and it is therefore not possible to provide this data.

Justin Madders:

[132010]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has a policy on the price that NHS trusts and foundation trusts are permitted to charge for procedures on private patients; and if he will make a statement.

Stephen Barclay:

National prices for the National Health Service are set through the national tariff. This does not apply to procedures for private patients.

Justin Madders:

[\[132012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS trusts and foundation trusts are able to charge private patients prices that are lower than those set out in the national tariff.

Stephen Barclay:

National prices for the National Health Service are set through the national tariff. This does not apply to procedures for private patients.

Justin Madders:

[\[132013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to increase the level of NHS funding generated by the treatment of private patients.

Stephen Barclay:

The Department does not have any plans to increase the level of National Health Service funding generated by the treatment of private patients.

These are decisions for local NHS organisations.

Justin Madders:

[\[132014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS beds are reserved for the use of private patients.

Stephen Barclay:

The requested information is not collected centrally.

■ NHS: Reviews

Rosie Cooper:

[\[132768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary State for Health and Social Care, whether the NHS (a) fit and proper person requirement and (b) duty of candour applies to an individual who undertakes an independent review commissioned by an NHS body that is funded by his Department.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

The fit and proper person requirement requires all registered health and adult social care providers to make sure board directors, board members and individuals who perform the functions equivalent to the functions of a board director and member, are fit for their roles. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) assesses whether registered providers have appropriate processes in place for this. In this regard the CQC does not look at individuals, an approach which would extend to independent reviewers.

The statutory duty of candour applies to organisations, rather than to individual members of staff. All regulated healthcare professionals working in the United Kingdom have an individual professional duty of candour, which is a responsibility to be open and honest. This responsibility is set out in their respective professional codes of conduct. The duty of candour set out in professional codes of conduct would therefore not automatically extend to independent reviewers, but any reviewer would be expected to be independent and able to express views with candour.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[132776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether there are mechanisms in place to provide oversight of independent reviews commissioned by NHS bodies that are funded by his Department.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Department maintains an oversight of independent investigations carried out by its National Health Service arm's-length bodies. This forms part of its sponsorship role whereby the Department holds these bodies to account for performance, delivering value for money services and supporting the Department in achieving its objectives.

■ Nurses: Schools

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[132793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have been refused access to a school nurse since the introduction of the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Amendment) Regulations 2017.

Stephen Barclay:

This information is not collected. However, services provided by school nurses and health visitors remain outside the scope of the Charging Regulations and so access to these services should not be refused.

■ Obesity: Children

Steve McCabe:

[\[132947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is developing a new child obesity plan; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of developing a new child obesity plan that includes steps to reduce child tooth decay.

Steve McCabe:

[\[132948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on children's oral health of a ban on advertising high-sugar products on television before 9pm.

Steve Brine:

Improving the oral health of children is a priority for this Government. Key measures in our world-leading childhood obesity plan include the soft drinks industry levy and sugar reduction and wider reformulation programme which are reducing the amount of sugar children consume.

Current advertising restrictions in the United Kingdom on high fat, salt or sugar (HFSS) products are among the toughest in the world. Strict new rules came into effect in July 2017 banning the advertising of HFSS food or drink products in children's media. These restrictions apply across all non-broadcast media including in print, cinema, online and in social media.

In August 2017 we announced £5 million investment in a policy research unit on childhood obesity to provide a robust evidence, evaluation and research capability including looking at the impact of marketing (including advertising) on childhood obesity. We will use this, alongside other reports and data published on progress in delivering our plan, to determine whether sufficient progress has been made and whether alternative levers need to be considered.

■ Orkambi

Luke Hall:

[132082]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on negotiations between NHS England and Vertex Pharmaceuticals on access to the drug Orkambi for people with cystic fibrosis.

Steve Brine:

NHS England is currently in discussion with Vertex about its range of drugs for treating cystic fibrosis, including the drug Orkambi. NHS England will continue to support discussions with pharmaceutical companies that aim to provide clinically effective medicines to patients at a level that is cost-effective, in line with standard National Institute for Health and Care Excellence practice for assessing new drugs before they are introduced into the National Health Service.

■ Prostate Cancer: Screening

Jim Shannon:

[132044]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that all men over 50 year of age have access to prostate tests even when they have no symptoms of prostate cancer.

Steve Brine:

Prostate screening is not offered as a population screening programme in the United Kingdom.

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) last reviewed the evidence about screening for prostate cancer in 2016 and recommended against a population screening programme. The reasons for this included that the test which is available for use in screening, Prostate-Specific Antigen, is neither very specific nor very sensitive and is unable to distinguish between slow-growing and fast-growing cancers; there is therefore a risk that a national screening programme would lead to a high number of false positives. There are major harms of treating men who incorrectly test positive (i.e. have false positive tests), these include impotence, incontinence and rectal problems.

The UK NSC will be reviewing the evidence to screen for prostate cancer later in 2019/20. More information is available at the following link:

<https://legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/prostatecancer>

■ Psychiatry: Children and Young People

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[132922]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS child and adolescent psychiatrists have been employed in the West Midlands in the last two years for which data is available.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

NHS Digital publishes workforce statistics and the following table shows the number of full time equivalent (FTE) child and adolescent psychiatrists employed in the West Midlands between September 2015 and September 2017 and latest data available.

NHS Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS): Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists in the West Midlands, as at 30 September for each specified year and latest data available, FTE:

| YEAR | CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRISTS IN HEALTH EDUCATION WEST MIDLANDS (FTE) |
|----------------|---|
| September 2015 | 90 |
| September 2016 | 87 |
| September 2017 | 88 |
| November 2017 | 89 |

Source: NHS Digital Monthly HCHS workforce statistics.

Notes:

FTE figures are given as this is the most accurate measure of service capacity.

FTE figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

■ Respiratory System: Medical Equipment

Jonathan Ashworth:

[132882]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 15 January 2018 to Question 122074, on Respiratory System: Medical Equipment, if he will publish the number of adult extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation beds occupied in each week in (a) January 2018 and (b) February 2018.

Stephen Barclay:

NHS England commissions 15 adult respiratory extra corporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) beds from five providers. In periods of high demand, capacity can be increased in line with an agreed standard operating procedure available via the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/ccs/>

The number of adult ECMO beds occupied during each week in January and February 2018, as recorded on a Monday (unless otherwise stated) is shown below:

| DATE | NUMBER OF ADULT ECMO BEDS OCCUPIED |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2 January 2018 (Tuesday) | 16 |
| 8 January 2018 | 27 |
| 15 January 2018 | 25 |
| 22 January 2018 | 19 |
| 29 January 2018 | 14 |
| 5 February 2018 | 19 |
| 12 February 2018 | 20 |
| 19 February 2018 | 20 |
| 26 February 2018 | 21 |

Source: NHS England

During the period 1 November to 31 March, NHS England monitors capacity on a weekly basis (increasing this frequency if required).

NHS England has no plans to routinely publish this information. This information is used by NHS England to inform discussions on operational service pressures and future capacity plans for ECMO.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Accommodation Centres

Mr David Lammy: [\[132379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March to Question 129628, what the strict time limits are on resolving defects where inspected asylum accommodation do not meet the required standards.

Mr David Lammy: [\[132380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March to Question 129628, what the strict time limits are on resolving defects where inspected asylum accommodation does not meet the required standards.

Mr David Lammy: [\[132384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2018 to Question 129628, how many financial reductions have been applied and

at what total cost to providers as a result of inspected asylum accommodation not meeting the required standards in each of the last five years.

Caroline Nokes:

Accommodation providers are required to provide safe, habitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped accommodation that complies with the Decent Homes Standard in addition to standards outlined in relevant national or local housing legislation.

In line with government transparency commitments details of the time limits on resolving defects are already in the public domain. The particular document that details the standards is titled 'COMPASS Project Schedule 2 - Statement of Requirements' and is available on the Contracts Finder Archive on the Data.Gov.UK Website at:

<https://data.gov.uk/data/contracts-finder-archive/contract/487962/>

There is a rigorous contract compliance regime in place to ensure that the required performance standards expected of all providers, as defined in the contracts, are met. Where there is any instance of non-conformance the performance indicators are applied which may lead to a financial deduction from monthly invoices. The Home Office does not publish data on the value of service credit that have been accrued on the asylum accommodation contracts.

■ **Asylum: Children**

Alex Sobel:

[132192]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the loss of specialist teams for unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors on their (a) physical health, (b) mental health and (c) learning and development.

Caroline Nokes:

All asylum claims lodged in the UK are carefully considered on their individual merits against a background of relevant case law and up to date country information.

All Decision Makers who process asylum claims from Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children must complete all three Tiers of Keeping Children Safe training before interviewing or deciding claims from Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

We are committed to delivering an asylum process that is efficient but also sensitive to the needs of all claimants so that sufficient information can be obtained to facilitate fair and sustainable decisions on their respective asylum claims. Where decision makers have concerns about the welfare of individual claimants then we have clear processes to raise these with the relevant bodies.

■ Detainees: Compensation

Mr David Lammy:

[\[132374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on how many occasions her Department paid compensation to a victim of wrongful detention and at what total cost in each of the last five years.

Caroline Nokes:

The information is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The Home Office does not record 'wrongful detention' as a payment type. It is only unlawful detention compensation which is reported in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts. The cost of unlawful detention for FYs 2012/13 onwards are included in the table below:

UNLAWFUL DETENTION CLAIMS PAID

| Year | £m |
|---------|-----|
| 2016/17 | 3.3 |
| 2015/16 | 4.1 |
| 2014/15 | 4.0 |
| 2013/14 | 4.8 |
| 2012/13 | 5.0 |

Figures for FYs 2013/14 to 2015/16 were provided under previous PQ47658.

Figure for FY2017/18 has not been published as the Home Office Reports and Accounts for the current financial year has not yet been finalised and closed.

■ Hate Crime

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[132314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the Hate crime action plan 2016.

Victoria Atkins:

The Hate Crime action plan, "Action Against Hate", published in July 2016 is a four year plan, with actions running up until 2020. We are approaching the half way point of the plan, and good progress has been made on many of the actions. This includes Home Office funding of £3.4 million for protective security measures for places of worship and other vulnerable faith institutions, and £900,000 for projects to tackle hate crime in local communities.

The Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will refresh the action plan this year, which will provide an opportunity to fully report on progress.

■ Human Trafficking: Asylum

Alex Sobel: [132190]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for asylum submitted by victims of trafficking are awaiting a decision to date.

Victoria Atkins:

The number of asylum claims submitted by potential victims and victims of trafficking, is not held in a format which is reportable and would require a manual check of each record.

