



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 16 January 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 16 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

#### ■ Asylum: Children

**Carol Monaghan:** [\[900234\]](#)

What discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the legal implications of Clause 37 of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill.

**Mr Geoffrey Cox:**

I cannot comment on Cabinet discussions, or on whether or not I have given legal advice.

What I can say is that the Government remains fully committed to the principle of family reunion and supporting the most vulnerable children. Clause 37 of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill does not represent a change of government policy in that regard. It simply removes the statutory requirement to negotiate.

#### ■ Cybercrime: Prosecutions

**Harriett Baldwin:** [\[900231\]](#)

What recent progress the CPS has made on tackling online crime.

**Andrew Bowie:** [\[900232\]](#)

What recent progress the CPS has made on tackling online crime.

**Michael Ellis:**

The CPS is committed to robustly prosecuting online crime cases, including offline offences with online elements.

In December, the CPS successfully prosecuted three men who, via fake accounts on an online dating platform, met victims to inflict horrendous violent and homophobic abuse. The defendants received significant custodial sentences of between 15 and 17 years.

#### ■ Dangerous Driving: Victim Support Schemes

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[1886\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, if he will commission an inquiry into the adequacy of support services for families of victims of dangerous driving during prosecutions for that offence.

**Michael Ellis:**

Supporting victims and witnesses throughout the criminal justice system is a key priority for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). In cases where death has been caused by dangerous driving the CPS offers an enhanced service to bereaved families, meeting with them at crucial stages of the criminal justice process to explain

the anticipated progress of the case and what is to be expected at each court hearing. The CPS commitment to bereaved families is incorporated in the Victims' Code.

Where a victim or a bereaved family, in a dangerous driving case, is not satisfied with a decision by the CPS not to charge they can seek a review under the CPS Victims Right to Review Scheme. This scheme allows for an independent review of such decisions, which can confirm or overturn them. Bereaved families will be offered a meeting at the end of the review process to discuss the outcome.

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (Victims' Code) outlines the services victims are entitled to receive, including updates on the progress of their case during an investigation or prosecution. The Government will be consulting shortly on changes to the Victims' Code, in line with the commitment in its cross-government Victims Strategy.

## ■ Immigration: EU Nationals

**Deidre Brock:**

[\[900237\]](#)

If he will hold discussions with the Home Secretary on defining the term Reasonable Excuse for missing the deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme.

**Mr Geoffrey Cox:**

I regularly meet ministerial colleagues to discuss important issues of common interest, including of course on matters relating to the UK's exit from the EU. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on the detail of those discussions.

The question of the deadline for the EU Settlement Scheme is a matter for the Home Secretary, but I can assure the Member for Edinburgh North and Leith that the Home Office will publish guidance on what will constitute 'reasonable grounds' for missing the deadline for the EU Settlement Scheme.

## ■ Rape: Criminal Proceedings

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:**

[\[2670\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what the average number of days taken from a report of rape to a decision to charge was in each year since 2015.

**Michael Ellis:**

Records held by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) provide data showing the average number of days from receipt of the pre-charge case from the police to the decision to charge. The CPS does not have a record of the number of days from the date a crime was reported to the police to the date the police refer the case to CPS for a charging decision.

The table below shows the average number of days from the date a case is received from the police to the date the decision to charge was taken for cases flagged as rape in each year from 2015/16 to 2018/19.

	2015 – 2016	2016 – 2017	2017 – 2018	2018 - 2019
Average police and CPS time to charge	52.70	67.28	77.98	107.68

In cases where a file is submitted to the CPS for early investigative advice or where there is insufficient evidence to bring a charge at the first referral, the prosecutor will advise the police officer on the further evidence to be gathered. Once this further evidence has been gathered the officer will return the case to the CPS in order for a charging decision to be made. With the increase in use of early investigative advice, the CPS is more often involved at an earlier stage in proceedings, which has an effect on the average number of consultations and overall timeliness.

### ■ Rape: Prosecutions

#### Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[\[2669\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many and what proportion of cases of suspected rape were given No Further Action as a result of insufficient evidence to proceed in each of the last three years.

