



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 15 January 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 15 January 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Criminal Investigation: Evidence

**Mr Gareth Bacon:** [\[1094\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, if he will provide additional staff training resources for criminal cases involving large volumes of electronic evidence.

**Mr Geoffrey Cox:**

The government is committed to investing in tools and training that can help to mitigate the challenges posed by large volumes of electronic evidence. The CPS provides extensive disclosure training for all prosecutors to ensure they are properly equipped to handle these challenges. The College of Policing figures, published last August, show that over 100,000 police officers and staff across England and Wales have completed all modules of disclosure training, and further advanced training packages are being developed by the CPS.

#### ■ Criminal Proceedings: Evidence

**Mr Gareth Bacon:** [\[1453\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment he has made of how (a) material evidence brought forward by the prosecution and (b) unused material that fails to be disclosed to the defence is processed by the (i) police and (ii) Crown Prosecution Service.

**Mr Geoffrey Cox:**

There has been unprecedented joint commitment and focus from the police and the CPS to finding solutions to the problem of getting the provision of material evidence and disclosure right. Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Inspectorate (HMCPPI) recently published a report on disclosure in the Crown Court, which shows that CPS and the police have made improvements in almost all areas. However, as the report notes, these improvements are from a low baseline and it is therefore crucial that lasting improvements continue to be made. I am working to update my Guidelines on Disclosure in order to provide clear guidance to all practitioners, and embed the recommendations I made in my 2018 Review.

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Business: Electricity

**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[1933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support is available to commercial businesses not currently on the electricity grid to gain access to it.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Electricity network companies provide information and advice to support those seeking a connection to their networks including guidance documents, connection surgeries and online connection applications. When connecting to the electricity distribution network, customers (including commercial businesses), are required to pay the costs of connecting to the existing network. However, any further network reinforcement costs to accommodate the connection are shared with all network users in the area. Further information is available at

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/guide-electricity-distribution-connections-policy>.

**■ Heating: Finance****Grahame Morris:****[1412]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if she will allocate new capital grant funding for the installation of heat pumps after March 2021.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The budget for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) has been set out to the end of March 2021. Decisions on the future funding for the RHI and any other low-carbon heat support schemes will be a matter for future fiscal events.

**■ Iron and Steel: Energy****Jessica Morden:****[1891]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether it remains her policy to deliver the lowest energy costs in Europe to reduce the disparity between the UK and EU in industrial electricity cost for the steel sector.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government is reducing the cumulative impact of energy and climate change policies on industrial electricity prices for energy intensive industries, including the steel sector. This includes over £300m of compensation to the steel sector since 2013.

We are committed to minimising energy costs for businesses to ensure our economy remains strong and competitive, such as through the £315m Industrial Energy Transformation Fund and our provision of electricity cost compensation and exemption.

**■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme****Nick Smith:****[1709]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 5 November 2019 to Question 8232, when the proposals for the long-term protection of Mineworkers' Pension Scheme bonuses will be implemented in full.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Officials are working with the Trustees on implementing the proposals. This requires changes to the Scheme Rules which are being drafted by the Trustees' lawyers. Further updates will be provided in due course.

**Research Fund for Coal and Steel****Jessica Morden:**[\[1894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to ensure that the UK steel industry will continue to benefit from the Research Fund for Coal and Steel after the UK has left the EU.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government recognises the importance of R&D to help transform the steel sector so it can play a vital role within our modern Industrial Strategy. Increasing investment in R&D was one of the key recommendations in our 2017 Future capacities and capabilities of the UK steel industry study (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-steel-industry-future-market-opportunities>), which sets out how the industry can increase its profitability and sustainability.

On ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement with the EU, we will continue to participate in RFCS during the implementation period. We want to make sure that if we are signing up to future EU Programmes, they align with UK priorities and provide value for money. Where it is in the UK's interests, we will seek to participate in some specific EU Programmes. The exact terms of any participation would be subject to negotiation between the UK and the EU.

**CABINET OFFICE****Census****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[1394\]](#)

To ask Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the ONS provided his Department with the draft Census Order.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Cabinet Office has provided the Minister for the Constitution with a draft Census Order in advance of it being laid.

**Members: Correspondence****Mary Glendon:**[\[1895\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Chief Executive of the Government Property Agency plans to respond to the letter from the PCS Union dated 27 September 2019 from the PCS Union and the follow-up email from PCS dated 21 October 2019.

**Jeremy Quin:**

A response to the PCS correspondence is being considered, and a reply will be issued shortly.

**DEFENCE****■ Type 45 Destroyers**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[1298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Propulsion Improvement Programme for the Type 45 is planned to conclude.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[1299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Power Improvement Project for the Type 45 will be concluded.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[1300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Power Improvement Project is planned to commence with HMS Dauntless.

**James Heappey:**

HMS DAUNTLESS will be the first of the Type 45 Destroyers to receive the Power Improvement Project upgrades. Work will commence this spring and the ship will return to sea for trials in 2021. The timetable for the Power Improvement Project is dependent on the availability of ships to undertake the conversion, balanced against the Royal Navy's standing and future operational commitments. It is planned that all six ships will have completed their upgrades by the mid-2020s.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Broadband: Broadland**

**Jerome Mayhew:** [\[1040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to allocate funding from the £5 billion fund to support the rollout of full-fibre, 5G and other gigabit-capable networks to Broadland constituency.

**Matt Warman:**

The ambition to invest £5bn for the rollout of full fibre and gigabit capable networks in the hardest to reach areas of the UK was announced in September 2019. This was reiterated in the Conservative Party Manifesto. In anticipation of the funding being announced in the March budget, mobilisation of the delivery programme is underway.

An application for State Aid approval has been submitted in parallel to both the European Commission and the UK Competition and Markets Authority. Modelling of the Intervention Area ("the final 20% of premises / F20") is underway. The

procurement approach is being designed in conjunction with Government Commercial Organisation and Crown Commercial Services

The delivery team is ramping up resources, processes and systems in preparation Supplier and Local Authority engagement and workshops are underway Plans are not yet at a sufficiently mature or at a sufficiently detailed stage to answer funding plans and dates at a constituency level, however we will provide more granular detail over the coming months. In the meantime our existing fibre delivery programmes continue to deliver further coverage. These include the Superfast, Local Full Fibre Networks, Rural Gigabit Connectivity Programmes as well as our Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme.

## ■ Culture: Urban Areas

**Tracy Brabin:**

[\[1779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a Town of Culture designation.

**Helen Whately:**

Arts, culture and heritage plays a crucial role in making towns attractive places to live, work and visit. This is why DCMS is working closely with MHCLG to support the delivery of the Towns Fund.

In particular, we are supporting the delivery of the £95million High Streets Heritage Action Zone programme with Historic England. The programme will not only revive and regenerate historic high streets and town centres but will support a cultural programme to engage people in the life, culture and history of their places. Historic England will be working in close partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England and the Architectural Heritage Fund.

In addition, the £250m Cultural Investment Fund announced in October will benefit many towns through culture-led regeneration.

DCMS will continue to explore other opportunities to support towns, and is engaging with towns in order to better understand their needs.

## ■ Loneliness: Christmas

**Scott Benton:**

[\[460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking with local authorities to promote schemes which tackle loneliness and social isolation at Christmas time.

**Helen Whately:**

Government's strategy on tackling loneliness stresses the important contribution of all parts of society, including local authorities, throughout the year not just at Christmas.

Government's work with local authorities includes: working with three local authorities to pilot ways of making information about local activities and services addressing



loneliness more easily available; and working with the Local Government Association and National Association of Local Councils to publish a comprehensive guide outlining how councils can create the right structures and conditions locally to tackle loneliness.

In addition, the Let's Talk Loneliness communications campaign promotes many schemes across the country that bring people together. The campaign website hosts a toolkit of resources and case studies; these have been shared with a network of over 300 organisations and have been widely used.

The government has also established the £11.5m Building Connections Fund; 126 grants were made to successful applicants in December 2018. Projects are now underway, bringing people together across the country. On 15 October 2019 the Minister for Civil Society, Baroness Barran, announced a new £2 million fund to help organisations at the frontline of tackling loneliness across the country.

#### ■ **Tourism: Taxation**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[1085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of a tourist tax.

**Helen Whately:**

The Secretary of State has had no discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on a tourist tax.

## EDUCATION

#### ■ **Children: Day Care**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[1911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the average per-hour cost of childcare (a) in a nursery and (b) with a child minder in (i) York Central constituency, (ii) City of York local authority area and (iii) England in each year since 2015.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government published data on the cost of delivering childcare in England for 2015 and 2018.

The average hourly costs of delivery are attached, with the respective publications from which the data is sourced.

The values in the attached table come from different sources, which used different methodologies and samples, and so their comparability is limited.

The Government does not hold data relating specifically to the York Central constituency or the City of York local authority area, nor does it hold this data relating to 2016 and 2017.

**Attachments:**

1. 1911\_table\_showing\_hourly\_costs\_of\_delivery [1911\_table.doc]

■ **Erasmus+ Programme**

**Layla Moran:** [\[1918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it his policy to negotiate continued membership of the Erasmus programme as part of the future relationship between the UK and the EU.

**Chris Skidmore:**

Under the Withdrawal Agreement Erasmus participation is protected for the transition period. Students, young people and learners will be able to participate fully and for the duration of their exchange in the remainder of the current programme and organisations can continue to bid for Erasmus+ funding to the end of 2020. Organisations should continue to apply for funding as usual.

As stated in the Political Declaration, the UK is open to participate in certain EU programmes, such as the next Erasmus+ programme (2021-27), if it is in our interest to do so.

The UK government is preparing for every eventuality and are considering a wide range of options with regards to the future of international exchange and collaboration in education and training, including potential domestic alternatives.

As my right Hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, has made clear, the government wants to work to continue to build academic cooperation between the UK and the EU. As we enter negotiations on our future relationship with the EU, we want to ensure that UK and European students can continue to benefit from each other's world-leading education systems.