Data on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is published regularly by the National Crime Agency and in the UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery. These reports are available via the following links:

<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/national-referral-mechanism-statistics> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2017-uk-annual-report-on-modern-slavery>

■ Immigrants: Detainees

Mr David Lammy: [132302]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what access detainees in immigration detention centres have to mobile phones, the internet and social media.

Caroline Nokes:

Detention Services Order 08/2012 sets out the Home Office's policy on detainees' possession of mobile phones in immigration removal centres.

Detainees are able to retain their own mobile telephones throughout their detention, provided their handset has no recording facility and/or access to the internet. Where a detainee's handset does not comply with these restrictions they are provided with a suitable handset by the immigration removal centre supplier so that they may maintain contact with friends, family and other means of support.

The provision of internet access in immigration removal centres helps detainees to remain in contact with family, friends and legal representatives and to prepare for removal.

Detention Services Order 04/2016 provides guidance on access to the internet. It is a contractual requirement that all immigration removal centres provide detainees with reasonable and regulated access to the internet and IT facilities. There are no plans to enable detainees to access social media.

■ Immigration

Mr David Lammy:

[132385]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to increase the proportion of (a) leave to remain, (b) indefinite leave to remain and (c) naturalisation applications processed within her Department's service standards.

Caroline Nokes:

The published statistics on leave to remain applications that have been processed within service standard can be found in the migration transparency data release.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/in-country-migration-data-february-2018> at:

InC_02: Percentage of In-Country visa applications, for each Route, processed within Service Standards.

InC_07: Premium Service Applications (same day)

We continually monitor and review our performance against service standards.

■ Immigration: Children

Richard Burden:

[132043]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) birth and (b) adoptive children with parents who are British citizens have been denied entry to the UK in each of the last five years.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office does not hold the information in the format requested.

Refusal data is published in the Home Office transparency data

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

■ Missing Persons: Disclosure of Information

Louise Haigh:

[131953]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to use the National Missing Person's Register as a tool for information sharing between (a) the police (b) children's social care providers and (c) other statutory safeguarding agencies.

Louise Haigh:

[131954]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress has been made on establishing a Missing Person's Register; and what the timetable is for that register going live.

Louise Haigh:

[131955]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Missing Person's Register will collect information on missing children at risk of (a) child sexual exploitation, (b) child criminal exploitation and (c) child trafficking.

Victoria Atkins:

We are continuing to work with the National Policing Lead for Missing Persons through the Home Office National Law Enforcement Data Programme (NLEDP) to deliver a National Register for Missing Persons (NRMP).

Initially the register will be available to the police only. Work is ongoing to determine which relevant agencies, such as local authorities, could and should have access to the register to facilitate information exchange between the police and partners. This improved information exchange will contribute to significantly reducing the amount of time that an individual is missing and the harm that an individual comes to during a missing episode.

The current timetable, as agreed with the Police, would see the register introduced from mid-2019, allowing forces to manually record missing and associated found incidents on the register. Following this introduction, further functionality would be introduced, including sharing information beyond policing to other relevant agencies.

It is intended that the National Register for Missing Persons will enable the collection and display of information relating to risk categories.

■ Naturalisation

Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson:

[132799]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications have been received from (a) Irish citizens and (b) citizens of other EU countries for British citizenship under the naturalisation rules in each of the last five years.

Caroline Nokes:

The available published information on the total number of applications made for British citizenship by the applicant's country of nationality, including both naturalisation and registration, is in the Home Office's *Immigration Statistics, October to December 2017*, Citizenship table cz_01_q_a available from

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2017/list-of-tables#citizenship>

■ Offences against Children

Lucy Allan:

[132276]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to prevent the grooming and sexual exploitation of vulnerable young women.

Victoria Atkins:

The Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: Progress Report, published in February 2017, announced a £40m package of measures to protect children and young people from sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking, and to crack down on offenders, including: £7.5m for a new, ground-breaking Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, which will develop evidence of what works to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation; a £7m uplift in funding in each of the last two years for non statutory organisations which support the victims and survivors of sexual abuse; and £2.3m for the second phase of the successful Disrespect Nobody campaign, which raises young people's awareness of healthy relationships.

On 28th February the Home Office launched the Trusted Relationships Fund, which will provide grant funding to local authorities who wish to run initiatives to protect young people in their area from different forms of exploitation and abuse, including child sexual exploitation, county lines, and peer abuse. The fund is currently open for applications and successful projects will be announced in the summer.

Lucy Allan:[\[132280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of (a) girls groomed for sexual exploitation and (b) perpetrators of child sexual exploitation in the latest period for which figures are available.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government does not currently hold such figures. We are working to build the national picture of the nature and scale of this sort of abuse.

We have introduced new requirements for the police to record information relating to these offences which, along with the establishment of a new national Centre of Expertise on child sexual abuse, will help us to build a more informed picture of the scale of these crimes and the best ways to tackle and prevent them in the future.

■ Offences against Children: Telford**Lucy Allan:**[\[132287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse plans to (a) visit and (b) consider Telford as part of its current investigation into child sexual exploitation in England and Wales.

Victoria Atkins:

The Inquiry's terms of reference require it to consider the extent to which institutions in England and Wales have failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation. Within the terms of reference, it is for the Inquiry to decide what it investigates and how it conducts its investigations.

The Inquiry also runs the Truth Project, which allows victims and survivors of child sexual abuse to share their experiences.

■ Refugees

Catherine McKinnell:

[132810]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of refugees residing in the UK who have been separated from their family due to not being eligible for family reunification.

Caroline Nokes:

The UK Immigration Rules have a comprehensive framework for refugees and their families to be safely reunited in the UK. Our family reunion policy allows immediate family members of those granted protection here to reunite with them. The Immigration Rules also provide for relatives with protection in the UK to sponsor children in serious and compelling circumstances. The Mandate resettlement scheme also allows those recognised by the UNCHR as refugees to join close family members here in the UK.

In addition, there is provision in the policy to grant visas outside the Rules in exceptional circumstances, which caters for extended family members who otherwise do not qualify under the Rules.

We do not believe there are unnecessary barriers to family reunion for refugees. Over the last five years there have been 24,700 family reunion visas issued –and this is in addition to the numbers granted asylum here or resettled here under our resettlement schemes.

We are listening carefully to concerns raised on this issue by Non-Governmental Organisations and others, we are currently reviewing our approach to family reunion as part of the Government's wider asylum and resettlement policy.

■ Refugees: Children

Alex Sobel:

[132263]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to increase the number of eligible child refugees who are able to enter the UK.

Caroline Nokes:

The UK operates several resettlement schemes: Gateway, Mandate, the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS), working closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to provide a safe and legal route to the UK for the most vulnerable refugees. Moreover, our Family Reunion policy 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.

The UK is also committed to close cooperation and collaboration with EU partners, to ensure the efficient and timely operation of the Dublin Regulation and national relocation schemes, namely to relocate and support unaccompanied children under

section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016. The UK provided protection to almost 6,000 children in 2017 and more than 28,000 since the start of 2010.

■ **Visas: Charities**

Deidre Brock: [\[132201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether (a) any policy has been changed and (b) guidance has been implemented to reduce the number of Tier 5 (Temporary Worker - Charity Worker) visa applications granted in the last 5 years.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office has implemented no changes to policy or guidance to reduce the number of Tier 5 (Temporary Worker) Charity Worker visa applications granted in the last 5 years.

■ **West Midlands Police: Finance**

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[132920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the level of funding for West Midlands Police.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[132921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the effect of the change in the level of police funding on the capacity of the police to investigate burglaries in Coventry.

Mr Nick Hurd:

In January I announced the police funding settlement for 2018/19 which will see an additional £450m invested in the policing system, around £270m direct to PCCs. Prior to this I spoke to police leaders in every police force in England and Wales about the demands they face, including representatives from the West Midlands and this settlement reflects the evidence they provided.

I understand that the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has chosen to use his increased precept flexibility, which will provide around £9.5m additional funding for West Midlands Police in 2018/19. The PCC has said that he will use this additional funding to improve services delivered to the public.

Decisions about the allocation of police resources and deployment of officers are for Chief Constables and democratically accountable PCCs. They are responsible for ensuring the needs of the local community are met.

■ **Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre**

Caroline Lucas: [\[132345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her oral contribution of 6 March 2017, Official Report, column 560, if she will grant the application made in November 2016 by the hon. Member for Brighton Pavilion to visit Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre.

Caroline Nokes:

All requests for visits to immigration removal centres (IRC) by Honourable Members require the agreement of the Minister for Immigration, with local constituency MPs generally given priority over non-constituency MPs.

In addition to security and safety considerations, visits to view IRCs can affect the regime for detainees and are therefore subject to careful consideration and management to minimise disruption and intrusion.

I will consider the Honourable Member's request.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Building Research Establishment****Mr Steve Reed:**[\[132455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Building Research Establishment has represented the Government in an official capacity on fire safety in the last five years.

Dominic Raab:

[Holding answer 19 March 2018]: The Building Research Establishment (BRE) provides technical support to the Department on fire safety in a number of capacities, which can include attending meetings of relevant experts. Members of BRE staff also sit on standards committees dealing with fire safety as UK experts.

■ Care Homes: Fire Extinguishers**Stephen Lloyd:**[\[132041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to place a statutory duty on care homes to install fire sprinklers.

Dominic Raab:

The Government has commissioned Dame Judith Hackitt to take forward an independent review of the Building Regulations and fire safety system. Any decision on future fire safety requirements will be taken following the completion of that review, which is expected to be published in Spring 2018.

■ City Deals: Belfast**Lady Hermon:**[\[132728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of progress on the Belfast City Deal; and if he will make a statement.

Jake Berry:

This Government has committed to a comprehensive and ambitious set of city deals in Northern Ireland. Belfast City Region are developing a set of proposals which they

intend to submit to Government as the basis for a city deal discussion, and I look forward to seeing them.

■ **Housing: Insulation**

Mr Steve Reed:

[\[132454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the use of high pressure laminate cladding is permitted under Approved Document B.

Dominic Raab:

[Holding answer 19 March 2018]: Approved Document B does not specify particular products that can or cannot be used as part of an external wall system. In considering which products to use, the person carrying out the work must ensure that the requirements for external walls to resist the spread of fire are met. Approved Document B provides guidance on how those requirements may be complied with.

■ **Land Drainage: Planning Permission**

Tom Brake:

[\[132113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress his Department has made in taking forward the proposal to make Lead Local Flood Authorities a Statutory Consultee on planning applications on surface water drainage as consulted upon by his Department in 2014.