#### Michael Ellis:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) maintains a central record of the number of suspects, flagged as rape suspects, referred to prosecutors for a pre-charge decision and the number of decisions not to prosecute suspects following the charging decision.

The table below shows the volume and percentage of legal decisions not to prosecute for evidential reasons in each year from 2016/17 to 2018/19.

	2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019	
	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%
Legal Decision: No Further Action: Evidential	2061	31.2%	1786	29.7	1816	35.5

Data Source: Case Management Information System

### ■ Sentencing

#### Philip Davies:

[\[900229\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, if he will extend the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme to include additional offences.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme is an important avenue for victims, family members and the public to ensure justice is delivered in the most serious cases.

This is why the Government has extended the scheme to cover further child sexual abuse offences, as well as some domestic abuse offences, including controlling and coercive behavior.

The remit of the scheme remains under constant review. We work closely with stakeholders to ensure it appropriately reflects the needs of victims, family members and the public.

**■ Sexual Offences: Convictions**

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:** [\[2667\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps the Government is taking to improve conviction rates for rape and sexual offences.

**Michael Ellis:**

Rape is a devastating offence that can have a significant and profound impact on victims, and the CPS is committed to bringing perpetrators of these horrific crimes to justice. The CPS welcomes and accepts all recommendations made in HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate's 'Rape Inspection' report, published in December 2019, and joint work with the police is already underway to make improvements. This work covers a range of areas, including case progression, digital capability and disclosure, expertise, supporting victims, and stakeholder engagement.

The ongoing cross-Government review into this complex area will offer comprehensive findings across the whole criminal justice system, and I look forward to its completion.

**■ Sexual Offences: Prosecutions**

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:** [\[2668\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps he is taking to increase the number of reported rape and sexual offences that are brought to trial.

**Michael Ellis:**

The reduction in suspects charged in rape and serious sexual offence cases is a cause of concern. Both Government and the CPS are committed to exploring what improvements can be made to the handling of these horrific cases and making progress in this area.

The CPS welcomes and has accepted all recommendations made in HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate's 'Rape Inspection' report, published in December 2019, and a joint action plan with the police is already underway to make improvements. The ongoing cross-Government review into this complex area will also offer comprehensive findings across the whole criminal justice system, and I look

forward to its completion. The CPS will address any issues highlighted by the review openly and honestly.

## BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

### ■ Easter

**Sir Greg Knight:**

[\[1695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to bring into force the provisions of the Easter Act 1928 to fix the date of Easter.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Government has no plans to bring into force the provisions of the Easter Act 1928 to fix the date of Easter.

### ■ Fireworks: Safety

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[1324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has made on developing a fact-based evidence base relating to firework safety; and if the OPSS will make that evidence base available to the public.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) is developing a fact-based evidence base on the key issues that have been raised around fireworks. This includes looking at data on noise and disturbance, anti-social behaviour, non-compliance, environmental impact, and the impact on humans and animals. This will build a fuller picture of the data around fireworks in order to identify whether further action is appropriate.

The evidence base work includes reviewing existing literature, research and data sources which are already publicly available. The work to develop a full evidence base is an ongoing exercise which is not time limited and we will report in due course.

### ■ Gratuities

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[1371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when her Department plans to (a) respond to the 2016 consultation on tips, gratuities, cover and service charges and (b) bring forward legislative proposals to tackle unfair practices in the hospitality sector.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

We have already implemented a number of recommendations from the Taylor Review, and as announced in the Queens' Speech, we will be bringing forward an Employment Rights Bill to deliver the greatest reform of workers' rights in over 20 years.

This legislation will make workplaces fairer, by providing better support for working families, new protections for those in low-paid work and the gig economy, and by encouraging flexible working.

One of the core measures to the Bill is ensuring that tips and service charges left for workers go to them in full, supporting fairness for workers in the hospitality sector.

## ■ Living Wage

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[1079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate she has made of the number of people paid below the Real Living Wage in (a) London and (b) the rest of the UK.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

*[Holding answer 15 January 2020]:* This Government is committed to building an economy that works for everyone. Through the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and the National Living Wage (NLW) the Government protects the lowest paid within our society and ensures they are fairly rewarded for their contribution to the economy.