**Layla Moran:** [\[1919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what representations he has received from (a) universities, (b) colleges and (c) students' unions on the UK's participation in Erasmus after the UK leaves the EU.

**Chris Skidmore:**

The government highly values international exchange and cooperation in education and training and recognises the benefits that such cooperation brings. As we prepare to leave the EU, the department has engaged widely with stakeholder groups across the UK, which we will continue to do. In particular, we have received representations from sector bodies such as Universities UK, the Association of Colleges, the Russell Group, MillionPlus and the National Union of Students.

As my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, has made clear, the government wants to work to continue to build academic cooperation between the UK and the EU. As we

enter negotiations on our future relationship with the EU, we want to ensure that UK students and European students can continue to benefit from each other's world-leading education systems. The UK government is preparing for every eventuality and are considering a wide range of options with regards to the future of international exchange and collaboration in education and training, including potential domestic alternatives. We remain open to participation in Erasmus and this will be part of future negotiations with the EU.

#### ■ Nurseries: York Central

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[1912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many nursery places were available in York Central constituency in each year since 2010.

**Nick Gibb:**

This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to the hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

#### ■ Schools: Inspections

**Layla Moran:** [\[1922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his proposals to remove the exemption for outstanding schools from regular Ofsted inspections requires primary legislation.

**Nick Gibb:**

On 10 January, the Department launched a consultation on removing the exemption from routine inspection that applies to schools judged outstanding by Ofsted. Subject to the outcome of this consultation, the Department will seek Parliamentary approval to lift the exemption. This will require secondary legislation, which needs to be approved by Parliament through the affirmative process. Regulations are required to revoke the Education (Exemption from School Inspection) (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1293) and changes will also need to be made to the Education (School Inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 (SI 2005/2038).

#### ■ Young People: Mental Health

**Conor McGinn:** [\[1909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to (a) reduce the level of social stigma in relation to mental health and (b) promote awareness of mental health issues among young people.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is making teaching about mental health part of compulsory health education in all state-funded schools in England from September 2020. The statutory guidance sets out that pupils will be taught about the importance of good physical and mental health including the steps pupils can take to protect and support their own

health and mental wellbeing. The content will also cover understanding emotions; identifying where someone is experiencing signs of poor mental health; simple self-care; and how and when to seek support. The statutory guidance can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>.

The Department is also working with the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families to pilot setting up peer support approaches in schools and colleges that allow young people to play an active part of creating a mentally healthy and supportive environment. The findings from the programme's external evaluation will be shared nationally, to help more schools to develop or improve their own mental health peer support programmes.

To support school staff, the Department has set up Expert Advisory Group on teacher and leader wellbeing which has a remit to advise the Department on what it can do to help schools and colleges promote good wellbeing, including tackling stigma around mental health.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Hunting

**Mike Amesbury:** [\[1051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to tackle illegal fox hunting.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Hunting Act 2004 bans the hunting of wild mammals with dogs in England and Wales, except where it is carried out in accordance with the exemptions set out in Schedule 1 to the Act.

### ■ Pet Travel Scheme

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[1033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress the Government has made on its application to the EU Commission to become a Part 1 listed third country under Annex II of the EU Pet Travel Regulations.

**George Eustice:**

The Department has submitted its application to allow the UK to become a Part 1 listed third country under Annex II of the EU Pet Travel Regulations and is currently seeking technical discussions with the European Commission. It is now for the Commission to consider our application for listed status, following our exit from the EU.

**■ Solid Fuels**

**Philip Davies:** [\[952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to publish the outcome of the consultation on Cleaner domestic burning of solid fuels and wood that closed on 12 October 2018; and if she will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Following the required pause for the 2019 General Election, we are working at pace to publish our response to the consultation on the cleaner burning of solid fuels and wood as soon as possible.

**■ Wildlife: Australia**

**Tracey Crouch:** [\[977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has had discussions with her Australian counterpart on the support to help rebuild devastated wildlife populations in Australia.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, and Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, as Minister of State for the Commonwealth, have been in contact with their Australian counterparts to offer the UK's condolences and assistance following the recent devastating wildfires. The UK High Commission and Consulates General are also liaising closely with Australian authorities at federal and state level to offer support. As a close friend and partner in international efforts to protect biodiversity, the UK Government stands ready to support the Australian Government in its response to the effects on wildlife populations, should such assistance be needed.

**EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION****■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

**Geraint Davies:** [\[900015\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of the length of the transition period on the outcome of negotiations with the EU on the future relationship between the UK and the EU.

**James Duddridge:**

As set out in the Political Declaration, both the UK and EU have committed to reaching an agreement on our future relationship by the end of 2020. This is in everyone's interests.

As set out in the Withdrawal Agreement Bill, we will not be extending the Implementation Period beyond 2020.

**■ Conditions of Employment: EU Law**

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether the Court of Justice of the European Union judgment *Dekker v BJV-Centrum* of 8 Nov 1990 falls within the scope of retained EU case law in Article 26(1) of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill.

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether the Court of Justice of the European Union judgment of 27 October 1993 *Enderby v Frenchay Health Authority* and Secretary of State for Health falls within the scope of retained EU case law in Article 26(1) of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill.

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether the Court of Justice of the European Union judgement *Webb v EMO Air Cargo* of 14 July 1994 falls within the scope of retained EU case law in Article 26(1) of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill.

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether the Court of Justice of the European Union judgment *Robinson-Steele v RD Retail Services Ltd and others* of 16 March 2006 falls within the scope of retained EU case law in Article 26(1) of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill.

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether the Court of Justice of the European Union judgment, *Williams and Others v British Airways plc* of 15 September 2011, falls within the definition of retained EU case law in Article 26(1) of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill.

**James Duddridge:**

Our manifesto, clearly set out the ambition to make the UK the best place in the world to work. As announced in the Queens' Speech, we will be bringing forward separate legislation to enhance rights to make the UK the best place in the world to work.

At the end of the Implementation Period, nearly all European Union law in effect in the UK will be saved and incorporated into a new category of domestic law called 'Retained EU Law'. This includes judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) made before the end of the Implementation Period.

Therefore, each of the cases named in the Parliamentary Questions will be categorised as Retained EU Law.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Admissions**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[1310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients visited A&E departments in (a) Queen's Hospital Romford, (b) London and (c) England in each year since 2010.

**Edward Argar:**

The information is not available in the format requested.

**■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Standards**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[1308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many ambulances have waited more than 30 minutes outside A&E at (a) Queen's Hospital Romford, (b) hospitals in London and (c) hospitals in England in each of the last four (i) quarters and (ii) years.

**Edward Argar:**

The information is not available in the format requested.

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[1311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time in A&E was at (a) Queen's Hospital Romford, (b) hospitals in London and (c) hospitals in England in each of the last four (i) quarters and (ii) years.

**Edward Argar:**

The information is not available in the format requested.

**■ Asthma: Prescriptions**

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [\[1363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to add asthma to the list of long-term medical conditions that are exempt from prescription charges; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department has no plans to change the list of medical exemptions from prescription charges. Extensive arrangements are already in place to help people access National Health Service prescriptions. These include a broad range of NHS prescription charge exemptions for which someone with asthma may qualify.

To support those with an ongoing medical condition who do not qualify for an exemption, the cost of the prescription pre-payment certificates has been frozen for another year. A holder of a 12-month certificate can get all the prescriptions they need for just £2 per week.

## ■ Bereavement Counselling

**Alex Sobel:** [\[1791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to expand (a) practical and (b) emotional support beyond designated suicide bereavement care for people affected by bereavement.

**Alex Sobel:** [\[1792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking with NHS England to (a) reduce variation in bereavement support and (b) improve the adequacy of provision of that support throughout England.

**Alex Sobel:** [\[1923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to (a) reduce the stigma associated with bereavement and (b) encourage the discussion of grief; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We are working with the National Health Service to improve the quality and provision of bereavement counselling available across the country and reduce variation.

In 2017 the National Bereavement Alliance in partnership with Ambitions Partnership produced 'A Guide to Commissioning Bereavement Services in England' to highlight the importance of practical and emotional support and to support commissioners in the provision of effective practical and emotional bereavement support.

In 2018, '[Learning from deaths: Guidance for NHS trusts on working with bereaved families and carers](#)', was published, providing advice to service providers regarding expected practice on how to engage, and work effectively with the bereaved following a death.

A children and young people's palliative and end of life care service specification was developed in 2018 by NHS England and NHS Improvement in collaboration with a range of stakeholders, to support improvements to services, care and experience. Work is underway to develop a national service specification for all aspects of end of life care covering community, hospital, hospice and tertiary care and which highlights the need for good bereavement and pre-bereavement care, including for children and young people.

[Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care: A national framework for local action 2015-2020](#), published by the National Palliative and End of Life Care Partnership, presents a framework for local action based on collective experience and analysis of the many reviews and reports in this area. The framework looks at how variation in palliative and end of life care can be tackled and makes clear that good end of life care encompasses support to help bereaved people manage the impact of a loved one's death, including their loss and grief.

Advice to people on coping with bereavement, grief and loss recommends that people should not think they are alone and try talking about their feelings to a friend,



family member, health professional or counsellor. This is available on the NHS website at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-bereavement/>

**Alex Sobel:**

**[1794]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to expand the National Bereavement Care Pathway for pregnancy and baby loss to other forms of bereavement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Thirty two healthcare settings, predominantly hospitals in England have piloted the National Bereavement Care Pathway over the past two years and have seen real changes for parents and professionals in their trusts. Following the outcome of independent evaluations, the Pathway is now being rolled out across the country and there are 43 pilot sites now live at National Health Service trusts.

#### ■ **Bereavement Counselling: Standards**

**Alex Sobel:**

**[1796]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the compliance of bereavement support service delivery with NICE quality standards.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We have made no such assessment. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence quality standards represent best practice and clinicians and healthcare professionals are expected to take them into account.