Dominic Raab:

Government has introduced the Lead Local Flood Authority as a statutory consultee under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015.

Local planning authorities are required to consult, subject to certain exceptions, the relevant lead local flood authority on planning applications for major development with surface water drainage. In determining the application, local planning authorities are required to take into account any representations received from the authority consulted.

■ **Life Expectancy**

Chris Ruane:

[\[132758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the change in the level of local government finance on the geographical variation in life expectancy.

Rishi Sunak:

Life expectancy is higher now than it has ever been, and is generally increasing in most areas. This Government has made available over £200 billion to councils between 2015/16 and 2019/20 to invest in services including those that support improved life expectancy, such as public health and social care, and we are currently

conducting a review of councils' relative needs to deliver an up-to-date, responsive distribution methodology that will ensure future funding goes to the right places.

■ Right to Buy Scheme

Dan Jarvis:

[\[132957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of Right to Buy on the number of young people in rented accommodation.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Right to Buy gives tenants of all ages the opportunity to own their home. Since the reinvigoration of Right to Buy increased maximum discounts to realistic levels in 2012, over 80,000 tenants have been enabled to buy their homes.

In addition, last October the Prime Minister announced an extra £2 billion funding for affordable housing, including social rent homes, in addition to the £1.4 billion announced at the Autumn Statement 2016. This has increased the Governments Affordable Housing Programme 2016-21 Budget to more than £9 billion, which will deliver many more affordable homes by March 2021. The new funding will support councils and housing associations to build more genuinely affordable homes in areas of acute affordability pressure where tenants, including young people, are struggling the most with the costs of rent.

■ Shops: Empty Property

David Simpson:

[\[132648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that High Street stores are not empty.

Jake Berry:

Issues about individual high streets are for the relevant local authority to address. They are best placed to determine how to help their local high streets, ensuring that their high streets meet the needs of the local community and maximise local growth in their areas. Ultimately, if a high street is to flourish, then local people, businesses and councils in an area need to work together to develop their own unique offer for the high street that resonates with the local community.

However, this Government is committed to supporting diverse high streets with a broad range of retail, service businesses, leisure and residential. High streets are a crucial part of our local and regional economies, and we want to see vibrant hubs where people live, shop, use services, and spend their leisure time, and that includes a welcoming and safe night-time economy. Since 2010, the Government has helped create over 360 town teams, and given over £18 million to towns, funding successful initiatives such as "Love your Local Market" and the "Great British High Street".

The Government does recognise that this is a difficult time for high streets and has taken significant actions to help them adapt and thrive. In England, these include introducing permitted development rights to allow certain changes of use without the

need for a planning application, enabling businesses to respond quickly to changing market demands, and avoiding premises being left vacant. Separately the Government is consulting in England on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework that will require local planning authorities to plan proactively for retail centres in a way that can support their continuing vitality and viability.

Earlier this month the Government announced the creation of a Retail Sector Council. Through the Council, the Government and retailers will work together to contribute to the retail sector's future direction, and to boost its productivity and economic health.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Department for International Development: Buildings

Jon Trickett:

[\[132220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what proportion of her Department's estate is (a) rented, (b) owned and (c) occupied through any other type of agreement.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Department for International Development has two Headquarters buildings in the UK, 22-26 Whitehall and Abercrombie House, East Kilbride. Both buildings are owned by, and form part of, the UK Government Estate.

■ Department for International Development: Staff

Fiona Bruce:

[\[132968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what work has been undertaken by his Department to develop religious literacy among its staff in the last two years.

Harriett Baldwin:

We have developed a position paper on faith and development; we continue to host seminars (such as the seminar in November on freedom of religion or belief); we have commissioned and circulated research on religion and development and have facilitated formal training. A limited number of DFID staff have already attended the newly re-launched Foreign and Commonwealth Office "Religion and Diplomacy" course. We plan to encourage more DFID staff to attend this course in the future.

■ Developing Countries: Sustainable Development

Derek Thomas:

[\[132361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what progress has been made on achieving the 17 sustainable development goals; and what steps her Department is taking to (a) support and (b) collaborate with the nations who have signed up to those goals.

Harriett Baldwin:

The UN is responsible for monitoring global progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in its 2017 SDGs Report noted that “implementation has begun, but ... the rate of progress in many areas is far slower than needed to meet the targets by 2030.”

The Department for International Development has put the Goals at the heart of all of its work and is working with a range of organisations and countries to help deliver them at the global, country and sectoral level. For example, DFID is leading the final global push to eradicate polio and help immunise 45 million children against the disease each year until 2020 to help achieve Goal 3 (Healthy Lives).

DFID is also providing a range of support to National Statistics Offices in developing countries to gather, analyse and use data, linked to the SDGs. For example, through the UN Statistics Department, DFID is supporting 20 developing countries to disseminate SDG data through National Reporting Platforms.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE■ **Department for International Trade: Buildings****Jon Trickett:**[\[132221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what proportion of his Department's estate is (a) rented, (b) owned and (c) occupied through any other type of agreement.

Greg Hands:

The proportion of the Department for International Trade's estate that is (a) rented, (b) owned and (c) occupied through any other type of agreement is detailed in the table below. The Department occupies 22 buildings, and pays rent for all of them.

| | | | | | | MEMORANDUM OF TERMS OF OCCUPATION | | TOTAL |
|-----------|-----|----------|-----|-------|---|---|------|-------|
| LEASEHOLD | % | FREEHOLD | % | OTHER | % | | % | |
| 2 | 9.1 | 1 | 4.5 | - | 0 | 19 | 86.4 | 22 |

■ **Department for International Trade: Internet****James Gray:**[\[131772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many and what proportion of his Department's cloud hosting contracts have been awarded to (a) hyperscale cloud providers and (b) UK SMEs, and what the value was of those contracts in each of the last three years.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 16 March 2018]: The Department for International Trade was formed in July 2016. In 2016 one contract was awarded to a UK small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) for cloud hosting. In 2017 one contract was awarded to a UK SME and one contract was awarded to a hyperscale cloud provider for cloud hosting. These proportions are shown in the table below.

The value and proportion of these contracts by value of UK SME and hyper scale provider is as follows:

| HOSTING ONLY | ACTUAL |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 2016 | £50,000 |
| 2017 | £408,926 |
| Total cloud hosting | £458,926 |
| 2016 | £50,000 |
| 2017 | £8,926 |
| SME cloud hosting | £58,926 |
| 2016 | 100.0% |
| 2017 | 2.2% |
| % SME | 12.8% |

■ **Exports: Republic of Ireland**

Nigel Dodds:[\[132069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the total amount of exports by (a) volume and (b) value to the Republic of Ireland were in the (i) pharmaceutical and (ii) chemicals sectors in each of the last five years.

Nigel Dodds:[\[132070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the total amount of imports by (a) volume and (b) value from the Irish Republic were in the (i) pharmaceutical and (ii) chemicals sectors in each of the last five years.

Graham Stuart:

Estimates of the value (£) and volume (kgs) of UK exports of pharmaceutical and chemical products to the Irish Republic in each of the last five years are available from HM Revenue and Customs 'Build Your Own Data Tables' tool at:

<https://www.uktradeinfo.com/Statistics/BuildYourOwnTables/Pages/Home.aspx>

Estimates by sector are not available.

Exports: USA**Barry Gardiner:****[132432]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of steel exports to the US by volume that are specialist steel products that the US does not have capability to produce.

Barry Gardiner:**[132434]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate his Department had made of the proportion of steel exports to the US by value which are specialist steel products that the US does not or has no capability to produce.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 16 March 2018]: Total US imports of steel from the UK in 2017 were 351 thousand tonnes with a value of £360m. This represents 5% of UK steel production in 2017, in tonnage. We are assisting UK industry in working with US customers to build their cases for the exemption of individual products from the tariffs on US steel imports announced by President Trump.

Investment: Treaties**Mr Roger Godsiff:****[132488]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of whether the recent European Court of Justice ruling issued on 6 March 2018 in the *Slowakische Republik v Achmea BV* case that the ISDS mechanism in an intra-EU bilateral investment agreement is incompatible with EU law; and whether the UK plans to follow that ruling and terminate its intra-EU bilateral investment agreements.

Greg Hands:

The Government has noted the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union in this case and is considering its implications. The judgment makes no reference to the intra-EU bilateral investment treaties to which the UK is a party, nor does it direct Member States to terminate such agreements.

■ Iron and Steel: USA

Gill Furniss:

[\[132589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate his Department has made of the volume of steel that will be re-directed to the UK which would have otherwise gone to the US as a result of the recent announcement on steel tariffs by the US administration.

Gill Furniss:

[\[132621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will make an assessment of whether a UK steel company can individually request an exemption for its product from the steel tariffs imposed by the US administration under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

We are working closely with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the UK steel and aluminium industries to assess the potential direct and indirect impacts of these measures.

The President of the United States of America announced there would be a mechanism for U.S. parties to apply for exclusion of specific products based on demand that is unmet by domestic production or on specific national security considerations. Details of this process are yet to be announced.

We are working closely with UK industry to help support them with this process via their US customers.

JUSTICE

■ Carillion: Insolvency

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[132903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of former employees of Carillion working in (a) HM Prison and Probation Service and (b) HM Courts and Tribunals Service have been transferred to (i) Gov Facilities Services Ltd and (ii) taken up employment with re-contracted providers.

Rory Stewart:

(a) HM Prison and Probation Service: Over 95% of the former employees of Carillion working in HM Prison & Probation Service have been transferred to Gov Facilities Services Ltd

432 Carillion employees were eligible to transfer to Gov Facility Services Ltd (GFSL) under TUPE arrangements with an additional 455 Carillion employees, who worked on the HMPPS contract, and who were subject to redundancy being offered employment with GFSL. 6 Carillion employees made a decision to resign prior to the date of transfer. Finally, we understand that 18 Carillion employees, working on the

HMPPS contract, were made redundant and not offered employment with GFSL as it was determined that their roles would not be required within the GFSL solution

(b) HM Courts and Tribunals Service: ISS are the new Facilities provider (re-contracted provider) for Humberside and East Anglia Courts PFI and they will be taking over from Carillion. Once the new contract is signed, it is anticipated that all 24 ex-Carillion staff will move across and become ISS employees

■ Criminal Cases Review Commission

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[132708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases have been referred to the Court of Appeal by the Criminal Cases Review Commission more than once since 1997.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The Criminal Cases Review Commissioner (CCRC) have referred two cases more than once since 1997.

■ Ministry of Justice: Buildings

Jon Trickett: [\[132222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of his Department's estate is (a) rented, (b) owned and (c) occupied through any other type of agreement.