The NMW and NLW rates are legal minimum thresholds. These rates are different from the Living Wage which is a voluntary minimum rate of pay endorsed by the Living Wage Foundation. The Government commends the work of the Living Wage Foundation and those employers who commit to paying the Living Wage rates.

In April 2020, we will be increasing the NLW by 6.2% to £8.72 meeting the Government's target of reaching 60% of median earnings by 2020. The Low Pay Commission estimates that these increases to the NMW and NLW will directly benefit over 2.8 million people. Last year, the Chancellor pledged to raise the NLW further, to two-thirds of median earnings, to an expected £10.50 by 2024, making the UK the first major economy in the world to set such an ambition.

## ■ Pay

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[2530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which employers underpaid the National (a) Living and (b) Minimum Wage in 2018-19.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Government is committed to ensuring that everyone entitled to the National Living Wage (NLW) and National Minimum Wage (NMW) receives it. This is why we have more than doubled the compliance and enforcement budget for the NMW and NLW to £27.4 million for 2019/20, up from £13.2 million in 2015/16.

In 2018/19, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) identified a record £24.4 million in minimum wage arrears for over 220,000 workers and issued over £17 million in penalties to non-compliant employers.

The Naming Scheme is the appropriate mechanism to state which employers have underpaid National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage. The Department of

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is reviewing the Naming Scheme; the outcome of that review will be published in due course.

## ■ **Small Businesses: Yorkshire and the Humber**

**Mr David Davis:**

**[1684]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support small businesses in (a) Haltemprice and Howden constituency and (b) Yorkshire and the Humber.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Government is committed to supporting all entrepreneurs to start and grow a business, to create jobs and spread prosperity.

In the North Yorkshire and Humber regions businesses can access support through [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk), the Business Support Helpline (0300 456 3565) and their local Growth Hubs (York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Growth Hub and Humber Growth Hub). These are led and governed by the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding and the Humber Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). Growth Hubs provide a free, impartial, 'single point of contact' to help businesses in these areas identify and access the right support for them at the right time no matter their size or sector. In 2018-2019 the two Growth Hubs supported 14,939 businesses and helped 81 new businesses to start up.

In addition, within the Humber LEP area, the 'Growing the Humber' business investment programme has supported the creation of over 2,800 jobs to date. This signposts anyone interested to a range of business support information, as well as to organisations that provide a wide variety of services, including funding, support, advice, mentoring and business services who can help business start-up, survive and thrive.

The Department for International Trade in Yorkshire and the Humber works with a network of International Trade Advisers and partners across the region to enable local businesses to showcase their products and services overseas, with their Northern Powerhouse team running bespoke Trade missions. Since April 2016, there have been 68 Northern Powerhouse missions to 19 countries, supporting 1,252 companies. As we leave the EU, they will be working to deepen our trading ties with overseas markets to maximise export opportunities for small businesses.

The British Business Bank (BBB) with a consortia of LEPs manages the £400m Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund (NPIF), which celebrated the milestone of having invested £100m in 385 Northern-based SMEs. This support addresses the disparity in availability of regional finance was further bolstered last autumn, with a £100m Business Angel investment programme was launched to support clusters of business angels outside London.

The BBB has also established a UK-wide Network of regional managers working with business support partners, delivering advice tailored to local needs.

The Government-backed British Business Bank's Start-Up Loans programme provides loans to entrepreneurs seeking to start and grow their own businesses. Since 2012, 5,875 loans have been issued in the Yorkshire and the Humber region, totalling over £49m, and with an average loan amount of £8,459. In the Haltemprice and Howden constituency, 108 loans have been issued, totalling over £974,000 (as at end-December 2019).

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Average Earnings: York

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[1910\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate his Department has made of the average weekly gross earnings of (a) men, (b) women and (c) people working full-time in York in each year since 2015.

**Chloe Smith:**

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Response [PQ1910.pdf]

### ■ EU Nationals: Northern Ireland

**Jim McMahon:** [\[2575\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) non-UK EU and (b) Republic of Ireland nationals moved from (i) the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland and (ii) Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland in the most recent period for which such data is available.