#### ■ **Fish: Contamination**

**Sir Greg Knight:**

**[1293]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what rules or guidance his Department provides on preventing noxious substances being contained in fish food pellets where those fish may later be used for human consumption; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

Stringent rules apply to ensure food and feed safety in the United Kingdom. UK feed law implements European Union legislation to ensure feed is safe for animals, the environment and the public who consume animals and their by-products. Fish are regarded as food producing animals.

There are specific rules prohibiting certain materials from being used in animal feed and maximum levels for certain undesirable substances. Additionally, additives used in feed need to be authorised and used within maximum levels where specified.

There are also rules on the hygiene, production and storage of animal feed. These are based on the best available scientific evidence and analysis.

The Government remains committed to ensuring that the high standards of food and feed safety and consumer protection we enjoy in this country are maintained.

## ■ Gum Diseases

**Jim Shannon:** [1004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed chronic periodontitis in the last five years.

**Jo Churchill:**

The information is not held in the format requested.

## ■ Heart Diseases: Sleep

**Jim Shannon:** [1001]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what advice his Department provides on the potential benefits of sleep in reducing the risk of a heart attack.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that there is evidence that a lack of sleep is associated with an increased risk of heart attacks as well as other cardiovascular disorders, particularly in patients with sleep apnoea. However, excessive sleeping should also be avoided, so it is important that the right amount of sleep is achieved.

The National Health Service website has published advice for the public on the importance of having a sufficient amount of sleep for good health, noting that a continued lack of sleep can affect overall health and make you susceptible to a range of serious medical conditions, including heart disease. Further details on healthy sleep advice for the public are available at the following link on the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/why-lack-of-sleep-is-bad-for-your-health/>

## ■ Infected Blood Inquiry

**David Duguid:** [1781]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent progress has been made in the inquiry into the contaminated blood scandal; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Infected Blood Inquiry chaired by Sir Brian Langstaff (a retired High Court Judge) and sponsored by Cabinet Office has been sitting since September 2018. So far, the inquiry has heard written and oral evidence from hundreds of those 'infected and affected'.

The next session of the Inquiry will begin in February 2020, when it will hear from its own expert panel on the 'psycho-social impact' of infection and what followed for individuals. Evidence from 'institutional' witnesses such as from Government and the National Health Service is expected to be sought later this year.

## ■ Influenza: Vaccination

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[1000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he taking to increase the rate of take up of the flu vaccination in winter 2019-20.

**Jo Churchill:**

Public Health England launched the annual flu campaign in October 2019 to encourage uptake of flu vaccination amongst key groups. The campaign targeted pregnant women, people with underlying health conditions, and parents of two and three-year olds. The campaign, which ran until 15 December 2019, featured advertising on television, video on demand, pharmacy screens, digital display, social media, radio, and paid search, in addition to public relations and extensive partnership activity. In the run up to Christmas, NHS England and NHS Improvement extended the campaign with national press advertising.

Local areas have also delivered a range of activities to encourage those in at risk groups to have the vaccine. To increase patient choice, adults who are eligible can also get the vaccine through their local community pharmacy. As part of its assurance process, NHS England and NHS Improvement have been working through its regional teams and clinical commissioning groups to ensure that general practices with the lowest uptake rates are contacted and action is taken to increase uptake.

## ■ Malnutrition: Older People

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[1006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle malnutrition among elderly people.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government is committed to better screening and prevention of malnutrition. The Malnutrition Task Force have published a series of guides offering expert advice on the prevention of and early intervention for malnutrition in later life. These guides draw together principles of good practice to offer a framework developed to help those in a wide range of health and care settings make the changes needed to counter malnutrition.

Hospitals and care homes must screen people for malnutrition on admission and meet high standards of nutrition care. We have announced a root and branch review of hospital food to ensure that patients receive the right nutrition and hydration.

## ■ Meat Products: Nitrates

**Mr David Davis:**

[\[1680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps are being taken to reduce the levels of nitrates in meat products.

**Jo Churchill:**

Nitrates and nitrites are used as preservatives and are important for inhibiting microbial growth, in particular *Clostridium Botulinum* in processed meat such as bacon and hams. They work against microorganisms that can spoil food, as well as those that cause foodborne disease, and are naturally present in certain vegetables such as swiss chard, celery and spinach.

Based on scientific evaluation, legislation specifies the maximum amount of nitrates and nitrites that can be added to various meat products to ensure that only safe levels of nitrates are used. The Food Standards Agency works closely with the meat industry to ensure that nitrates and nitrites are used at the lowest possible levels to achieve this necessary technological function, without jeopardising product safety.

■ **Meningitis: Females****Jim Shannon:****[1007]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women were diagnosed with meningitis in the last five years.

**Jo Churchill:**

Public Health England (PHE) collects data on laboratory confirmed cases of invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) in England which is caused by the *Neisseria meningitidis* bacteria and is a major cause of bacterial meningitis and septicaemia. The number of laboratory confirmed cases of IMD in England in the last five years is available in the following table. The overall risk of invasive meningococcal disease is similar in men and women. PHE does not publish this data breakdown by gender.

Number of laboratory confirmed cases of IMD in England by epidemiological year

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Cases of IMD	724	811	747	754	525

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/meningococcal-acwy-immunisation-programme-vaccine-coverage-estimates#history>

■ **Mental Health Services: Children****Conor McGinn:****[1908]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding has been allocated from the public purse to children's mental health services in (a) St Helens and (b) nationally in each of the last 10 years.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

This information is not held centrally.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Hospital Wards

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[1370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timeframe is for the ending of mixed sex wards in mental health facilities.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Men and women should not share hospital accommodation and we have cut mixed sex accommodation breaches by over 85% since 2010.

The Independent Review of the Mental Health Act recommended that the physical environment of inpatient mental health wards needs to be improved and that the definition of single sex accommodation should be tightened up to ensure a genuinely single sex environment with separate access to any shared daytime space. The NHS Long Term Plan also recognised that capital investment is needed to upgrade the physical environment for inpatient psychiatric care but that this would be subject to the next capital review.

We will publish a White Paper in early 2020 that will set out the Government's response to the Review's recommendations and we will bring forward a Mental Health Bill to amend the Act when parliamentary time allows.

## ■ Mental Health Services: St Helens North

**Conor McGinn:**

[\[1907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking as part of the NHS Long Term Plan to improve children's mental health services in St Helens North constituency; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to at least an additional 345,000 children and young people aged 0-25 being able to access support via National Health Service-funded mental health services and school or college-based mental health support teams by 2023/24.

St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has advised that it is taking a borough-wide approach for children and young people's mental health. As part of this, the CCG will fund a number of projects including:

- commissioning Kooth - an online provider that supplies advice, guidance, general support and online counselling for children and young people aged 11-25 years. This will go live in March 2020;
- extending the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies programme into additional schools in the borough; and
- a one-year pilot to enhance the crisis response service provision for children and young people with autism and/or learning disabilities.

In addition, the CCG has agreed to take part in the national Link programme, which brings together professionals from education and health in workshops to create

closer working to help address the mental health needs of children and young people in the borough.

### ■ Obesity: Older People

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[1013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people over the age of 65 who have (a) obesity and (b) have sought help for obesity.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS Digital has provided the data in the following table:

ADULTS: NUMBER ESTIMATES FOR BODY MASS INDEX (BMI) OBESE CATEGORY, AGED 65-74 AND 75+ (THOUSANDS)

Age	Obese	Confidence interval
65-74 years	1,857	+/-161
75+ years	1,073	+/-135

Source: Health Survey for England, NHS Digital

Information is not held centrally on the number of people who have sought help for obesity.

Notes:

- Number estimates based on Office for National Statistics mid-year estimates for the relevant year, adjusted to exclude people living in institutions. Figures are presented to the nearest 1,000. These number estimates are obtained by grossing up the Health Survey for England estimates for the relevant year to the population level.

- The 95% confidence interval is shown. This means that for a given number estimate, there is a 95% chance that the true value lies within the range indicated by the confidence interval. For instance, with a number estimate of 1,000 and a confidence interval of +/-100, the true value is expected to be between 900 and 1,100 in 95 cases out of 100.

- BMI is calculated as weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in metres. Obesity is categorised as BMI of 30 or more.

### ■ Organs: Donors

**Sir Greg Knight:**

[\[1294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to make the public fully aware of the implications of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019; and if he will make a statement.

**Sir Greg Knight:**[\[1295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the extent of awareness among the general public of the implications of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019; and if he will make a statement.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

The Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019 introduces a new system of consent for organ and tissue donation in England, known as 'opt-out' or 'deemed consent'. The Government aims for the new consent arrangements to be introduced from spring 2020.

NHS Blood and Transplant launched a communication campaign on behalf of the Government in April 2019 to make the public fully aware of the new system of consent. Several platforms have been used since then to raise public awareness of the new system, more recently through TV and radio adverts, as well as public advertising with specific targeting of people with different backgrounds, faith and beliefs. NHS Blood and Transplant will continue to work with general practitioner (GP) practices, schools and black, Asian and minority ethnic communities to address barriers to organ donation.

**■ Prostate Cancer: Ultrasonics****Jim Shannon:**[\[1005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when HIFU treatment for prostate cancer will be made available on the NHS.

**Jo Churchill:**

The technique was reviewed by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence in 2012 who concluded that the evidence on the efficacy of treatment was limited and recommended that HIFU be used in the research setting only. For this reason, use of the technique in the National Health Service is limited to research only and there are currently no plans to extend use of the technique without development of the current evidence base.

**■ Rett Syndrome****Jim Shannon:**[\[999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with Rett syndrome in each of the last five years.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Congenital Anomaly and Rare Disease Registration Service (NCARDRS) records the number of people with congenital anomalies and rare diseases across England. In 2017, NCARDRS estimated that there are approximately 900 (1.6 per 100,000 population) people diagnosed with Rett syndrome living in England (95% confidence interval 843-960).