Dr Phillip Lee:

The proportion of the Ministry of Justice's estate that is (a) rented, (b) owned and (c) occupied through any other type of agreement is detailed in the table below.

| LEASEHOLD % | | FREEHOLD % | | PFI | % | OTHER | % | TOTAL |
|-------------|-------|------------|-------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 392 | 30.0% | 731 | 56.0% | 27 | 2.1% | 165 | 12.6% | 1315 |

"Other" includes Memorandum of Terms of Occupation (MOTO) with other government departments.

■ Prisoners' Release

Stephen Timms: [\[132869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 13 March to Question 131737, what the maximum length of time is for a prisoner to continue to be incarcerated after a Parole Board has granted release where there are no further adjudications.

Rory Stewart:

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

In 2017, over 2,100 prisoners who were serving indeterminate or determinate parole eligible sentences were released. To obtain the requested information would require a manual check of all records for the prisoners directed to be released in this period.

The Secretary of State has a statutory duty to give effect to Parole Board release decisions. As set out in the written answer of 13 March, where possible, HMPPS aim to release prisoners within 14 days of receipt of the Parole Board's decision. The safe release of a prisoner is the priority, in order that they have the best possible chance of successful rehabilitation. That means that prior to release, the full risk management plan, including approved accommodation, must be in place.

■ Prisons: Computers and Telephones

Richard Burgon:

[\[132160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much has been spent from the public purse on the pilot scheme on placing telephones and basic computers into prison cells by prison involved in that scheme; and for each prison on what was that money spent.

Richard Burgon:

[\[132162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the cost to the public purse has been of the pilot scheme on placing telephones and basic computers in prison cells to date.

Richard Burgon:

[\[132163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of the pilot scheme on placing telephones and basic computers into prison cells.

Rory Stewart:

Under the pilot, telephones and basic computers were introduced into prison cells in two prisons: HMP Wayland and HMP Berwyn. HMP Berwyn already featured both capabilities when it opened on 27th February 2017. Telephones were introduced into HMP Wayland in December 2016 and computers in January 2017.

The purpose is for prisoners to manage some of their own day-to-day tasks that would normally be managed by officers on paper, freeing up officers to focus their time on the important task of reforming offenders.

All in-cell phones are limited to a number of preapproved phone numbers with robust restrictions in place. Prisoners are not given access to the internet.

Ministers will need to see evidence that new technologies have tangible benefits, in terms of improving rehabilitation, cutting crime and protecting the public before making any further decisions.

The pilot is still running in both prisons. We are monitoring and evaluating the benefits to assess the impact on prisoner safety and rehabilitation, and on officers' ability to do their jobs more effectively.

As part of our evaluation of the pilot we are collecting data on rates of self-harm, assaults and adjudications. We are also collecting qualitative feedback on the pilot from users of the technology.

The direct costs for A) Network & Telephony and B) basic computers for each prison included in the scope of the proof of concept are:

HMP Wayland: A) Network & Telephony £1,100,000

HMP Berwyn: A) Network & Telephony: £520,000

HMP Wayland and Berwyn: B) Computers £546,000

The costs to date of providing the telephones and basic computers into HMP Wayland and HMP Berywn is £2,166,000. This figure includes the cabling costs for HMP Wayland but not HMP Berwyn as these were absorbed by the overall prison build programme. Cabling costs for Berwyn were included in the prison build costs not the pilot.

Costs are rounded to the nearest thousand pound.

■ **Shoplifting: Prosecutions**

Steve McCabe:

[\[132940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the amount of court time that has been made available as a result of his Department's policy to allow people accused of shoplifting items under the value of £200 to plead guilty by post.

Lucy Frazer:

There is some saving of court time where an accused indicates a guilty plea by post compared with an equivalent case where the accused appears in person and pleads guilty. To date no estimate has been made of the amount of court time that has been made available, either generally or in respect of low-value shoplifting cases. Data to answer the question is not available and it would present a disproportionate expense to HMCTS to provide it.

In all cases the defendant may choose to enter their plea in open court at a hearing if they prefer.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Northern Ireland Office: Buildings**

Jon Trickett:

[\[132223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what proportion of her Department's estate is (a) rented, (b) owned and (c) occupied through any other type of agreement.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

The Northern Ireland Office has three areas of estate. The 1 Horse Guards Road holding is occupied via a lease with HMT. A further holding in Stormont Estate, Belfast is occupied via a Memorandum of Terms Of Occupation with the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

The third area of holding relates to a contract for Hillsborough Castle. Some accommodation and a small office for ministers are also available at Hillsborough Castle, however, responsibility for the management and day to day running of Hillsborough Castle rests with the charity Historic Royal Palaces.

■ Northern Ireland Office: Cleaning Services

Catherine West:

[\[132865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what information she holds on the rate of remuneration for cleaners in her Department.

Mr Shailesh Vara:

The Northern Ireland Office is unable to provide the requested information as they do not directly employ cleaning staff.

SCOTLAND

■ Scotland Office: Buildings

Jon Trickett:

[\[132226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what proportion of his Department's estate is (a) rented, (b) owned and (c) occupied through any other type of agreement.

David Mundell:

The Scotland Office has two buildings, both of which are rented.

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

■ General Election 2017

Simon Hart:

[\[132978\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Houghton and Sunderland South, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, how many complaints the Commission received in relation to breaches in election law after (a) during and (b) after General Election 2017; and how many of those complaints (i) related to electoral fraud or other breaches, (ii) have been resolved, (iii) have been passed to the police and (iv) have resulted in prosecutions.

Bridget Phillipson:

The Electoral Commission receives both formal and informal complaints across a range of areas of electoral law through a range of different routes. It is not, therefore, possible to provide comprehensive data in response to parts of this question.

Allegations of electoral fraud relating to offences under the Representation of the People Act (RPA) 1983 are matters for the police. When the Commission is made aware of allegations of electoral fraud they advise the complainant to contact the police directly, and they may also pass on details of the allegation to the relevant police force.

On 2 March 2018 the Commission published information provided by police forces about cases of electoral fraud recorded during 2017. The data shows that police forces across the UK recorded a total of 336 cases of alleged electoral fraud relating to offences under the Representation of the People Act (RPA) 1983. Police forces

also recorded 69 other complaints about elections which did not relate to allegations of electoral fraud offences.

At the end of January 2018, when the data was updated by police forces, there had been one conviction following investigation by the police, and suspects in eight further cases had accepted police cautions. Police forces were awaiting prosecution advice in relation to a further seven cases, in two cases court proceedings had been initiated and one case resulted in an acquittal. Forty four cases remained under investigation by the police.

TRANSPORT

■ Fishing Vessels

Jim Shannon:

[\[132021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many UK and Northern Ireland registered fishing vessels are owned by international or European companies in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

As of 14 March 2018, nine of the 5,678 fishing vessels on the UK Ship Register are owned by international or European companies. These nine fishing vessels have their ports registered as (a) two in England, (b) two in Scotland, (c) none in Wales, and (d) five in Northern Ireland.

■ Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions

Peter Grant:

[\[132792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment the Government has made of the potential effect on kit car owners of the implementation of proposals on emissions in paragraph 4.11 of the consultation on Road vehicles: Improving air quality and safety.

Joseph Johnson:

The proposals would have no effect on the owners of kit cars that are already registered, as the new requirements apply only to newly constructed and unregistered vehicles. Full consideration is being given to the representations received from the public consultation.

■ Space Technology

Scott Mann:

[\[132242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Civil Aviation Agency on licenses for space flights and the location of spaceports in (a) the UK and (b) Cornwall.

Joseph Johnson:

My officials are working closely with Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the UK Space Agency to develop the legal framework for the licensing and regulation of spaceports

and spaceflight in the UK. The Space Industry Bill, which lays the foundation, received Royal Assent on 15 March 2018. The CAA continue to be involved in the development of the detailed regulations, including licence requirements for spaceports, which we plan to consult on from 2019.

Once the detailed licensing requirements are in place, it will enable any location that thinks it can meet the licensing requirements to apply to become a licenced spaceport or spaceflight operator.

TREASURY

■ Cash Dispensing

Paul Masterton:

[\[132574\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with consumer groups on the effect on consumers of LINK's proposals to reduce the interchange fee.

Paul Masterton:

[\[132575\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with LINK and the Payment Systems Regulator on LINK's ability to guarantee the protections outlined in its Financial Inclusion Programme.

Paul Masterton:

[\[132580\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Payment Systems Regulator on the future provision of ATMs and wider issues related to consumers' access to cash.

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. This includes regular meetings with regulators, consumer organisations, and industry – including LINK and the Payment Systems Regulator – to discuss relevant issues, such as access to cash.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations 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 Government recognises that widespread free access to cash remains extremely important to the day-to-day lives of many consumers and businesses in the UK, and will continue to engage with a range of stakeholders to ensure that it is maintained.

■ Child Care Vouchers**Lady Hermon:** [\[132730\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will meet representatives of Employers for Childcare to discuss its concerns about the closure of the childcare voucher scheme to new entrants after the six-month extension; and if he will make a statement.

Elizabeth Truss:

HMRC hold regular meetings with childcare voucher providers, and will be holding another forum shortly. Employers for Childcare will be invited to attend.

■ Children: Day Care**Darren Jones:** [\[131898\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether parents of disabled children are entitled to an increase of 40 per cent in the proportional rate of the top-up for tax-free childcare contributions.

Elizabeth Truss:

Tax-Free Childcare offers more generous support for parents of disabled children, who can get up to £4,000 a child each year and who remain eligible for Tax-Free Childcare until the child is 17 years old. This is to reflect the additional costs associated with childcare provision for disabled children.

Tracy Brabin: [\[132796\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Secretary of State for Education of 13 March 2018, Official Report, Column 802, on Universal Credit, for what reason the change to the childcare vouchers salary sacrifice policy was not included in the Spring statement.

Elizabeth Truss:

The Government confirmed that childcare vouchers will remain open for a further six months following a debate on childcare after Spring Statement, during which colleagues were given the opportunity to voice their concerns.

Anneliese Dodds: [\[132930\]](#)

To ask the Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how frequently the contractor's compliance with the government childcare service contract is assessed by his Department.

Elizabeth Truss:

We continually assess our contractor's compliance with the government childcare service contract.

■ Cryptocurrencies: Regulation**Andrew Percy:** [\[133067\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with its international counterparts on developing regulations for crypto-currencies.

Andrew Bridgen:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given on 1 March 2018 to PQ UIN 129437.

■ **En+ Group****Sir Mike Penning:**[\[132483\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of whether the listing of EN+ Group on the London Stock Exchange received appropriate security checks; and if will he make a statement.