**Chloe Smith:**

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Response [PQ2575.pdf]

## DEFENCE

### ■ Iraq: Armed Forces

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[2545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent steps he has taken to enhance the security of military personnel based in Iraq following the attacks on Al Asad and Erbil air bases on 8 January 2020.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

We have paused counter-Daesh military activities in Iraq to focus on protecting the Iraqi bases that host Coalition personnel, taking every precaution to ensure the safety of the British and Coalition personnel based in the region. The safety and security of personnel is of paramount importance and force protection measures and advice are under constant review.

**Iraq: Bombings**

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[2544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the potential increase in the risk to UK military personnel in Iraq following the attacks on Al Asad and Erbil air bases on 8 January 2020.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The recent attacks on Coalition bases in Iraq have threatened the safety of Coalition and Iraqi personnel. We have changed our posture and reallocated resources to prioritise force protection.

**Islamic State**

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[1378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the level of (a) the resurgence of Daesh in Iraq and (b) the threat posed by Daesh on the stability in the Middle East.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Daesh's capability has been significantly degraded in recent times. Nonetheless, it continues to have a presence in northern and central Iraq where it continues to conduct small scale attacks against civilians, security forces and infrastructure by taking advantage of a permissive operating environment.

Daesh is one of many threats to stability in the Middle East. Regional partners and the international community must continue to disrupt Daesh's activity to limit the scope for Daesh to re-grow their support base. Any successful response to a Daesh resurgence in Iraq will depend on the effectiveness of security and governance and addressing poor socio-economic prospects and sectarian tensions.

**Military Aircraft**

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[1668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the four BAe 146 aircraft based at RAF Northolt will be retired from service; when replacements for those aircraft will be procured; how many such replacements will be procured; how much funding from the public purse has been allocated to replacing those aircraft; and whether the RAF Voyager ZZ336 will be used for short haul trips previously undertaken by those aircraft.

**James Heappey:**

The current fleet of four BAe 146 aircraft are planned to be retired from Service on 31 March 2022.

Replacements for those aircraft are currently under consideration as part of normal capability planning.

The fleet of 14 Voyager will continue to support the collective Air Transport task including VIP and Command Support Air Transport tasking.

**Gareth Thomas:**[\[1669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list all of the flights flown by (a) No. 32 squadron since May 2016 and (b) all of the flights flown by aircraft ZZ336.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

This information is not held in the format requested. However, I am able to provide the number of taskings undertaken by 32 (The Royal) Squadron and Voyager ZZ336 flights by financial year(FY).

This is provided in the table below. Figures exclude routine aircrew training and engineering test flights.

FINANCIAL YEAR	FY2016-17	FY2017-18	FY2018-19	FY2019-20*
32 (The Royal) Sqn ( <i>Taskings</i> ) Note 1	301	360	327	217
Voyager ZZ336 ( <i>Flights</i> )Note 2	68	110	109	74

\*1 Apr-31 December only

Note 1- Each task could include multiple separate flights

Note 2-When not in use as a VIP aircraft, Voyager ZZ336 is also used for air-to-air refuelling alongside the rest of the Voyager fleet based at RAF Brize Norton.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Christian Matheson:**[\[900208\]](#)

What plans the Government has to introduce a music strategy.

**Nigel Adams:**

We recognise the significant contribution of British music to the UK, both culturally and economically and I recognise the case for a music strategy. In 2018, music contributed £5.2bn to our economy, reached £2.5bn in exports and sustained over 190,000 jobs.

We have taken a number of steps to support the industry, including reforming licensing and planning guidance and providing £1.5m ACE funding to support grassroots venues.

We are looking to develop a music strategy in the forthcoming months and will be working closely with the UK music sector.

**Andy Carter:**

[\[900216\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to support further growth of the creative industries in the North West.

**Nigel Adams:**

Government and industry launched a Sector Deal for the Creative Industries in 2018, with more than £150m of funding. This aims to unlock growth for creative businesses across the country, and the North West benefits from a number of programmes within the Sector Deal.