Data collection for rare diseases such as Rett Syndrome is at an early stage, therefore data are not available for each year. Further information on NCARDS data collection can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-national-congenital-anomaly-and-rare-disease-registration-service-ncards>

The Government is committed to improving the lives of those affected by a rare disease and continues to implement the commitments made in the United Kingdom Strategy for Rare Diseases to ensure that those living with a rare disease have the best quality of evidence based care and treatment. This can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rare-diseases-strategy>

### ■ Sexually Transmitted Infections: Older People

**Jim Shannon:**

**[1008]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases among people aged over 50.

**Jo Churchill:**

Since 2013, local authorities in England have been mandated to provide genitourinary medicine and integrated services for the early diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including STI prevention programmes. These services are open-access with no upper age limit.

Public Health England published the Making It Work guidance in 2015 to support local authorities commissioning, available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-sexual-health-reproductive-health-and-hiv-services>

In addition, the HIV Innovation Fund supports local projects such as 'Raising Awareness of HIV in the over 50's' to develop a local campaign and resources around sexual health, HIV testing, prevention and stigma directed at adults aged over 50.

### ■ Social Services

**Louise Haigh:**

**[1029]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent progress he has made on cross-party talks on social care.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

The manifesto set out a commitment to seek a cross-party consensus in order to bring forward the necessary proposals and legislation for long-term reform of social care. The Department will outline next steps shortly.



## ■ **Suicide: Bereavement Counselling**

**Alex Sobel:**

**[1795]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to help ensure that (a) families and (b) NHS staff throughout England have access to suicide bereavement services by 2023-24.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

On 28 October 2019, I announced that, as part of the NHS Long Term Plan, over £1 million is being invested this year to roll out dedicated bereavement support in 10 areas (including West Yorkshire and Harrogate) to care for people in the aftermath of a family member or friend's suicide. This support will be made available across the country by 2023/24.

## ■ **Trikafta**

**Jim Shannon:**

**[998]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for Trikafta being made available on the NHS for cystic fibrosis sufferers.

**Jo Churchill:**

It is a condition of the agreement reached between NHS England and NHS Improvement and Vertex that the company will submit its full portfolio of cystic fibrosis medicines, including its new triple therapy, marketed in the United States as Trikafta to National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) for appraisal.

NICE has begun work for the appraisal and further information is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/proposed/qid-ta10566>

NICE will invite the company to provide an evidence submission immediately after the triple therapy has been formally referred to its work programme, expected in February.

The triple therapy does not yet have a marketing authorisation for use in the United Kingdom and the dates for licensing have not yet been confirmed. Subject to licensing, in order to recommend the triple therapy for routine National Health Service funding, NICE will need to be assured that Vertex have priced it at a level that is fair to both the NHS and UK taxpayer. In the period leading up to that, NICE will work extensively with the company and other stakeholders in putting the best possible evidence submission to its independent advisory committee.

**HOME OFFICE****■ British Nationality: Children**

**Afzal Khan:** [\[1924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the High Court's recent ruling that the £1,000 fee to register a child as UK citizens is unlawful; and whether she has plans to reduce the fee.

**Victoria Atkins:**

While this court case remains active it would not be right to speculate on next steps and potential courses of action. Although the judge ruled that there had not been proper consideration of the Government's section 55 duties, the fees regulations were not in themselves quashed.

We are, though, committed to considering this issue and the judgment carefully and plan to do so with the diligence that is deserved.

**■ Crimes of Violence**

**Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:** [\[1066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding from the public purse she plans to allocate to Violence Reduction Units in each of the next three years.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Of the £100million Serious Violence Fund that was announced in March 2019 for 2019/20, £35million was invested towards Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in England and Wales.

VRUs provide leadership and strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence by bringing together police, local government, health and education professionals, community leaders and other key partners to identify the drivers of serious violence and agree a multi-agency response to them.

We are pleased with the early progress that has been made in establishing the VRUs and the work they are now beginning to deliver to ensure that the right support and services are directed to children and young people most at risk of involvement in serious violence.

On 29 December 2019 the Home Secretary announced a further £35 million to continue funding VRUs in 2020/21. These first two years of funding will provide local areas with the resources to start building and developing a public health approach to serious violence. We expect them to build on this platform over time and we hope to see VRUs operating beyond the end of 2021. That is why future funding for VRUs will be a key element of our spending review bid.

## ■ **Drugs: Misuse**

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to review the classification of drugs following the June 2019 recommendations of the Global Commission on Drug Policy.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government has considered the recommendations of the Global Commission on Drug Policy's report of June 2019. We keep drug control under constant review and work in consultation with our independent experts, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD), to consider any new evidence of misuse and harms.

Following any advice or recommendation from the ACMD, the Government will act to classify substances in the appropriate way, based on an assessment of harm or potential harms.

## ■ **Immigrants: Health Services**

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[1925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will reassess the potential merits of the £625 immigration health surcharge for NHS staff who are not UK citizens.

**Kevin Foster:**

As set out in the manifesto, the Government is committed to increasing the Immigration Health Surcharge to ensure that temporary migrants cover the costs of the NHS services provided to them. We will set out our detailed plans for implementing this shortly.

## ■ **Immigration: EU Nationals**

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[1930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme to date.

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[1931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of EU citizens who are eligible for settled status but have not applied.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The latest published information on EU Settlement Scheme applications received can be found in the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme monthly statistics' available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics-november-2019>

The total number of applications received up to 30 November 2019 was nearly 2.6 million (2,592,800). Updated figures for the period to 31 December 2019 will be published on 16 January 2020.

The published figures refer specifically to applications made to the EU Settlement Scheme and cannot be directly compared with estimates of the resident population of EU/EEA nationals in the UK. The published figures include non-EEA family members, Irish nationals, and eligible EEA citizens not resident in the UK, none of whom are usually included in estimates of the resident EU population. Furthermore, the population estimates do not take account of people's migration intentions and will include people who have come to the UK for a range of purposes, including some who have no intention to settle in the UK.

## ■ Immigration: Windrush Generation

**Helen Hayes:** **[1913]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the (a) number of Windrush citizens who applied for emergency payments in urgent and exceptional circumstances before the Windrush Compensation Scheme was established; (b) number of Windrush citizens who have been found eligible for such payments and (c) total amount awarded via those emergency payments.

**Kevin Foster:**

The specific information requested is not included in statistical data published by the Home Office.

The Home Secretary provides regular updates to the Home Affairs Select Committee on the work of the department in connection with Windrush. This includes information on the urgent and exceptional support provided to members of the Windrush cohort.

The updates can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/correspondence-on-the-work-of-the-home-office-windrush>

**Helen Hayes:** **[1914]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of Windrush citizens who have (a) applied to the Windrush Compensation Scheme and (b) received compensation under that scheme; and what the total amount awarded under that scheme is to date.

**Kevin Foster:**

We will publish information on the total number of claims paid and the overall amount paid out by the scheme shortly as noted in our report to the Home Affairs Select Committee: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/update-to-the-hasc-on-windrush-22-october-2019>.

**Afzal Khan:** **[1928]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Windrush compensation scheme, (a) when she plans to make the first compensation payments and (b) how much money her Department has allocated to the scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

The compensation scheme opened in April 2019 and a number of claimants have received payments through the scheme.

We will publish information on the total number of claims paid and the overall amount paid out by the scheme shortly as noted in our report to the [Home Affairs Select Committee](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/update-to-the-hasc-on-windrush-22-october-2019) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/update-to-the-hasc-on-windrush-22-october-2019>.

In relation to the amount of money allocated to the scheme, information relating to estimated costs including compensation payments are referred to in the Home Office's Impact Assessment IA No: HO 0329 dated 9/1/19.

**Knives: Crime****Sir David Evennett:****[949]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of trends in the level of knife crime in (a) Bexley, (b) London and (c) the UK.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Statistics are collected at the Police Force Area level only. Statistics for lower levels of geography (e.g. London Borough level) are not held by the Home Office. The Government takes seriously the concerns that have been expressed about the levels of serious violence in Bexley and other boroughs in London over recent months and has sought an assessment of the current response by the Metropolitan Police.

The Government is strengthening police numbers over the next three years by putting extra police officers on the streets and increasing sentences for violent criminals. Police will be given more powers to stop and search those who have been convicted of knife crime. 6,000 additional officers will be recruited in England and Wales by March 2021 and their ranks will be increased by 20,000 over the next three years.

Funding for policing is increasing by £1 billion this year, including council tax and the Serious Violence Fund, through which, we are providing £63.4 million to the 18 police forces worst affected by serious violence to pay for surge operational activity, such as increased patrols, and £1.6 million to help improve the quality of data on serious violence, particularly knife crime, to support planning and operations. This includes an additional £20.8 million of surge funding to the Metropolitan Police. In addition, £35 million of the Serious Violence Fund is being invested in Violence Reduction Units (VRUs), which will form a key component of our action to build capacity in local areas to tackle serious violence.

The Government will change the law so that police, councils and health authorities are legally required to work together to prevent and tackle serious violence. The Offensive Weapons Act introduces new laws which to give police extra powers to seize dangerous weapons and ensure knives are less likely to make their way onto the streets in the first place.

**■ Passports: British National (Overseas)****Daniel Zeichner:** [1026]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many valid British national (overseas) passports were in issue on 31 December 2019.

**Kevin Foster:**

The total number of valid British National Overseas Passports as at 03/01/2020 was 316,344.