Sir Mike Penning:[\[132495\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what checks were made by his Department before the listing of EN+ Group on the London Stock Exchange; and if will he make a statement.

John Glen:

HM Treasury is not directly involved in the process for companies seeking to list on the London Stock Exchange and therefore does not undertake checks as part of this process. Companies seeking to admit securities to the Official List must apply to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), in its role as the UK Listing Authority (UKLA). For listed companies, the UKLA monitors and enforces compliance with the Listing Rules. The FCA is an independent regulator.

■ **Energy: Storage****Layla Moran:**[\[132814\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of business rate rises for onsite battery storage on the development of the UK battery storage market.

Mel Stride:

I refer the hon Member to the answer given by the Minister for Energy and Clean Growth (Claire Perry) on 15 March 2018 to PQ 131965.

■ **Financial Services: Standards****Emma Little Pengelly:**[\[132194\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the report of the Financial Conduct Authority, FCA Mission: Our Future Approach to Consumers, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a duty of care on financial services firms towards consumers.

John Glen:

The government believes that the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), as the UK's independent conduct regulator for the financial services industry, is best placed to lead the discussion on the merits of a duty of a care for financial services providers.

The FCA have committed to issuing a Discussion Paper on a duty of care later this year. The Paper will invite contributions from all interested parties on the case for and

against a duty of care, what form such a provision might take, and consequential issues arising from adopting it. This will be an open process designed to gather views.

■ Government Departments: Property

Jon Trickett:

[132078]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what restrictions are placed on the use of capital receipts gains from Departments' disposals of surplus property; and what guidance his Department provides to departments on the use of capital receipts gains from government disposals of surplus property.

Elizabeth Truss:

In general, receipts from the disposal of surplus property may only be used to fund departments' capital expenditure. Receipts that may be retained by departments are subject to limits agreed with HM Treasury at Spending Reviews, as set out in paragraph 7.29 of the Consolidated Budgeting Guidance. All rules and guidance around the use of capital receipts are set out in chapter 7 of the [Consolidated Budgeting Guidance](#) and Annex 5.3 of [Managing Public Money](#)

■ NatWest: Sheffield

Jared O'Mara:

[132200]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will meet with representatives of NatWest to discuss the potential effect on that bank's elderly and vulnerable customers of the proposed closure of its Millhouses branch in Sheffield.

John Glen:

The decision to open and close a bank branch remains a commercial judgement for banks, which the Government does not intervene in. However, the impact on communities must be understood, considered and mitigated where possible.

The Access to Banking Protocol Standard 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.

The independent financial services regulator - the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) - requires firms to treat their customers fairly, including the elderly and the vulnerable, and has broad and robust powers to enforce breaches of its rules. The FCA's Handbook requires firms to identify particularly vulnerable customers, and to deal with such customers appropriately.

■ Owner Occupation

Jo Platt:

[\[132272\]](#)

To ask the Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 20 November 2017 to Question 112340 on Owner Occupation, if his Department will take steps to ensure that lenders take into account (a) council tax and (b) rental payments when assessing a borrower's creditworthiness.

John Glen:

The Government believes that it is right that a history of paying rent should be recorded and recognised in tenants' credit scores and in affordability assessments.

That is why, at the Autumn Budget 2017, the Government announced the Rent Recognition Challenge, a £2m competition challenging the UK's world-leading technology firms to develop innovative new applications to enable rental tenants to share their rent payment data with lenders and credit reference agencies. The winning applications will be announced shortly.

Data on individuals' council tax payments are not currently made available to lenders or credit reference agencies by local authorities.

■ Pensions

Catherine McKinnell:

[\[132807\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to encourage people aged under 30 in employment to save towards their pensions.

John Glen:

Automatic Enrolment has had great success in increasing participation rates in workplace pensions across the population. 9.4 million employees have been enrolled into workplace pensions since 2012. DWP's figures show an increase of 44 percentage points in pension participation for those aged 22 to 29 from 2012 to 2016. Additionally, workplace pension participation among eligible men and women has equalised. We want to build on the increase in participation. The minimum contributions required under automatic enrolment will increase from the current 2% of qualifying earnings to 5% in April 2018 and 8% in April 2019.

Furthermore, in April 2017 the government also introduced the Lifetime ISA, allowing younger people to receive a 25% bonus from government on savings of up to £4,000 annually. This encourages the next generation to get into the habit of saving and helps them to simultaneously save for both a first house and for later life, with the same product.

■ Pensions: Self-employed

Catherine McKinnell:

[\[132808\]](#)

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to encourage self-employed people to save towards their retirement.

John Glen:

The Government has a variety of policies that encourage self-employed retirement saving. Tax relief is provided on pension contributions, representing a significant incentive to save into a pension. As noted in DWP's review of automatic enrolment in December, we are looking to build on the principles behind automatic enrolment's success to help the self-employed save for retirement and DWP will be running tests of targeted interventions to help the self-employed save for retirement. As a first step, HM Treasury and DWP are co-hosting a 'Tech Sprint' event later this month with the ABI, working with industry and Fintech firms to develop innovative technology-based ideas to help the self-employed save for retirement.

■ Personal Savings**Catherine McKinnell:****[132809]**

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what barriers to investing in savings by people aged under 30 his Department has identified.

John Glen:

We have increased the amount of money that people can save in their ISAs annually to a record £20,000 and introduced a Personal Savings Allowance of up to £1,000. Thanks to these measures over 95% of people pay no tax on their savings income. In April 2017 the government also introduced the Lifetime ISA, allowing younger people to receive a 25% bonus from government on savings of up to £4,000 annually. This encourages the next generation to get into the habit of saving and helps them to simultaneously save for both a first house and for later life, with the same product.

■ Research and Development Tax Credit**Justin Tomlinson:****[132049]**

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) small and (b) large firms have claimed research and development tax relief in each year since 2010.

Mel Stride:

HMRC publishes reports on the number of claims for Research and Development (R&D) tax relief by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and large companies. Information for the period 2010-11 to 2015-16 can be found in Table RD1 here:

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

Information for the period 2016-17 will be published in Autumn 2018.

■ Shareholders: Sanctions

Sir Mike Penning:

[132356]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he takes to ensure that funds raised by companies through initial public offerings in London do not finance companies under US and EU sanctions; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

I refer the honourable member to the reply I gave on 16 March 2018 to his previous question, no. 132256.

■ Treasury: Buildings

Jon Trickett:

[132228]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of his Department's estate is (a) rented, (b) owned and (c) occupied through any other type of agreement.

Robert Jenrick:

HM Treasury estate comprises:

1. No rented property.
2. One property where the Crown is the Freeholder.
3. Four properties occupied through other types of agreement.

■ Video Games: Tax Allowances

Justin Tomlinson:

[132047]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many firms claimed video games tax relief in each year since its introduction.

Robert Jenrick:

HMRC publishes reports on the number of claims for video games tax relief.

Information for the period 2014-15 to 2016-17 can be found in Table 4.1 here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/creative-industries-statistics-july-2017>

Companies have a period of one year to submit returns after the end of the accounting period and another year to amend or withdraw a claim. Therefore, the data for 2016-17 remains provisional and subject to change due to claims not yet received.

Justin Tomlinson:

[132048]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of video games tax relief on (a) employment and b) investment in the video games sector.

Mel Stride:

The creative sector tax reliefs provide support to ensure that these highly skilled and innovative industries thrive in the UK.

Since its introduction in 2014 the Video Games Tax Relief has supported almost £700 million of UK expenditure in the industry.

Although the government does not collect statistics on employment in the video games sector specifically, video games industry body TIGA estimate that in 2016 there were 33,637 employed in the games industry or in jobs indirectly supported by studios, compared to 30,741 in 2014.

■ Welfare Tax Credits

Frank Field:

[132499]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many households received (a) Working Tax Credit, (b) Child Tax Credit and (c) both Working and Child Tax Credit in 2015-16.

Elizabeth Truss:

The number of households that received Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and a combination of both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit are published on the gov.uk website at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/617128/Child_and_Working_Tax_Credits_statistics_finalised_annual_awards_-_2015_to_2016.pdf

The latest figures available are for 2015-16.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Gender Recognition: Children

Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson:

[132801]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what plans she has to amend the Gender Recognition Act 2004 to permit children under the age of 18 to change their gender without parental consent.

Victoria Atkins:

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 is the piece of legislation that enables people to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate, and thereby gain legal recognition of their gender. Legal gender recognition is entirely separate from any medical treatment an individual may receive to change their gender.

In July 2017, we announced our intention to consult on reforming the Gender Recognition Act 2004. We are currently considering the content of the consultation, and we will be publishing the consultation in due course. The Government recognises that there are a wide range of views on reforming the Act and we are taking time to engage with stakeholders in advance of the consultation to understand these views in more detail.

Any reforms that we might take forward relating to the age limit for applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate, will not affect when an individual can access medical

treatment. Surgery is not offered for children and adolescents, and we have no intention of changing this.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Buildings

Jon Trickett:

[\[132230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of her Department's estate is (a) rented, (b) owned and (c) occupied through any other type of agreement.

Kit Malthouse:

The Department occupies 923 buildings broken down as follows:

(a) Rented 826

(b) Owned 0

(c) Other - Lease/Licence for Co-location with Local Authority 67 and Memorandum of Terms of Occupation 30

Based on m² figures 93% of the estate is rented and 7% is MOTO and Co-locations.

■ Funeral Payments

Frank Field:

[\[132704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the maximum level of funeral expenses payments, in relation to recent trends in funeral costs.

Kit Malthouse:

The Social Fund Funeral Expenses Payments continue to meet the necessary costs of a cremation or burial for eligible claimants. Average payments have increased year-on-year to meet these necessary costs. We have had to make difficult choices about welfare spending and it has not been possible to increase the £700 maximum for other costs. However we have made interest-free Social Fund Budgeting Loans available for funeral costs in addition to Funeral Expenses Payments.

In 2016/17, approximately 27,000 Funeral Expenses Payments were paid worth around £38.6 million. The average payment made has increased in value in the past ten years by about 28 per cent – from £1,117 in 2006/07 to £1,427 in 2016/17 – as the necessary costs have increased.

We need to ensure that we have a system that is both fair for tax payers, while assisting the most vulnerable with funeral expenses. The Funeral Expenses Payments scheme continues to make a significant contribution towards the cost of a simple funeral for claimants on certain income based benefits or tax credits.

■ Health and Safety Executive: Inspections

Paul Blomfield:

[132151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information on (a) labour rights and (b) access to advice and remedy is routinely provided to workers who (i) file a complaint with and (ii) are encountered during inspections conducted by the Health and Safety Executive.