These include a Creative Scale Up programme to help small creative businesses access the finance they need to grow and is launching today in the Manchester region.

**Mary Glendon:**

[\[900217\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to increase sports coverage on free-to-air television.

**Nigel Adams:**

The listed events regime strikes a balance between retaining free-to-air sporting events for the public while allowing rights holders to negotiate agreements in the best interests of their sport.

To give equal recognition to disabled and women's sports, the government is currently consulting on the addition of the Paralympics and certain women's events to the listed events regime. However, the government does not have any plans to carry out a full review of the list.

## ■ Arts Council: Location

**Tracy Brabin:**

[\[2673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of relocating the Arts Council outside of London.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government has committed to ensure that the administration of government is less London-centric and to locate more Civil Service roles and public bodies out of London and into the regions and nations of the United Kingdom

The Arts Council's Head Office is in Manchester, and the majority of its staff are based there. The Arts Council also has a network of a further eight Area Offices across the country: with offices in Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Leeds,

London, Newcastle and Nottingham. Senior staff with sector expertise are based in each local area, and work closely with local strategic partners.

The Cabinet Office Places for Growth team is working with departments and public bodies on any future relocation plans.

#### ■ **Broadband and Mobile Phones: Rural Areas**

**Damian Hinds:** [\[900207\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to improve (a) broadband and (b) mobile phone coverage in rural areas.

**Edward Timpson:** [\[900211\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to improve (a) broadband and (b) mobile phone coverage in rural areas.

**Matt Warman:**

The government's £200m Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme is already supporting rollout of gigabit broadband in rural areas.

The government has also pledged £5bn of funding for Gigabit broadband in the 'hardest to reach', predominantly rural, areas of the UK.

The government announced in-principle support in October 2019 for the Mobile Network Operators' Shared Rural Network proposal. It aims to collectively increase 4G mobile coverage throughout the United Kingdom to 95% by 2025.

#### ■ **Broadband: Bosworth**

**Dr Luke Evans:** [\[900209\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to improve broadband connections in Bosworth constituency.

**Matt Warman:**

The government has made good progress in Bosworth, with over 97% of premises able to access superfast speeds. This is up from 57% in 2010.

Only 1% of premises in the constituency of Bosworth have speeds below 15 Megabits per second. This is testament to the great work undertaken by the Superfast Leicestershire superfast broadband rollout programme, which has been boosted by just under £8 million of central government funding. In October 2018 the 600th Superfast Fibre cabinet in Leicestershire was unveiled in Market Bosworth.

#### ■ **Broadband: Rural Areas**

**Alan Brown:** [\[1362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to respond to the 18 September 2019 report of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, An Update on Rural Connectivity, Seventeenth Report of Session 2017-19, HC 2223.

**Matt Warman:**

The government has prepared a response to the EFRA committee, which will be submitted when the committee is reformed.

**■ Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland****Hywel Williams:**[\[2439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what (a) artists and (b) acts have been confirmed to perform in the Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Helen Whately:**

DCMS has recently asked the Organising Committee for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, under the leadership of its Chief Creative Officer, to develop the Festival programme. Details will be shared as this work develops.

**■ Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: Expenditure****Hywel Williams:**[\[2437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much has been spent from the public purse on preparations for the Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to be held in 2022.

**Helen Whately:**

DCMS has spent £891,365 on preparations for the Festival 2022 (to December 2019). This includes work on the Festival scope and strategic objectives, discussions with other government departments and the home nations on the Festival plan, and DCMS staff costs.

**Hywel Williams:**[\[2438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment the Government has made of the cost effectiveness of proposed spending on the Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Helen Whately:**

DCMS has asked the Organising Committee for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, under the leadership of its Chief Creative Officer, to develop a proposal for the Festival by the spring. Once the Festival proposal has been agreed, we will assess the cost-effectiveness of the Festival through the HM Treasury business case process.

**■ Football: Sportsgrounds****Tracy Brabin:**[\[2676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she had with the (a) Premier League, (b) Football League and (c) Football Association on introducing safe standing in football grounds.