**■ Windrush Lessons Learned Review****Afzal Khan:** [1929]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish the report of the Windrush lessons learned review.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Secretary has not yet received the final report from Wendy Williams. On receipt it will be published as soon as practicable.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Affordable Housing: Construction****Caroline Nokes:** [101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what proportion of all planning permissions granted for affordable housing units were subject to a contribution in lieu in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

**Esther McVey:**

The Department does not hold figures splitting out the proportion of affordable housing planning permissions which are subject to a contribution in lieu. Section I13a of the Local Authority Housing Statistics includes a figure for the direct payment of financial contributions received during the financial year 2018/19 towards the provision of affordable housing from developers via planning obligations (s106 agreements).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/local-authority-housing-statistics-data-returns-for-2018-to-2019>

**■ Buildings: Insulation****Mr Steve Reed:** [1896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department commissioned the Building Research Establishment to write a Frequently Asked Questions document on cladding after the inquest into the Lakanal House fire.

**Esther McVey:**

*[Holding answer 15 January 2020]:* The Department considered and acted on the recommendations of the Coroner's report into the Lakanal House fire in 2009. A note setting out the action the Government took in response to the recommendations was placed in the Library of the House in September 2017 in response to Question UIN HL1281 on 5 September 2017. Since the publication of this note we have published a clarified version of Approved Document B available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-approved-document-b> . In December 2018 we started a wide ranging technical review of the guidance in which means of escape in blocks of flat is a key research topic.

**■ Buildings: Safety****Mr Steve Reed:****[1898]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which Minister in his Department has responsibility for the Building Safety Programme.

**Esther McVey:**

As with all departmental business, The Secretary of State maintains overall responsibility for the work of the department, and he has asked Viscount Younger of Leckie to lead on day to day ministerial responsibility for the Building Safety Programme.

**Mr Steve Reed:****[1900]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to report on the progress of the Building Safety Programme; and if he will make a statement.

**Esther McVey:**

The Building Safety Programme produces monthly statistics which highlight progress on remediation. I am committed to keeping the House updated as new developments arise.

**■ Future High Streets Fund: North West Durham****Mr Richard Holden:****[1935]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what representations he has received from (a) representatives of Durham County Council and (b) the hon. Member for North West Durham on including towns and villages in North West Durham constituency in consideration of funding allocations from the Future High Streets Fund.

**Jake Berry:**

I can confirm that Durham County Council were eligible for four applications in Round 1 of the Future High Streets Fund. There is no record of written representations or correspondence from either Durham County Council or the hon. Member for North West Durham on funding allocations for North West Durham in the Future High Streets Fund.

We will open a further round of the Future High Streets Fund this year and welcome communities and local authorities to come forward with proposals to bring about change for our high streets.

### ■ Lakanal House: Fires

**Mr Steve Reed:** **[1899]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what specific steps his Department took as a result of the inquest into the Lakanal House fire.

**Esther McVey:**

The Department considered and has acted on the recommendations of the Coroner's report into the Lakanal House fire in 2009. A note setting out the action the Government took in response to the recommendations has been placed in the Library of the House in September 2017 in response to Question UIN HL1281 answered on 19 September by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

Since the publication of this letter we have published a clarified version of Approved Document B available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-approved-document-b> . In December 2018, we have started a wide ranging technical review of the guidance in which we have identified means of escape in blocks of flat as a key research topic.

### ■ Social Rented Housing: Construction

**Rachael Maskell:** **[1087]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many social houses have been built (a) nationally and (b) under City of York Council in each of the last 10 years.

**Esther McVey:**

The number of houses which have been built for social rent may be found within Live Table 1000 at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply> To view the number which have been built under City of York Council, this may be accessed at the site listed above, within Live Table 1011.

### ■ Travellers: Caravan Sites

**Sir Oliver Heald:** **[941]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans the Government has to strengthen civil law in respect of intentional unauthorised development; and what the timetable is for such action.

**Esther McVey:**

In the Government's response last year to our consultation on powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments, we committed to strengthening national planning policy on intentional unauthorised development. We intend to consult on proposals for doing so shortly.



## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### ■ India: Transport

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[1336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps he is taking to help support the decarbonisation of transport infrastructure in India.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

DFID is partnering with India to tackle climate change and transition to a clean growth pathway that will benefit us all, by providing advice and technical assistance. DFID's Supporting Structural Reforms in the Indian Power Sector programme is working to improve the efficiency, reliability and sustainability of electricity supply in India, enabling a reduction in carbon emissions. Since 2015 DFID has invested in over 1GW of renewable energy projects in India – returns from these investments come back to the UK taxpayer. To date £55m has been returned.

The UK ended traditional aid to India in 2015 and no financial assistance is provided to the Government of India.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Iron and Steel: UK Trade with EU

**Jessica Morden:**

[\[1892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary for State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that the EU FTA negotiations do not result in UK steel exports being subject to EU steel safeguard measures without the provision of UK specific tariff-free quotas at the end of 2020.

**Conor Burns:**

The Government will seek to engage with the European Commission to discuss the mutual application of the steel safeguard measure with the aim of preserving traditional trade flows and providing as much continuity to industry as possible at the end of the Implementation Period.

### ■ Raytheon: USA

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

[\[1037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to extant licences for the export of controlled goods from Raytheon UK to the US, if she will set out (a) the type of those licences, (b) their start and end dates, (c) their item codes in the Consolidated list of strategic military and dual-use items that require export authorisation and (d) the quantity of goods exported under those respective licences.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 13 January 2020]:* Providing the detailed information requested would disclose commercially sensitive information, however we can advise there are

39 extant Standard Individual Export Licences (SIELs) granted to Raytheon UK, between January 2018 and September 2019 for export to the USA. The licences are valid for two years and cover the following ratings: ML4, ML10, ML11 and ML22.

Licensing data is provided based on information published as Official Statistics up to September 2019. Licences granted from 1 October 2019 onwards have not, as yet, been published as official statistics on GOV.UK and therefore information about those licences cannot be disclosed.

## ■ Trade Agreements

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has undertaken regional impact assessments of the effect of potential (a) free trade agreements and (b) trade negotiation mandates with (i) Australia, (ii) New Zealand, (iii) Japan and (iv) the United States.

**Conor Burns:**

At the start of new free trade agreement negotiations, the Government will publish its Outline Approach which will include our negotiating objectives. This will be accompanied by a scoping assessment which will set out the potential economic results of any agreement and will provide preliminary assessments of the potential implications for the UK nations and English regions.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Administration of Justice

**Mr Gareth Bacon:** [\[1086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing Crown courtroom availability; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of undertaking a review of criminal justice system resources.

**Mr Gareth Bacon:** [\[1090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to increase the number of court sitting days so that more Crown court cases can be heard; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Gareth Bacon:** [\[1091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he is putting in place to ensure the adequate use of Crown courtroom capacity.

**Mr Gareth Bacon:** [\[1092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing funding for the HM Courts and Tribunals Service to tackle court (a) under-occupancy and (b) case backlogs.

**Chris Philp:**

Sitting days are kept under close review to ensure changes in demand are met by the court system. In November, we allocated an extra 700 days to the Crown Court for this financial year in response to an increase in the number of cases coming to court.

Sitting days are monitored and assigned based on the number of cases we expect the courts to receive annually. This approach has enabled us to reduce the number of outstanding cases in the Crown Court in England and Wales by almost 40% since 2014.

We are also considering options for a Royal Commission on the criminal justice process, which could deliver a fundamental review of some of the key issues which are affecting the system now, or may do in the future.

**■ Young Offender Institutions****Imran Hussain:**[\[1364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children and young people in HM Young Offenders Institutes (a) Werrington, (b) Wetherby, (c) Swinfen Hall, (d) Feltham, (e) Cookham Wood and (f) Aylesbury have accumulated (i) 1-24, (ii) 25-49, (iii) 50-74, (iv) 75-99, (v) 100-149 and (vi) 150 or more additional days of imprisonment as punishment since their arrival.

**Wendy Morton:**

Discipline procedures are central to the maintenance of a safe, decent and rehabilitative custodial environment. They require adjudications to be conducted lawfully, fairly and justly. All prisoners have a full opportunity to hear what is alleged against them and to present their case. Children and young people in custody are some of the most vulnerable people in society and their safety and welfare is our highest priority. But there are occasions when their behaviour is so challenging and violent that it is necessary to instigate disciplinary procedures. Young or vulnerable prisoners, who may lack experience of adjudications, are encouraged to request help from an advocate.

Only Independent Adjudicators, who are District Judges or Deputy District Judges, can, in cases deemed to be sufficiently serious, make an award of additional days. The adjudicators will follow the punishment guidelines issued by the Chief Magistrate. These are rightly, independent of the Ministry of Justice and a matter for the Chief Magistrate.

The information requested can be found in the tables attached.

**Attachments:**

1. Table [Copy of PQ 1364 table for publication.xlsx]

**■ Young Offender Institutions: Visits****Seema Malhotra:****[1745]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many young offenders received (a) no visitors, (b) one visitor and (c) more than one visitor a month in each young offender institution in each of the last 12 months.

**Wendy Morton:**

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

Governors and Directors of contracted prisons are required to actively encourage young people in custody to maintain outside contacts and meaningful family ties, which is integral to the children's right to family life as well as their rehabilitation. Visits are also vital in sustaining their relationships with close relatives and friends, where appropriate, while helping to maintain community ties.

**MEMBERS ESTIMATE COMMITTEE****■ Representative Money****Mr Gregory Campbell:****[1697]**

To ask the hon. Member representing the Members Estimate Committee, how much (a) was paid between the 2015 and 2019 general elections and (b) is scheduled to be paid between 12 December 2019 and 12 December 2020 in Representative Monies to parties whose Members had not taken the oath.

**Sir Paul Beresford:**

Under a resolution of the House, Representative Money is provided to opposition parties represented by Members who have chosen not to take the Oath.