Sarah Newton:

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE's) website contains the relevant information for workers who wish to file a complaint about their workplace and can be found at the '[Report a workplace problem](#)' page. This page contains a link to information specifically for [Whistleblowers](#). They will also find an explanation of what HSE will do when their concerns are received.

The HSE website also provides comprehensive free guidance on all aspects of workplace health and safety, specific webpages to support workers and translations of information on basic health and safety protections in 16 languages.

During health and safety inspections, HSE inspectors routinely make direct contact with workers to provide them with the opportunity to raise health and safety concerns, provide advice and support relevant to that workplace, and agree how the inspector will provide workers with relevant information about the inspection.

■ Health and Safety Executive: Undocumented Workers

Paul Blomfield:

[132152]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many cases of migrants working undocumented were passed from the Health and Safety Executive to Immigration Enforcement in each of the last five years.

Sarah Newton:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not check the immigration status of workers or collect specific data on undocumented workers, as Great Britain's health and safety law provides protection for all workers irrespective of their immigration status. If HSE inspectors observe signs of potential labour abuse in a workplace, HSE will share this intelligence with other enforcement agencies.

■ Independent Case Examiner: Complaints

Angela Crawley:

[132106]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints about the Independent Case Examiner's Office have been referred to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Office in each of the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

The table provides details of the number of complaints the Ombudsman accepted about the Independent Case Examiner's Office for the reporting years 2012 to 2017.

The information has been taken from DWP's Annual Report and Accounts 2013-14, and the Ombudsman's annual Performance Reports for the reporting years 2013 to 2017.

| YEAR | CASES ACCEPTED FOR INVESTIGATION |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| 2012/13 | 5 |
| 2013/14 | 132 |
| 2014/15 | 145 |
| 2015/16 | 76 |
| 2016/17 | 62 |

■ Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit: Dupuytren's Contracture

Grahame Morris:

[\[132403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the cost of adding Dupuytren's Contracture to the list of prescribed diseases.

Sarah Newton:

The cost of including Dupuytren's contracture in the list of Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit prescribed diseases is assessed to be £8m per year once fully rolled out. The number of claims and awards are assumed to ramp up over time.

The estimated costs of administration, based on the additional volumes of processing both awarded and disallowed claims, medical assessments and changes to supporting processes and products is assessed to be £5.6m.

Grahame Morris:

[\[132404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will including Dupuytren's Contracture on the list of prescribed diseases.

Sarah Newton:

The Secretary of State has carefully considered the recommendation from the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council but has decided not to add Dupuytren's contracture to the list of prescribed diseases.

Grahame Morris:

[\[132407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what organisations she met with when considering the inclusion of Dupuytren's Contracture on the list of prescribed diseases.

Sarah Newton:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions considers the advice and recommendation of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) along with advice

from Departmental officials when considering whether to add to the list of prescribed diseases.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Patrick Grady: [\[132057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pension, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Glasgow North of 13 December 2017 on his constituent's employment and support allowance application and concerns about a lack of consideration given to mental health and autistic spectrum medical conditions.

Kit Malthouse:

Despite an extensive search, we have been unable to locate the letter. I will of course respond to any future correspondence we receive.

■ **National Insurance: Refugees**

Alex Sobel: [\[132267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how his Department determines which refugees automatically get a National Insurance number as soon as they receive their refugee status; and if he will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

For those refugees granted leave to remain as a result of a successful asylum claim, a joint fast track National Insurance Number (NINo) application process operates between DWP and the Home Office. This process has been in place since 2005 but only included the main asylum applicant. This was extended to cover all adult dependants (aged 16 or over) in the refugee's family from 15 January 2018.

Additionally from this date the NINo is now printed on the reverse of the refugees Biometric Residence Permit (BRP).

■ **Personal Independence Payment**

Ronnie Cowan: [\[131894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has allocated contingency funding to pay people who are having their personal independence payment claim reviewed by the Government.

Sarah Newton:

I refer the Hon. Member to the statement made by myself, [Official Report](#), 30 January 2018, Column 703.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations**

Grahame Morris: [\[132398\]](#)

To ask the Department for Work and Pensions, if he will take steps to ensure that all medical assessment centres have disability access and disabled parking for claimants with mobility issues.

Sarah Newton:

All Assessment Centres are compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Assessment providers are required to ensure that the needs of all claimants are considered, including proximity to public transport routes and access to suitable parking.

Before attending an assessment, claimants are given the opportunity to alert the assessment provider to any additional requirements they may have. The providers will endeavour to meet any reasonable requests. If a claimant is unable to travel to, or access an Assessment Centre as a result of their health condition or impairment, a home visit may be offered.

■ Universal Credit**Mr Roger Godsiff:**[\[132939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of universal credit claims by heterosexual couples (a) with children and (b) without children who do not receive split payments are made to the female partner.

Alok Sharma:

The information requested is not available. The Department does not collect information on the sexual orientation of claimants.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Nuisance Calls

Alex Sobel:

[126489]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what his Department's policy is on a ban on phone companies charging a fee for services to protect against nuisance calls.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 February 2018. The correct answer should have been:

Margot James:

The Government and local bodies together are investing £1.7 billion of public money to support vital improvements in broadband services across the UK. Superfast broadband coverage reached 95% of premises in December 2017 — up from 45% in 2010. Many of the premises reached had exchange-only lines.

For any premises not covered by superfast broadband, as confirmed in our announcement in December 2017, we are pushing ahead with our plans for a Universal Service Obligation (USO) so that by 2020 everyone across the UK will have a clear, enforceable right to request 10 Megabit per second broadband.

Within London the Government expects superfast broadband coverage to be provided by the private sector and is encouraging providers to tackle remaining issues including exchange-only lines.

Consumers can register their landline and mobile telephone numbers with the Telephone Preference Service (TPS), which helps prevent them receiving unsolicited nuisance marketing calls. The TPS is a free service and consumers can register at the following address:

http://www.tpsonline.org.uk/tps/number_type.html.

In addition, phone companies provide consumers with a range of services to protect them against nuisance calls. It is for phone companies to decide whether to offer these services for free or for a charge. The Government welcomes services being provided free, or at low cost, for the benefit of consumers.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Competitiveness Council - 12 March

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) (Richard Harrington): [\[HCWS564\]](#)

The Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) took place on 12 March in Brussels. I represented the UK.

EU Industrial Policy

Ministers had a wide-ranging discussion on the future of EU industrial policy and the need for European industry to adapt to changes in the global economy and the digital revolution. The UK noted that its recently published industrial strategy identified many of the same challenges and drivers of growth, and stressed our commitment to an open, liberal market economy based around fair competition and high standards. Commissioner Bieńkowska updated Ministers on the first meeting of the 'Industry 2030' High Level Roundtable which took place in February. The Roundtable would work towards a future vision for EU industry. Ministers also agreed the draft Council Conclusions (doc. 2793/18).

The UK also raised concerns at the recent announcement by the US administration to introduce tariffs on steel and aluminium imports. The UK stressed that unilateral tariffs were not the right way to tackle global overcapacity. Other Member States stressed the need for a solution that respected the role of the WTO which Commissioner Bieńkowska supported in her response

Digitalisation of the EU economy

Ministers considered how to better focus national reform efforts and funding decisions, to seize the opportunities presented by digitalisation for European industry and citizens. There was wide agreement on the need to boost digital skills, to provide clear regulatory frameworks, and to see SMEs and the public sector as potential beneficiaries as well as large businesses. Member States considered that both private sector and EU funding should be easier to access and complement existing national investment in infrastructure.

Single Market

Ministers held a policy debate on the Single Market to mark the anniversary of the Treaty of Maastricht. A number of Member States, including the UK, called for better enforcement of Single Market rules and an analysis of barriers to the services market to realise the Single Market's full potential.

Commissioner Bieńkowska hoped that Member States would reflect their aspirations for the Single Market in responding to Commission legislative proposals. The UK underlined our continuing interest in the success of the Single Market and support for ongoing efforts

to reduce barriers, and reiterated the Prime Minister's call for an ambitious UK-EU partnership.

Other items

Commissioner Bieńkowska set out the key elements of the Commission's Plastics Strategy and highlighted the objectives of a review of the REACH regulation. On Better Regulation, the Presidency presented work to highlight the role of scientific evidence in the EU's regulatory decision making. Belgium presented a short note to highlight the risk of start-ups and scale-ups being captured by the rescue and restructuring guidelines in the State Aid rules. Under the regular 'Competitiveness Check-up' Commissioner Bieńkowska gave a presentation on the link between services reforms and productivity in manufacturing. Commissioner Jourova updated Ministers on the forthcoming package of consumer protection proposals which are due in April.

■ **Corporate Governance**

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Greg Clark):
[\[HCWS561\]](#)

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Commencement of Chapters 5 and 7 of Part 5 of the the Digital Economy Act 2017**

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Matt Hancock):
[\[HCWS567\]](#)

This statement is to inform the House that Regulations were made on 15 March 2018 to bring into force specified provisions in Parts 5 and 6 of the Digital Economy Act 2017 ("the Act"). The Part 5 provisions, also known as the "Digital Government" provisions, provide powers enabling public authorities and other persons to share information for particular purposes, as well as introducing new powers of access to information for the UK Statistics Authority to assist them in exercising their functions.

The Digital Government provisions in Part 5 of the Act allow information-sharing in the areas of Public Service Delivery, civil registration, debt, fraud, research and statistics. Between 21st September and 2nd November last year, the Government carried out a public consultation and obtained the views of statutory consultees on draft codes of practice and other guidance which support these provisions, and on draft regulations which set objectives for the Public Service Delivery provisions. The government expects to lay the draft codes and regulations for consideration by Parliament shortly.

The Research and Statistics provisions (at Chapters 5 and 7 of Part 5) will be brought into force in Northern Ireland as well as in England, Wales and Scotland. Some of the purposes for which information may be shared under Part 5 are devolved with respect to Northern Ireland.

Although it was intended that a legislative consent motion (LCM) would be sought from the Northern Ireland Assembly during the passage of the Act, the Assembly was

dissolved before the motion itself could be passed. With that in mind, the Government has sought to keep open the ability to commence the provisions separately in Northern Ireland, in the hope that a restored Executive could seek legislative consent from the Assembly before the provisions were commenced.