**Nigel Adams:**

I meet with the Premier League, the Football League, the Football Association, the Sports Grounds Safety Authority and the Football Supporters Association regularly to discuss a variety of matters including this government's commitment to move towards areas of standing in football stadia currently subject to the all-seater policy. I will be setting out the government's intention in this area in due course.

■ **Gambling: Children****Martyn Day:**[\[2596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to include in the Online Harms Bill provisions to tackle the potential risk of problem gambling to children of online gaming.

**Matt Warman:**

As problem gambling is not commonly associated with user-generated content, we do not anticipate that it will be addressed through the Online Harms regulatory framework.

However, the government is aware of concerns that entertainment products, such as some video games, could encourage gambling-like behaviour. We have committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 to make sure it is fit for the digital age, and to tackle issues surrounding loot boxes. We will announce further details in due course.

■ **Lotteries: Charities****Philip Davies:**[\[1703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the timeframe is for the proposed increase in charity lottery limits announced on 16 July 2019 to come into force.

**Helen Whately:**

New limits to the per draw sales, annual sales and maximum prize for society lotteries were announced on 16 July 2019. Affirmative secondary legislation is required to change the limits, and the Gambling Commission is also required to consult on changes to its Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice (LCCP).

I hope to lay the draft Order in Parliament in January 2020, and the changes to come into force during 2020. The Order will include transitional arrangements for the first year, to enable operators to take advantage of the new limits as soon as possible.

The Gambling Commission has already launched its consultation in anticipation of the legislation, and this will help ensure the new limits can come into force as swiftly as possible. Their consultation also covers measures to improve transparency of society lotteries and will run until 12 March 2020. There will then be a further 3 month notice period before the changes can be implemented, which is likely to be in the summer.

**■ Museums and Galleries and Public Libraries: Crawley****Henry Smith:****[1721]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to support (a) local libraries and (b) regional museums in Crawley constituency.

**Helen Whately:**

Local libraries Local authorities in England have a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. It is for individual local authorities to decide how best to provide a public library service that meets local needs within their available resources. The net expenditure on the library service by local authorities in England increased in 2018/19 from 2017/18.

In October 2019, DCMS announced the £250 million Cultural Investment Fund, of which over £125 million will be invested in regional museums and libraries over five years from 2020/21. The funds will be used to upgrade buildings and technology so public libraries across England are better placed to respond to the changing ways people are using them.

West Sussex Council received £178,830 from Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone Innovation Fund in 2018 to ensure more people had access to digital technology by establishing a collection of tablets and laptops that could be loaned out to the local community. The emphasis of the project was on meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups within the council's communities – such as older people or adults with learning disabilities.

Arts Council England, funded by DCMS, is the development agency for libraries, and also provides support to public libraries in England. Arts Council England is providing £1.6 million per annum to seven libraries' organisations through its National Portfolio 2018 to 2022, including Libraries Connected, which is funded as the Sector Support Organisation for public libraries.

Regional Museums In 2018, Crawley Museum reopened after an extensive, publicly funded renovation project. The project received £1.15m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and £763,000 from Crawley Borough Council.

This independent local history museum puts community participation at its heart, including through its current exhibition in partnership with members of the Crawley Kashmiri community on the history, traditions and culture of Azad Kashmir.

Museums around the country are supported by Arts Council England as the development agency for the sector. Museums can contact area offices and Museum Development services to find out what support is available, such as National Lottery Project Grants which fund a range of activities such as developing collections, audiences, and skills. The South East Museum Development Programme is managed by a consortia of museums led by the Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton and Hove, and will receive £2m of funding from the Arts Council 2018-22.

## ■ Orchestras

**Stephen Timms:** [\[2412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to support orchestras in the UK.

**Helen Whately:**

In the past five years, Arts Council England (ACE) has invested over £107 million in orchestras and related classical music organisations in its National Portfolio. This figure does not include ACE investment in Opera companies, each of whom also support their own orchestra. As culture is a devolved matter, this figure excludes funding decisions taken by the devolved administrations in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Orchestras have also benefited from the Government's introduction of the Orchestras Tax Relief (OTR), which is helping to support the increase of productions, especially via touring. Since the introduction of the OTR in 2016, £23 million has been paid out relating to 170 claims and 770 productions.