Budget allocations for Representative Money since 2005-06 are published in Appendix 4 of the following document:

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN01663>

Since 2016-17 it has been a requirement to publish the amounts paid for the financial year and these can be found on the Parliament website via the following link:

<https://www.parliament.uk/site-information/foi/transparency-publications/hoc-transparency-publications/financial-information/financial-assistance-to-opposition-parties/previous-financial-assistance-to-opposition-parties/>

The Representative Money scheduled to be paid following the General Election on 12 December 2019 to the end of the current financial year (31 March 2020) will be published in due course on the above page, as will amounts relating to subsequent financial years.

**NORTHERN IRELAND****■ Conditions of Employment: EU Law**

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether the legal obligation in the European Union Withdrawal Agreement and the provisions in the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill not to diminish rights set out in Council Directive 2000/43/EC on equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin applies to Northern Ireland only or to the whole of the UK.

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether the legal obligation in the European Union Withdrawal Agreement and the provisions in the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill not to diminish rights set out in Council Directive 2006/54/EC on equal treatment of men and women in employment applies to Northern Ireland only or to the whole of the UK.

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether the legal obligation in the European Union Withdrawal Agreement and the provisions in the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill not to diminish rights set out in Council Directive 2010/41/EU on equal treatment of men and women in self employment applies to Northern Ireland only, or to the whole of the UK.

**Julian Smith:**

The commitment to no diminution of rights, safeguards and equality of opportunity, as set out in Article 2(1) of the Protocol on Northern Ireland/Ireland to the Withdrawal Agreement and provided for in the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill, applies to protections enshrined or given effect to in the domestic legal order in Northern Ireland. As such, the obligation not to diminish rights set out in Council Directives 2000/43/EC, 2006/54/EC and 2010/41/EU applies only to Northern Ireland and not the rest of the UK.

**SCOTLAND****■ Scotland Office: Trade Unions**

**Chris Stephens:** [\[1102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what meetings (a) he and (b) officials of his Department have had with (a) the Scottish Trades Union Congress and (b) individual affiliated trades unions since he took office; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

My officials and I regularly meet with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that Scotland has a voice in Westminster. The Government publishes a list of all

ministerial meetings with external bodies on departmental business on a quarterly basis and is available at gov.uk.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Bridges: A14

**Tom Hunt:** [\[1075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he plans to take with Highways England to prevent the need for the Orwell Bridge in Suffolk to be closed during periods of high wind.

**George Freeman:**

Highways England is aware of the impact any closure of the Orwell Bridge has during high winds. Any decision to close it is not taken lightly and is made on safety grounds alone.

Highways England commissioned a study in October 2018 which will help determine whether the current closure threshold is appropriate. Highways England has meetings planned with stakeholders later this month to present and discuss the findings and next steps. The study will then be published on Highways England's website.

### ■ Crossrail Line

**Sir David Evennett:** [\[947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Mayor of London on the further delays to Crossrail.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Department for Transport has regular discussions with Transport for London and Crossrail Limited regarding the Crossrail project.

On 10 January 2020, Crossrail Limited issued its latest update on progress to complete the Elizabeth line and confirmed that it plans to open the central section between Paddington and Abbey Wood in summer 2021.

Although progress is being made, Crossrail Limited have been clear that risks and uncertainties remain across the programme. Crossrail Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of Transport for London.

**Sir David Evennett:** [\[948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of delays to Crossrail on the viability of the Crossrail to Ebbfleet infrastructure proposal.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Department has not made any recent assessment of proposals for transport enhancements between Abbey Wood and Ebbfleet as these remain under development.

## ■ Department for Transport: Iron and Steel

**Jessica Morden:**

**[1893]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has plans to (a) become a signatory to the UK Steel charter and (b) maximise the use of UK steel in public infrastructure projects through procurement practises for national transport projects.

**George Freeman:**

I can confirm that the Department has committed to supporting the Charter where this is relevant to our commercial activities and where consistent with the relevant public procurement regulations. This position has been communicated to UK Steel.

Government's guidance on the procurement of steel was published in November 2015 and subsequently updated in December 2016. In DfT steel is only purchased directly by Network Rail, and they source approximately 93% percent of their steel from the UK. Both Highways England and High Speed Two Ltd procure steel through their respective supply chains. The guidance has been fully adopted by DfT for all in-scope projects and we are required to report on its implementation.

## ■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Denham

**Joy Morrissey:**

**[1046]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what financial compensation has been agreed by HS2 Ltd for the compulsory purchase of land in Denham.

**Paul Maynard:**

All compulsory purchase payments made by HS2 Ltd are in line with the compensation code – the body of statute, case law and established practice that underpins the approach to property compensation. Information regarding financial compensation for specific land or to individuals is not made publicly available as it is commercially sensitive.

HS2 Ltd publishes detailed information online regarding compulsory purchase compensation and procedures. This information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/compulsory-purchase-system-guidance>

**Joy Morrissey:**

**[1048]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many Compulsory Purchase Orders in Denham were undertaken by HS2 Ltd in the last five years.

**Paul Maynard:**

One compulsory purchase notice was issued in Denham since February 2017. This is the point at which powers to compulsorily acquire land for HS2 were conferred on the Secretary of State through the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act 2017.

**Joy Morrissey:** [\[1049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many HS2 Ltd community engagement meetings have been cancelled in Denham in the last twelve months.

**Paul Maynard:**

HS2 Ltd and its contractors have not cancelled any community engagement activities in Denham during 2019.

Over the last twelve months HS2 Ltd and its contractors continued to engage regularly with residents, and local stakeholders such as the Parish Council, in the Denham area. The most recent community event was a drop-in session held on 10 December at Higher Denham Community Hall.

#### ■ London, Tilbury and Southend Railway Line

**Sir David Amess:** [\[1882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of new ticketing technology on the Essex Thameside train line.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Officials are aware of a number of technical issues experienced with the new ticketing technology being implemented at stations and ticket offices across the c2c network.

As a consequence, Trenitalia c2c are providing regular updates to the Department on the measures being taken to rectify and improve the technology in order to ensure smooth, reliable and user-friendly ticket purchasing facilities for all customers on the route.

**Sir David Amess:** [\[1883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to Trenitalia's operation of the Essex Thameside train line, what steps he is taking to help ensure that rail customers are not charged unexpected currency conversion fees when purchasing travel tickets.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Customer should not be charged unexpected currency conversion fees when purchasing travel tickets. However, there was an instance in August 2019 when Trenitalia c2c launched their new Sigma Ticket Vending Machines, where a software issue led to a limited number of customers being charged in Euros. As soon as this was discovered the issue was rectified, those customers were reimbursed. Since then there have been no similar issues with charging in other currencies.

#### ■ M1: Accidents

**Sarah Owen:** [\[1057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many (a) road traffic collisions and (b) fatalities there have been between junctions 10 and 13 on the M1 in each year since 2010.



**George Freeman:**

The number of reported personal injury road accidents and the number of fatal casualties between junctions 10 and 13 on the M1 since 2010 can be found in the table below:

**REPORTED PERSONAL INJURY ROAD ACCIDENTS AND FATALITIES BETWEEN JUNCTIONS 10 AND 13 ON THE M1<sup>1</sup>, 2010 TO 2018**

Year	Accidents (all severities)	Fatalities
2010	113	0
2011	74	1
2012	93	1
2013	84	0
2014	98	2
2015	90	4
2016	94	0
2017	103	1
2018	84	0

Source: DfT, STATS19

1. Includes all the slip roads on and off at each of the junctions.

**■ Motor Vehicles: Fuel Cells****Damian Hinds:**[\[980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department is providing to the development of hydrogen-powered transport.

**George Freeman:**

Government is committed to exploring the development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier, which has potential to support the UK's efforts to decarbonise transport and meet the 2050 net zero target. The UK is well placed to be a leader in hydrogen and fuel cell powered transportation due to our high-quality engineering and manufacturing capability in relevant supply chains. We are supporting innovation in the hydrogen supply chain from production to end use and investigating potential synergies between transport and other sectors.

In road transport, hydrogen is eligible for support under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation following changes made to the scheme in April 2018. The Office for Low Emission Vehicles and the Advanced Propulsion Centre are funding a wide range of development projects in hydrogen vehicles across technology readiness levels. We are also supporting the technology through the £23m Hydrogen for Transport programme and £2m FCEV fleet support scheme. In addition, the Clean Maritime Plan recognised hydrogen as one of a number of the key fuels on a pathway to zero-emission shipping

### ■ **Motorways: Safety**

**Sarah Owen:** [\[1089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the safety of the roll-out of smart motorways.

**George Freeman:**

On 24 October 2019 the Secretary of State for Transport announced that the Department will carry out an evidence stocktake to gather the facts about smart motorway safety.

The Department will present the findings shortly.

### ■ **Railways**

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many railway (a) lines and (b) stations closed under Beeching the Government plans to bring back into service.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

To help communities across the country, we have pledged £500m to start reopening lines closed following the Beeching report, reconnecting smaller towns, regenerating local economies and improving accessibility to jobs, homes and education.

Further details will be announced in due course.

### ■ **Railways: Lancashire**

**Antony Higginbotham:** [\[1032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential economic benefits to Burnley of improvements to rail connectivity in and around the East Lancashire area; and if he will make a statement.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government supported the reopening of the Todmorden Curve in 2015 which has allowed a new faster and direct train service between Manchester Victoria and Burnley, opening up job prospects and tourist and leisure opportunities.

Work is progressing to assess the potential role of a re-opened Skipton-Colne rail line to deliver real benefits for passengers in East Lancashire, freight users and the local economy to complement the initial Strategic Outline Business Case completed in

December 2018. These will inform the Government's decision as to whether a reinstatement scheme should progress to the 'develop' stage of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

More widely, to help communities both in East Lancashire and across the country, we have pledged £500m to start reopening lines closed following the Beeching report.

## ■ Roads: Safety

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[1024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 4 November 2019 Question 7159, what steps he is taking to ensure that Highways England adopts performance indicators which incentivise an increase in the (a) number of journeys and (b) safety of (i) cyclists and (ii) pedestrians throughout the Strategic Road Network.