In the light of the ongoing absence of a Northern Ireland Executive, however, a point has been reached whereby a decision on whether to commence the Research and Statistics provisions cannot be further deferred. The UK Government has therefore decided to proceed with UK-wide implementation on a limited basis for those provisions, taking into account representations from officials and other stakeholders in Northern Ireland. This decision has not been reached lightly. Not commencing these specific provisions UK-wide at this time would undermine the comprehensiveness and consistency of statistics about society and the economy for both the UK as a whole, and for Northern Ireland in particular. It could also affect the ability of bodies in Northern Ireland to access essential statistical data and to make policy on the basis of relevant research. In both respects it would impact on the ability to make effective, timely and evidenced decision-making at the local and national levels. Given this, and noting the support the measures commanded from the previous Executive (with a Legislative Consent Motion laid in the Assembly albeit not passed) and as part of a public consultation which included Northern Ireland, we assess that now is the right time to move forward with commencement.

When an Executive has been restored, we will write to Northern Ireland Ministers to confirm that they are content for the commenced provisions to remain in place. We will also consider carefully any further representations from stakeholders in Northern Ireland to commence other provisions in the Digital Economy Act 2017, while recognising the broad support that these measures have commanded previously.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ NHS Planning in 2018-19

Minister of State for Health (Stephen Barclay):

[\[HCWS571\]](#)

In accordance with the NHS Act 2006, I have today laid before Parliament the Government's mandate to NHS England for 2018-19. To further support the NHS to meet the challenges it faces, I am also today publishing the remit letter for NHS Improvement.

NHS England oversees the commissioning of health services in England and so has a key role in setting direction across the health and care system. The mandate sets objectives that Government expects NHS England to achieve and its budget, which now includes £2.8 billion additional funding between 2017/18 and 2019/20, taking NHS funding to over half a trillion pounds from 2015 to 2020.

Since 2016/17, we have taken a multi-year approach to the mandate, setting enduring objectives to 2020, underpinned by specific 2020 goals and annual deliverables for each financial year. This stability has supported NHS England, working with NHS Improvement and other health and care system partners, to transform services and deliver real improvements for patients, while also working to ensure the sustainability of the NHS for

future generations, as set out in its *Five Year Forward View* and *Next Steps on the NHS's Five Year Forward View*.

As the NHS approaches its 70th anniversary, this stability and focus is more important than ever. The NHS is facing unprecedented levels of demand and must meet the immediate challenges of reducing this demand and continuing to improve NHS productivity and efficiency, so that all who need access to vital NHS services can get access within agreed timeframes.

The mandate for 2018-19 is therefore a mandate of consolidation and renewal. It continues the multi-year approach already established, making only one change to the enduring objectives. This is to reflect the important role that NHS England will need to play in ensuring a smooth and orderly withdrawal from the European Union in the best interests of patients. It will include supporting the many EU nationals making an enormous contribution to our health and care services.

Mandate objectives in 2018/19 will therefore be:

- to improve local and national health outcomes, and reduce health inequalities, through better commissioning;
- to help create the safest, highest quality health and care service;
- to balance the NHS budget and improve efficiency and productivity;
- to lead a step change in the NHS in preventing ill health and supporting people to live healthier lives;
- to improve and maintain performance against core standards;
- to improve out-of-hospital care; and
- to support research, innovation and growth, and to support the Government's implementation of EU Exit in regards to health and care.

I have agreed with colleagues at Her Majesty's Treasury and the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government that it is not necessary to impose any requirements for the purpose of ensuring that it achieves its objectives in 2018/19. The Better Care Fund is now well-established, with two-year local plans now underway and progress being made to better join up care around the needs of people and communities. Now is therefore the time for Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Authorities, supported by Government and NHS England, to work together to continue implementation and reach joint solutions in the interests of their local populations. In addition, the Department of Health and Social Care is currently undertaking a triennial review of its Framework Agreement with NHS England, to ensure that it is up-to-date, including reflecting *Managing Public Money* principles.

This year, I expect NHS England to step up the joint work that it does with NHS Improvement to ensure that the NHS lives within its means. I have therefore also sought to ensure that, where they share responsibility for delivery, the mandate and the annual remit letter to NHS Improvement are more closely aligned than previously. Both the

mandate and the NHS Improvement remit letter are, for the first time, being published simultaneously on gov.uk today.

As required by the Act, I have consulted both NHS England and Healthwatch England in developing the mandate.

As in previous years, I have also re-laid the mandate for 2017-18, reflecting NHS England's increased budget for 2017-18.

Copies of the mandate for 2018-19, revised mandate for 2017-18, and NHS Improvement remit letter for 2018-19 are attached.

Attachments:

1. NHSE Mandate 2018-19 [NHSE_Mandate_2018-19.pdf]
2. NHSE Revised Mandate 2017-18 [NHSE_Mandate_2017-18.pdf]
3. NHSI remit letter [NHS Improvement Remit Letter 2018-19F.pdf]

■ **Outcome of the General Medical Services contract negotiations for 2018-19**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Steve Brine): [\[HCWS565\]](#)

I am today updating the House on the outcome of the General Medical Services (GMS) contract negotiations with the General Practitioners Committee of the British Medical Association and NHS Employers on behalf of NHS England.

The GMS contract for 18/19 comprises of a pay uplift together with a CPI uplift of 3% to expenses totalling £102.9m, as part of the overall investment of £256 million. The investment includes £60 million which has been allocated to cover increased indemnity costs incurred in the past financial year.

Other key parts of the contract include:

- An agreement that will pave the way to general practitioners no longer issuing paper prescriptions, instead using the NHS Electronic Prescription Service.
- The roll out of the NHS e-referral service into general practice. NHS England has allocated £10 million to facilitate GPs uptake of the electronic referral service.
- An agreement with the GPC to work with DHSC and NHSE to establish the extent and reasons behind locum use and cost.

We understand that NHS England will apply the provision to Personal Medical Services and Alternative Provider Medical Services where appropriate.

Full details of the agreement can be found at <http://www.nhsemployers.org/GMS201819>

HOME OFFICE**■ Fire Reform**

The Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service (Mr Nick Hurd):
[\[HCWS570\]](#)

Improving firefighter diversity is a key priority for the Government's ambitious fire reform programme. The most recent 2017 operational data, published on 26 October, showed that only 5.2% of firefighters in England are women and 3.9% are from an ethnic minority group. This is unacceptable and needs to be significantly improved so that firefighters are representative of the communities they serve.

While in 2017 we did see movement in a positive direction in terms of new joiners to the firefighter role: 8.7% were women and 5.1% from ethnic minorities, there is still further to go. This is why the Home Office will shortly be launching a national campaign with a focus of *'Join the Team; Become a Firefighter'* to raise awareness of the role of a modern firefighter and help improve diversity.

The campaign which is being supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Local Government Association (LGA) and Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) will: (i) target those from underrepresented groups that may not have previously been interested in the role; (ii) provide information on the breadth of role across prevention, protection; and response; and (iii) produce guidance and toolkits to help those interested in the role overcome any challenges they face during the recruitment rounds. The campaign will enhance and not duplicate the work already being undertaken by fire and rescue services in England to improve diversity.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Local Government Finance**

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Sajid Javid):
[\[HCWS569\]](#)

The current 50% business rates retention scheme for local government is yielding strong results. Local authorities estimate that in 2017-18 they will keep around £1.3 billion in business rates growth, which we expect will be at least maintained into 2018-19 and 2019-20. On top of the 50% business rates retention scheme which is in place for all local authorities, in 2017-18 the Government established pilots of 100% business rates retention in five areas of England and extended business rates retention to 67% in London. The pilot programme will be expanded further in 2018-19 to cover an additional ten areas.

My officials have worked through the necessary calculations to prepare for the extension of the piloting programme in 2018-19. In doing so, an historic error has been identified in the methodology used to calculate the sums due to pilots. An adjustment is therefore required to the methodology, which will reduce the amount due to these local authorities for participating in the pilot programme to the correct level. This adjustment does not

affect the Local Government Finance Settlement nor the Core Spending Power of the local authorities concerned. The relevant local authorities have been informed today.

Background

Under the business rates retention system, local authorities retain a percentage of the business rates they raise locally. Since 2014-15, locally-raised business rates have been lower than they would have been because Government has under-indexed the business rates multiplier in each of 2014-15, 2015-6 and 2018-19. To compensate local authorities for their loss of income, therefore, the Government has calculated the extent of the loss caused by under-indexation and paid that amount as a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

The compensation to be paid to local authorities is paid on account during the course of a year, based on estimates made by authorities before the start of that year. It is then adjusted once outturn figures are available, following the end of the year.

When on account compensation payments were calculated for the six 2017-18 pilot areas, the methodology used to adjust tariffs and top-ups contained an error. This resulted in 27 local authorities and the Greater London Authority being over-compensated by £36 million.

These local authorities will have been operating on the understanding that this funding has already been secured and, at this late stage in the year, a sudden reduction in their funding could potentially have an impact on the delivery of the objectives agreed as part of their devolution deals. Therefore, although the rules of *Managing Public Money* indicate that the Department should recover the overpayment, I have issued a Direction requesting that the Permanent Secretary does not do so in this extraordinary circumstance. My correspondence with the Permanent Secretary will be published on the Department's website.

In respect of the payments due to 2018-19 business rates retention pilot authorities, my department will use the corrected methodology to calculate the Section 31 grant compensation due to authorities. Local authorities will shortly be notified of these amounts.

Review

In recognition of the importance of the business rates retention system to the sustainability of local government, I am also today announcing an independent review of the internal processes and procedures that underpin the department's oversight of business rates and related systems. This should include modelling and analytical work, how officials manage the interface with policy decision-making, and resourcing and skills.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Update on Safeguarding in the Aid Sector**

Secretary of State for International Development (Penny Mordaunt):
[[HCWS568](#)]

Following the safeguarding issues exposed through the case of Oxfam in Haiti, I am updating the House on three key areas of work DFID has undertaken.

1. Statements of assurance from UK charities and follow up on cases

All UK charities that I wrote to on 12 February have replied and provided me with a clear statement of their assurance on their organisations' safeguarding environment and policies, organisational culture, transparency and their handling of allegations and incidents.

This exercise has delivered results in terms of increasing reporting of live and historic cases to the relevant authorities. As of 5 March, 26 charities funded by DFID had made Serious Incident Reports to the Charity Commission, concerning some 80 incidents. There has also been an increased level of reporting of safeguarding concerns into DFID's 'Reporting Concerns' hotline and inbox.

I cannot provide information on live investigations, but will keep the House informed on developments with partners and with regard to DFID's internal case review.

Writing to UK charities was the first stage in a broader process, which also includes requesting assurances from our top 30 suppliers, 43 multilateral organisations and other partners. Assurances received are a first step, but do not constitute a final conclusion by my Department on the quality of safeguarding. We will test this further through the measures I announced at the Safeguarding Summit held on 5 March and set out below.