## ■ Orchestras: Travel

**Stephen Timms:** [\[2413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to support UK orchestras to tour throughout the world.

**Helen Whately:**

Our British orchestras are renowned across the globe for their world-leading performances; collectively touring to an average of 35 countries per year. We understand the importance of being able to tour, and recognise that it depends on performers and crew being able to move quickly and easily between countries, taking necessary equipment with them.

As we increase and develop our links with countries across the globe, we will continue our close dialogue with the sector, maintaining our deep understanding of sectoral need and ambition. We will ensure that the interests of our great cultural institutions are considered at every opportunity, including during the development of future trade agreements.

## ■ Rugby: Finance

**Tracy Brabin:** [\[2678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding her Department has provided to grassroots rugby league in each of the last three years.

**Nigel Adams:**

Through Sport England, government has invested the following in grassroots rugby league in each of the last three years:

- 2016/17: £2.58m

- 2017/18: £5.18m
- 2018/19: £2.76m

These figures include investment in both the Rugby Football League Ltd as the national governing body for the sport, together with investment in specific community rugby league projects.

Over this time period, Sport England has invested a further £9.27m in multi-sport projects where rugby league is one of the sports benefitting.

As part of its support for grassroots rugby league, government is also investing up to £10m in rugby league facilities to help drive a legacy from the 2021 Rugby League World Cup.

## ■ Social Media

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[1385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to ensure the accuracy of content loader information on social media.

**Matt Warman:**

We published the Online Harms White Paper in April last year, setting out plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online.

Our proposals would establish a new statutory duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. The duty of care will ensure companies have appropriate systems and processes in place to deal with harmful content on their services to keep their users safe

## ■ Sport England: Finance

**Tracy Brabin:**

[\[2677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding her Department has allocated from the public purse to Sport England in each of the last three years.

**Nigel Adams:**

Sport England receives both Grant-In-Aid (GIA) funding and good causes funding from the National Lottery from DCMS. The allocated totals for each of the past three years are:

- 2016/17: £105.6m GIA; £202.8m National Lottery
- 2017/18: £100.8m GIA; £203.3m National Lottery
- 2018/19: £104.5 GIA; £199.4m National Lottery

Overall income from the National Lottery Distribution Fund is variable and dependent on ticket sales. Sport England receives 12.4% of the Lottery returns to good causes which results in variable annual Lottery income to the organisation.

## ■ Swimming Pools

**Sir Desmond Swayne:** [R] [1662]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential effect on opportunities for swimming for (a) club members and (b) the general public of the Royal Parks' plans for the Serpentine Lido.

**Helen Whately:**

The Secretary of State has made no such assessment. This is an operational matter for the Chief Executive of The Royal Parks, who I have asked to write to you directly regarding this matter. We will place a copy in the House Library.

## ■ Youth Services

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [1785]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to increase the availability of youth services.

**Helen Whately:**

This government is investing £500 million over five years through the new Youth Investment Fund to increase the availability of youth services. The fund will be used to build new youth centres across the country, refurbish existing youth facilities, provide mobile facilities for harder to reach areas, and invest in the youth work profession and frontline services. Government is funding up to £7 million through the Youth Accelerator Fund that will expand existing successful projects delivering positive activities, and address urgent needs in the youth sector by delivering extra sessions in youth clubs.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Arts: Primary Education

**Barbara Keeley:** [2464]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the additional funding from the Arts Premium that will be allocated to primary schools.

**Barbara Keeley:** [2465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what role music will play in the introduction of the Arts Premium for secondary schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

Arts education is an important part of a broad and balanced curriculum and should not be the preserve of the elite but the entitlement of every single child. Between 2016-20 the Department is providing almost £500 million of funding for a range of creative and performance arts education programmes including Music Education Hubs, the Music and Dance Scheme, the Dance and Drama Awards, and a set of diverse cultural education programmes. As set out in the manifesto and in early

January, we also announced funding of £85 million for music and arts in 2020-21; £80 million for music hubs coupled with further investment in film, dance, theatre and design.