**George Freeman:**

The second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2), which we expect to publish shortly, will specify the objectives to be achieved by Highways England in the second road period 2 (2020-21 to 2024-25). It will have legal force under the Infrastructure Act 2015 Chapter 7, Part 1 Section 3. Compliance with the performance specification, including the meeting of Key Performance Indicator targets and the reporting of wider performance measures, is overseen by the Department as client, and monitored and where necessary enforced by the Office of Rail and Road as Highways Monitor.

The development of the Performance Specification for RIS2 entailed comprehensive, structured engagement with external stakeholders including representatives from cycling, walking and equestrian groups, and the performance measures reflect this input. These groups will continue to be involved once RIS2 is in place through the work of Transport Focus as watchdog and Highways England stakeholder activities.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[1025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what consultation Highways England held with groups representing (a) walking, (b) cycling and (c) horse-riding interests before publishing its recent design standards on (i) Designing for cycle traffic and (ii) Designing for walking, cycling and horse-riding.

**George Freeman:**

The documents newly published by Highways England contained only editorial changes rather than technical changes, to align with the new format and structure of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. As the content had not changed, no consultation with groups representing (a) walking, (b) cycling and (c) horse-riding interests was undertaken by Highways England.

## ■ Rolling Stock: Disability

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[1932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what deadline his Department has set for making all train carriages fully accessible.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

It is extremely disappointing that some train carriages were not made fully accessible by the December 31 2019 deadline.

The Department has reluctantly granted dispensations for some carriages that have not yet met modern accessibility standards, these are time limited and on a case by case basis. If all non-compliant trains had been removed from service on December 31 2019 there would have been a disproportionately negative effect on the provision of services for passengers.

A full list of rolling stock and their associated exemption expiry dates is publicly available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exemptions-from-rail-vehicle-accessibility-regulations-and-their-expiry-dates>

**■ Transport: Manchester****Yasmin Qureshi:****[973]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on the Castleford Corridor enhancement project in central Manchester.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government recognises the performance and capacity problems in Manchester and therefore commissioned Richard George and Network Rail to recommend service and infrastructure options. Officials have now received the first recommendations, which they are currently considering and expect more of over the course of the next few months.

**TREASURY****■ Employment: Taxation****Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:****[1065]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will undertake a review of HMRC's IR35 tax regulations.

**Jesse Norman:**

The review of the off-payroll working rules reform was announced on 7 January 2020. As set out at Budget 2018, the reform is due to be extended to medium and large organisations in all sectors from April 2020. The review will look to address any remaining concerns from businesses and individuals about how the forthcoming reform will be implemented, and will determine if any further steps can be taken to ensure smooth and successful implementation.

**■ Equitable Life Assurance Society****David Duguid:****[1782]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to provide financial relief to Equitable Life policyholders.

**John Glen:**

In 2010 the government allocated up to £1.5 billion, tax free, for payment to affected policyholders. More detail on the history of the action taken on this issue can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equitable-life-payment-scheme-final-report>.

■ **Tax Evasion****Chris Stephens:****[1100]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people are employed to investigate tax evasion in HMRC's Wealthy Team unit; and if he will make a statement.

**Jesse Norman:**

As of 31 December 2019 HMRC's Wealthy team had approximately 961 full time equivalent staff engaged in customer compliance activity.

The Wealthy team work with around 24,500 full time equivalent staff in HMRC's Customer Compliance Group, including in Counter Avoidance and the Fraud Investigation service so that HMRC can effectively tackle avoidance and evasion within this customer segment. They also focus on promoting tax compliance and helping customers through digital services.

**WALES**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Alex Davies-Jones:****[900131]**

What recent assessment he has made of the economic effect on low-income families of the roll-out of universal credit in Wales.

**Simon Hart:**

Work is the most effective route out of poverty. Universal Credit makes it easier for people to move into work and keep more of what they earn.

We have listened to concerns and as a result ensured that claimants can access 100% advance payments on day one of a Universal Credit claim and continue to receive Housing Benefit for two weeks after transitioning.

**Stephen Doughty:****[900132]**

What recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on cross-border rail services on the Great Western Railway line.

**Simon Hart:**

I am due to meet the Secretary of State for Transport in the next few weeks. We will discuss how we build upon the additional 15,000 weekday seats between South Wales and London and the new SuperFast services, which have brought the journey time between Cardiff and Paddington down to 1 hour 42 minutes, saving 17 minutes on the previous fastest times.

**Scott Benton:**

[900135]

What steps he is taking to help strengthen the Union.

**Simon Hart:**

As the new Secretary of State for Wales I am wholeheartedly committed to strengthening the Union and to working hand in hand with Welsh Government colleagues.

I have already met with the First Minister and a number of Welsh Ministers to discuss how we can work together to maximise the opportunities of EU exit and support the Welsh economy.

**Craig Williams:**

[900136]

What recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on cross-border infrastructure.

**David T C Davies:**

I met Ken Skates, Minister for Transport and Economy for the Welsh Government last week and we discussed opportunities to improve transport across the border.

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[900138]

If he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the Welsh Government's administration of the NHS in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

**Simon Hart:**

I am grateful for this opportunity to emphasise our commitment to the NHS. In Wales it is the responsibility of the Welsh Government to use their funding effectively. We are committed to working with the Welsh Government to ensure that a high standard of healthcare and access to services is available.

**Jo Stevens:**

[900139]

What recent assessment he has made of the potential effect on the Welsh economy of the EU Withdrawal Agreement.

**Simon Hart:**

The Withdrawal Agreement allows us to get Brexit done and leave the European Union in a smooth and orderly manner at the end of the month.

The Government will maximise the opportunities of Brexit for Wales and the whole of the UK, taking back control of our money, our laws, our trade and our borders.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Employment and Support Allowance

**Steve McCabe:**

[1884]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average length of time is for claimants in the (a) support and (b) work-related activity groups to be awarded employment support allowance.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

As of May 2019, the latest point at which this information is available, the mean duration of a claim for Employment and Support Allowance claimants currently in the (a) support group is 5.15 years and (b) work-related activity group is 4.60 years.

Alternatively, the median duration of a claim for Employment and Support Allowance claimants currently in the (a) support group is 5.49 years and (b) work-related activity group is 4.76 years.

Source: DWP 100% Employment Support Allowance data source

Notes:

- Figures are rounded to the nearest 2 decimal places.

**■ Food Banks****Gareth Thomas:**[\[2416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the use of food banks.

**Will Quince:**

This Government is committed to a sustainable solution to poverty in all its forms, by building a strong economy and reforming the benefit system so that it supports employment and higher pay.

Households where all adults are in work are around 6 times less likely to be in relative poverty than adults in a household where nobody works. Compared to 2010, there are 3.7 million more people in work and around 1 million fewer workless households.

We have worked with food insecurity experts, the Office for National Statistics and the Scottish Government to introduce a new set of food security questions in the Family Resources Survey starting from April 2019. This means that we will in future be able to monitor the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity across the UK and for specific groups, to better understand the drivers of food insecurity and identify which groups are most at risk.

**■ Universal Credit****Mike Amesbury:**[\[1039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claimants have signed a waiver outlining any previous communication with a political representative regarding benefits before accessing appeals information since that policy was introduced.

**Will Quince:**

At no point during a Universal Credit claim does the Department ask a person to sign a waiver. To safeguard the sensitive and personal data we hold about people's Universal Credit claims, we ask representatives making enquiries on behalf of others

to demonstrate that they have claimant consent. This is a simple process, which can be completed online or by telephone by the claimant, and has been in place since 2017.

The Universal Credit system is structured around an online personal account which contains all the information relevant to the claim. This can include details about: bank accounts, savings, capital, medical history and family relationships, in addition to third parties including landlords and employers. Therefore, we need to ensure a high level of security and protection exists to combat unscrupulous individuals and organisations who try to access the information and seek to impersonate genuine representatives.

The Department is continuing to work with Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) and third party organisations to understand how Universal Credit can support organisations who help our claimants. We are committed to having processes in place which effectively supports claimants to access our services, but which also protects information.

#### ■ Universal Credit: Glasgow

**Chris Stephens:**

**[1099]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent progress has been made with housing associations in (a) Glasgow South West constituency and (b) Glasgow on their access to information from the Landlord Portal on universal credit claimants; and if she will make a statement.

**Will Quince:**

The Universal Credit Landlord Portal allows social landlords who are registered users, to verify rent and submit managed payment requests through the Landlord Portal, rather than through the established email processes.

Our Trusted Partner scheme allows social landlords to play a key role in engaging with their tenants who are on Universal Credit, helping those who cannot manage their housing payments to access the support available and to request that managed payments are in place where appropriate.

There are now over 750 Social Landlords using the Portal and Trusted Partner scheme, and enrolment onto the Portal & Trusted Partner remains open for any eligible Social Landlords (further details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-landlord-portal-and-trusted-partner-scheme-for-social-landlords/landlord-portal-and-trusted-partner-scheme-for-social-landlords> ). The total number of landlords currently enrolled on the Portal represent around 96% of the total Social Rented Sector housing stock.

The Department maintains guidance on GOV.UK, relevant for private and social sector landlords, with information about Universal Credit including the Landlord Portal which has existed since 2017. This can be accessed at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-and-rented-housing-2/universal-credit-and-rented-housing-guide-for-landlords](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-and-rented-housing-2/universal-credit-and-rented-housing-guide-for-landlords)



## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Business Update

**Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (Chris Skidmore):**

[\[HCWS39\]](#)

The UK Space Agency is offering young people expert advice and the chance to connect with space industry representatives, potential investors and commercial partners, as well as a share of £50,000 for their ideas of how satellites could improve life on Earth.

Satellite services such as navigation, communications and Earth observation support industrial sectors worth £300 billion to the UK economy. This competition gives young people the chance to test new ideas with space experts and perhaps one day become part of the UK space sector, which already supports 42,000 jobs and could create thousands more this decade.