A high-level summary of the returns from UK charities and a list of organisations we have written to will be published on gov.uk today. It can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-level-summary-safeguarding-assurance-returns-from-uk-charities>.

2. Safeguarding Summit follow up

On 5 March, DFID co-hosted a Safeguarding Summit with the Charity Commission where I challenged UK charities to drive up standards and ensure that the aid sector protects the people it serves. As a result a number of actions were agreed. These include immediate short-term measures and longer term initiatives.

Four working groups, including civil society and independent experts, have been established and are meeting this week to refine and test ideas further. They will report back on concrete actions in time for the international Safeguarding Conference that the UK will host this autumn. The working groups are taking forward the following areas:

- Accountability to beneficiaries and survivors - prioritising those who have suffered and survived exploitation, abuse and violence, and designing systems of accountability and transparency that have beneficiaries at their centre;

- How the aid sector can demonstrate a step change in shifting organisational culture to tackle power imbalances and gender inequality;
- Ensuring that safeguards are integrated throughout the employment cycle, including work on the proposal for a global register / passport; and
- Ensuring full accountability through rigorous reporting and complaints mechanisms, and make sure that concerns are heard and acted upon.

At the Summit, I announced new, enhanced and specific safeguarding due diligence standards for all organisations that work with DFID. A pilot of these new standards starts this week and they will be rolled out shortly. No new funds will be approved to organisations unless they pass these new standards, which will be integrated into DFID's due diligence Assessments, Supply Partner Code of Conduct and ongoing programme management and compliance checking processes.

Major UK charities, the Charity Commission and DFID agreed on initiatives to be taken forward to improve safeguarding standards - including immediate short term measures, and longer term initiatives to be developed in the coming weeks and months. These include:

- Exploring options for an international safeguarding centre to support organisations to implement best practice on safeguarding and maximise transparency in the sector. This work could include conducting safeguarding reviews, offering guidance and support to organisations, and a deployable team of experts on sexual exploitation and abuse who can advise organisations on the ground.
- Carrying out an urgent review of referencing in the sector. At the Summit, it was agreed that vetting and referencing standards are required for: UK-based staff; international staff and locally-employed staff – to ensure no offender can fall through the cracks.
- Planning for a systematic audit of whistleblowing practices across the sector to ensure individuals feel able to report offences, and developing and implementing mandatory standards which would make organisations accountable to beneficiaries – ensuring those receiving aid are able to identify and raise concerns.
- Making annual reports more transparent, with specific information published on safeguarding including the number of cases. Also carrying out mandatory inductions on safeguarding for all staff to ensure any issues are identified and acted upon.
- Establishing clear guidelines for referring incidents, allegations and offenders to relevant authorities - including the National Crime Agency.

Those in attendance at the Summit agreed a Joint Statement which has been published on the Bond and gov.uk websites.

DFID is now building on the 5 March Summit outcomes and working with a wide range of stakeholders, including other nations, to shape and deliver an ambitious agenda for the Safeguarding Conference to be held later this year.

3. Driving up standards in the UN and multilateral organisations

I have written jointly with the Foreign Secretary and with the support of other donor countries to the UN Secretary-General.

Last week, I was in New York to speak at the Commission of the Status of Women to highlight that we will only prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, if we deliver our commitments on gender equality.

I hosted a roundtable and held meetings with senior UN partners, calling for a step change across all constituent parts of the UN to ensure they put beneficiaries first, shift their organisational culture, integrate safeguards throughout the employment cycle and ensure that there are robust systems for reporting, complaints and whistleblowing. I challenged the UN to set out concrete actions to take this forward.

I will take this message to other multilateral organisations at the Spring Meetings next month.

A donor group has been established to capitalise on our collective leverage to deliver changes across the international aid sector at the Safeguarding Conference.

I am determined that the UK will continue to lead this agenda to drive up safeguarding standards across the sector and keep people safe from harm.

JUSTICE

■ Justice update

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Mr David Gauke):
[\[HCWS566\]](#)

The Government is today introducing into the House of Lords legislation through the Civil Liability Bill to make important changes to our system of compensation for personal injury.

As announced in the Queen's Speech on 21 June 2017, the Civil Liability Bill will reform the law relating to whiplash claims. We will introduce a new fixed tariff of compensation for pain, suffering and loss of amenity for whiplash claims with an injury duration of up to two years. The tariff will be set in supporting regulations. We will also introduce a ban on seeking or offering to settle whiplash claims without medical evidence.

The Civil Liability Bill will also make changes to the way in which the personal injury discount rate for England and Wales is set under the Damages Act 1996. The principal changes we are making are that: the discount rate will be set by reference to expected rates of return on a low risk diversified portfolio of investments rather than a return on very low risk investments as under the present law; in setting the rate, the Lord Chancellor will consult an independent expert panel chaired by the Government Actuary, with HM Treasury remaining a statutory consultee; and the discount rate will be reviewed promptly after the legislation comes into force and, thereafter, at least every three years.

I am also publishing today the Government's response to the Justice Committee's report, *Pre-legislative scrutiny: draft personal injury discount rate clause*, published on 30 November 2017.

I am also placing the Delegated Powers memorandum and accompanying impact assessments in the House libraries.

I notified the market of the Civil Liability Bill earlier today through the London Stock Exchange group.

TRANSPORT

■ Rail Update

Secretary of State for Transport (Chris Grayling):

[[HCWS562](#)]

I have today launched an invitation for investors who want to invest in rail infrastructure to bring forward proposals for the new southern rail link to Heathrow. In addition they are being invited to propose schemes around the country that could enhance and expand the rail network. Promoters and investors now have two months to start working up proposals which are financially credible without Government support.

This Government is already making the biggest investment in the railway since the Victorian era, delivering better journeys for passengers across the network. However, I want to go further by unlocking new private sector funding to invest in railway infrastructure across the country. This will be in addition to the Government's significant commitment to invest £48 billion in railway infrastructure in the next funding period.

Governments do not have a monopoly on good ideas for the railways. I have been clear that I want the knowledge and expertise of investors and local partners to contribute to delivering new connections, more services and better journeys for passengers.

This approach has already proved effective on a number of roads schemes in the UK. By encouraging innovative ideas and new investment on our railways, we can relieve the burden on taxpayers and fare payers with schemes that match our transport needs, support our economic and housing aspirations and ensure everyone benefits from an enhanced rail network.

Heathrow is a perfect example of how this approach can make a real difference. The Department is continuing to work on a western rail link to Heathrow. The proposed southern rail link to Heathrow is an exciting opportunity to harness new and innovative ideas from the private sector and there are already a number of consortia looking to construct it. I am certain that there are other opportunities nationwide for third parties to work with government improve the railway.

I have published my Guidance for Market-led Proposals to provide clarity on what Government is looking for from these ideas and the process by which it will consider them. I have also published the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

When I published my High level output specification and Statement of funds available for the railway in England and Wales for the next investment period, I made clear that the Government was developing a new process for rail enhancements - the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline provides this. This is designed to ensure that future rail projects are planned and scrutinised to deliver maximum value and benefit to rail users and taxpayers.

Taken together this provides a clear framework for how we will improve the way we enhance our railway.

The changes I have outlined today lay the foundations for improving rail access to Heathrow. They also set in motion ambitious proposals on new rail schemes that could deliver significant improvements for passengers across the network and to maintain the record levels of investment this government is delivering in our railways.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Access To Work Scheme

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Esther McVey): [\[HCWS563\]](#)

In March 2015, as part of a package of improvements to Access to Work, the former Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work and the right honourable member for Forest of Dean announced the introduction of an annual limit on the amount of an Access to Work grant of 1.5 times average salaries in order to encourage better use of public funds and to enable Access to Work to support more people – particularly traditionally under-represented groups. The cap has been in place since October 2015 but a period of transitional protection was granted to enable those who were spending above the level of the cap on introduction time to adjust to the new limits.

During this transitional period for people to adjust to the need to source their support within a limit, we have seen considerable progress. The average spend amongst the remaining transitionally-protected customers has fallen from around £57,000 each to around £45,000 each. This suggests that it is achieving the intended incentive effects on individuals and employers to make best use of funding as well as freeing over £2m per year, to support growing numbers of people benefitting from the scheme, alongside the extra resources provided in the Spending Review. I am therefore persuaded that the principle of the cap is sound, balancing the need to provide support to the largest number of people, and at a significant level for some, with the need to make the best use of public funds.

At the same time, the Government have always said that we would also use this time to monitor the impact of the cap on individuals and work with customers and other stakeholders to see if any further practical mitigations could be applied to those whose needs still remain above the cap. This includes emphasising the duties that employers have to play their part and make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. At the same time it was agreed that we would lead a review of communication support for Deaf people, which we published last year.

I am therefore pleased to announce that as a result of this engagement – particularly with the UK Council on Deafness (because the majority of capped customers are Deaf), but also with others groups and individuals that as of April 2018, the cap will not rise to £43,100 in line with 1.5 times average earnings. Instead it will rise to £57,200, double average earnings, and will be updated annually on that basis. This means that considerably fewer British Sign Language users now remain affected by the cap. I believe it is important to retain this link to average earnings so that high-value awards, which are overwhelmingly used to purchase human support, retain their purchasing power over time.

Alongside this change, existing capped customers will, where applicable, have their needs considered against this new limit when their awards are due for their annual review.

As we continually seek to improve Access to Work, which last year approved provision for 8% more people than in 2015/16 – including 13% more people who were Deaf or had hearing loss - we will introduce the following measures:

- extra support to customers with high-value awards via automatic workplace assessments promoting available technology and reasonable adjustments and voluntary cost-share from employers as well as signposting to advice and guidance provided by third parties;
- working with stakeholders to co-produce guidance and share best practice as well as continued monitoring of the impacts on the cap;
- discretion in exceptional cases of multiple disability, to consider award limits averaged over a longer period – for example where a customer's on-going need for a support worker may be below the cap but when coupled with a periodic need for say a wheelchair, would exceed the cap in that year;
- introduction of managed personal budgets to enable greater choice and control for customers in the way grants are spent;
- taking applications 12 weeks ahead of a job start date rather than the current six weeks to allow more time for support to be agreed and put in place;
- continuing to invest in our digital improvements such as developing the facility to submit invoices online;
- allowing more flexibility in how people can use Access to Work to support short periods of work experience where there is a likelihood of a paid job in the near future; and
- encouraging uptake of technological solutions that can both reduce costs and promote independence, we will allow risk free trials of technological solutions so that customers can revert to their old award if they wish, and also introduce a "Tech Fund" that will mean the mandatory cost-sharing contributions from employers for such items are waived where their use will save the taxpayer money.