By supporting the UK's next generation of scientists and engineers, the competition will help turn young people's ideas into real-world proposals that could eventually transform our lives – from saving our planet from climate change, to improving healthcare services.

Anyone aged between 11 and 22 years old has until 3 March 2020 to enter the competition through the UK Space Agency's website. The winners will go on to pitch their ideas to a panel of industry experts, with the opportunity to gain further advice and support.

The government is committed to establishing a National Space Council and developing a UK Space Strategy, while establishing commercial spaceflight from UK spaceports for the first time, to help the UK lead the way in this fast-growing, high-technology sector. It is my own personal ambition to ensure the sector has a bright future, and I would encourage all young people who are fascinated by space to enter the SatelLife competition and to play a key part in the second space age.

### FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

#### ■ Foreign Affairs Council – 10 January 2020

**Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Christopher Pincher):**  
[\[HCWS37\]](#)

On 10 January, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRVP), Josep Borrell, convened an extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) in Brussels to address recent developments in Iraq and Libya. My Right Honorable Friend the Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa (Dr Andrew Murrison) attended the meeting.

*Libya*

Ministers exchanged views on recent developments in Libya, including the military escalation around Tripoli and the EU's engagement. HRVP Borrell briefed on his recent diplomatic engagement, including with the E4 (France, Germany, Italy and United Kingdom) and with Libyan Prime Minister Serraj. HRVP Borrell updated Ministers on his plans to engage with all players involved, with the objective of moving towards a political solution within the framework of the Berlin process and UN-led mediated efforts.

The United Nations (UN) Special Representative and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Ghassan Salamé, briefed Ministers on his work to prepare for the planned Berlin Summit, which will focus on practical initiatives towards long-term stability in Libya.

Dr Murrison expressed full support for German efforts to boost regional cooperation, and underscored the need for international unity, particularly in support of the UN process and of the strict enforcement of the UN arms embargo.

#### *Recent Developments in Iran and Iraq*

The Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Jens Stoltenberg, briefed Ministers on the latest developments in Iraq.

Ministers emphasised the need for the de-escalation of tensions in the region and maximum restraint as well as condemning attacks on coalition forces engaged in the fight against Da'esh. They stressed their continued support for Iraq's stability and reconstruction and urged Iran to return to full compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) without delay.

Dr Murrison supported calls for de-escalation and shared our deep concern at Iran's latest announcement of non-compliance with the JCPoA. Dr Murrison also offered the United Kingdom's condolences to those affected by the Ukraine Airlines crash, and called for EU support for a full investigation.

### ■ **Outcomes of the Foreign Affairs Councils – 11 November and 9 December 2019**

#### **Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Christopher Pincher):** **[[HCWS36](#)]**

The 11 November and 9 December Foreign Affairs Councils (FACs) took place in Brussels whilst Parliament was dissolved. Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRVP), chaired the November FAC with her replacement Josep Borrell chairing the December FAC. The United Kingdom's Ambassador to the Political and Security Committee, Paul Johnston, represented the United Kingdom at both the November and December FAC.

#### *November FAC*

At the November FAC, HRVP Mogherini briefed Ministers on Venezuela, Bolivia, and Lebanon and touched on Turkey's actions in North-East Syria. Ministers also adopted a framework for sanctions in response to Turkey's hydrocarbons explorations activity in the Eastern Mediterranean.

On Hong Kong, the United Kingdom stressed the need for support for the right to peaceful protest; condemnation of the violence; the need for a proportionate response; the importance of China upholding the Joint Declaration; and the need for investigations into the treatment of protestors.

Ministers discussed the EU's approach to Iran and Gulf Regional Security, following Tehran's announcement of further non-compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA).

The United Kingdom highlighted our commitment to the JCPoA whilst noting that Iranian actions were putting the deal under pressure. We stressed the importance of all parties engaging in comprehensive negotiations and of the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchange (INSTEX) to avoid the collapse of the deal and to support regional security.

Ministers discussed the political situation in Afghanistan and reviewed the prospects for peace, following the Presidential election. HRVP Mogherini underlined the EU's willingness to contribute both politically and financially to peace talks, and its readiness to support an inclusive Afghan political process. The United Kingdom stressed the importance of reductions in Taliban violence and renewed US-Taliban talks as an important step towards the relaunch of intra-Afghan negotiations.

Ministers had an exchange of views with the Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. They reaffirmed the EU's strong political commitment to support the civilian transitional government, as well as the EU's readiness to provide financial aid for the transition, including in support of economic and state structure reform. They highlighted the importance of ensuring that the civilian transition remains an inclusive process, including an appropriate role for youth and women.

#### *December FAC*

In December, Ministers expressed their concerns about the Turkey-Libya Memorandum of Understanding on delimitation of maritime jurisdiction and on security and military cooperation. They also reflected on the political situation in Libya and the Berlin process, which aims to find a sustainable solution to the situation in the country.

Ministers exchanged views on Ukraine, in the context of the Normandy Format leaders' summit, which took place in Paris the following week, and the situation in Iran, following the recent meeting of the Joint Commission of the JCPoA, as well as recent protests. HRVP Borrell briefed on the situation in Bolivia, Moldova and Hong Kong. On the latter, the United Kingdom underlined the importance of meaningful government efforts around dialogue to prevent a return to violence.

Ministers discussed EU-Africa relations in preparation for 2020's Ministerial and summit-level meetings between the EU and the African Union (AU). They addressed the political, economic, security and demographic aspects of the relationship as well as important cross-cutting issues such as climate change and digitalisation. Ministers emphasised that the next summit would be an important milestone in modernising and scaling up the EU's partnership with Africa.

Ahead of Human Rights Day on 10 December, Ministers discussed the promotion and protection of human rights in the world. They assessed the EU's work on human rights, the instruments at its disposal and its priorities for the coming months, reaffirming the EU's leadership in the protection and promotion of human rights worldwide. HRVP Borrell announced the launch of preparatory work on a possible sanctions regime to address serious human rights violations.

During the working lunch, Ministers informally discussed the FAC's working methods. The new HRVP set out his priorities, including the Western Balkans, Europe's Neighbourhood and the Middle-East, as well as on how the EU could work together more effectively to deliver operational outcomes.

### *Conclusions*

At the November FAC, the Council extended sanctions on Venezuela for a year due to persistent actions undermining democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. It also adopted a framework for restrictive measures in response to Turkey's hydrocarbons explorations activity in the Eastern Mediterranean.

At the December FAC, the Council agreed a number of measures:

- The Council decided to maintain individual restrictive measures against several personalities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) regarding the obstruction of the electoral process and human rights violations, and to lift these measures for two other persons.
- The Council also adopted conclusions on the DRC that support the most recent elections as the first peaceful transfer of power in the country's history and state the EU's readiness for a gradual engagement in support to the DRC government's reform agenda, based on reciprocal commitments.
- The Council adopted conclusions on Sudan, recognising the opportunity for democracy, peace and prosperity following the political transition. They highlight Sudan's importance in the region's stability and reaffirm the EU's commitment to accompanying Sudan on its reform path towards democracy. While welcoming the transition government's recent steps, they reiterate the EU's concern for the deteriorating humanitarian situation and call upon the Sudanese authorities to remove remaining bureaucratic obstacles to humanitarian and development actors' work.
- The Council adopted conclusions on the civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Compact, reaffirming its commitment to make civilian CSDP more capable, effective, flexible and responsive. They highlight CSDP missions' significant contribution to international peace and stability as an essential part of the EU's integrated approach to external conflicts and crises. They also emphasise the need to strengthen the EU's role and capacity to act as a security provider through CSDP.

- The Council adopted conclusions on the EU Arctic policy, and noted that the EU should continue to make a significant contribution in both regional and multilateral fora.
- The Council adopted a decision in support of strengthening biological safety and security in Latin America in line with the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.
- The Council extended the implementation period of the decision in support of the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons to a total of 48 months. This extension of the implementation period will allow the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which is responsible for the technical implementation of the project, to reach its planned objectives.
- The Council adopted a decision in support of SEESAC disarmament and arms control activities in South East Europe reducing the threat of illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition.
- The Council adopted the EU position within the Ghana-EU Economic Partnership Agreement Committee regarding the definition of the concept of "originating products" and methods of administrative cooperation.
- The Council adopted a decision setting out the EU's position within the administrative committee for the international convention on the harmonisation of frontier controls of goods, which aims to reduce barriers to international trade and facilitate the movement of goods at the international level, to reduce administrative burdens on Member States.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Transport Update

#### Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[\[HCWS38\]](#)

The Department for Transport, the Treasury and the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy have been in discussions with Europe's largest regional airline, Flybe, which plays an important role in the UK's connectivity by flying regional routes.

In a sign of the Prime Minister's commitment to levelling up all regions of the UK, the Government has announced additional measures to support regional connectivity across the UK, to ensure all corners of the country drive the economy, and fully benefit from prosperity in years to come.

A review of regional connectivity will ensure all nations and regions of the UK have the domestic transport connections local communities rely on – including regional services from local airports. This review, led by DfT, will consider all options to ensure we continue to have good regional connectivity. The DfT will work closely with the aviation industry, local regions and devolved nations to identify how we can support connectivity.

As part of this work and ahead of the March Budget, the Treasury will also be reviewing Air Passenger Duty (APD) to ensure regional connectivity is supported while meeting the UK's climate change commitments to meet net zero by 2050.

The outcomes of these reviews will benefit the entire industry, passengers, communities, regions and nations across the UK.

These measures featured in discussions between the Department for Transport, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and HM Treasury and Europe's largest regional airline, Flybe, which plays an important role in the UK's connectivity.

HMG was notified about the difficulties of Flybe on 11 January, and since then we have worked intensively with the company to understand their financial position and explore options. In the light of these discussions the management and shareholders on 14 January took action to set Flybe on a recovery path.