The Department believes that the arts help young people to learn creative skills and widen their horizons, so we will also offer an 'arts premium' to secondary schools to fund enriching activities for all pupils. We will share further details on the premium in due course.

## ■ Children: Day Care

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

**[2434]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the average per-hour cost of childcare (a) in a nursery and (b) with a childminder in (i) Wallasey, (ii) Liverpool city region and (iii) the North West in each year since 2015.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government published data on the cost of delivering childcare in the North West of England for 2015 and 2018. The average hourly costs of delivery, with the respective publications from which the data is sourced, are:

	2015 [1]		2018 [2]	2018 [3]	
	2-year-olds	3- and 4-year-olds	All ages	2 year-olds	3- and 4-year-olds
<b>All Settings</b>	£3.70 (n=16)	£3.28 (n=19)	£3.16 (n=184)	£3.88 (n=8)	£4.02 (n=11)

The Government does not hold data relating specifically to the Wallasey constituency or Liverpool City Region.

[1] Table 16 of 'SEED: The cost and funding of early education' and is available at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/586235/SEED - The cost and funding of early education - RR552.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/586235/SEED_-_The_cost_and_funding_of_early_education_-_RR552.pdf).

[2] Table 17 of 'Providers' finances: Evidence from the Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2018' and is available at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/795332/Frontier - SCEYP 2018 Finance Report v2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/795332/Frontier_-_SCEYP_2018_Finance_Report_v2.pdf).

[3] Figure 8 (2-year-olds) and figure 19 (3- and 4-year-olds) of 'Early Years Provider Costs Research' and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-providers-cost-study-2018>.

Average hourly costs are based on different collection methodologies and from different sources, so comparability is limited.

Figures in brackets indicate base sizes. Bases sizes under 50 cases should be treated with caution.

“All settings” is defined as private, voluntary, nursery class, maintained nursery schools, /children’s centre and childminder

“North West of England” is defined according to regional definition which can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/administrativegeography/england#regions-former-gors>.

## ■ Children: Social Services

**Mr Steve Reed:** [2548]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to bring forward proposals for long term reform of the children's social care system as set out in the December 2019 Queen's Speech.

**Mr Steve Reed:** [2552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will bring forward proposals for a central register of foster parents.

**Mr Steve Reed:** [2553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will bring forward proposals for the regulation of semi-supported housing for young people.

### **Michelle Donelan:**

Every child growing up in care should have a stable, secure environment where they feel supported, regardless of the type of their placement. Due to this reason, we are committed to undertaking a review of the care system. This was set out in the Conservative Party’s manifesto and it is an early priority to deliver on this commitment. Doing so will allow us to go even further and to make sure that all care placements and settings provide children and young people with the support they need.

‘Fostering Better Outcomes (2018)’ sets out our ambitions for foster care, including our plans to undertake a digital project to explore how technology can help improve the quality and consistency of data on foster parents, to inform recruitment, planning and vacancy management. This project has been underway since October 2019. The aim of the project is not to design a central register but to improve our understanding of the feasibility and potential of national digital approaches to addressing the current challenges.

While most children in care are placed in children’s homes or foster care, an increasing number of children are placed in independent and semi-independent settings. For many older children, this is the right type of placement to meet their needs and develop their independence ahead of adult life. Where local authorities place children in these settings, they must ensure that these settings are suitable. It is

unacceptable for any child to be placed for any amount of time in a setting that does not meet their needs and keep them safe.

We cannot imagine a circumstance under which a child under the age of 16 should be placed in an independent or semi-independent setting that does not deliver care, and my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has written to local authorities asking them to review these placements. We are considering where we must go further to ensure that these settings are used appropriately and that they are of good quality.

## ■ Foster Care: Conditions of Employment

**Martyn Day:** [\[2599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department is taking steps to introduce workers' rights and protections for foster carers classed as self-employed; and if he will make a statement.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The Department for Education has policy responsibility for fostering and foster parents. We have no plans to issue a statement on the employment status of foster parents.

I refer the hon. Member for Linlithgow and East Falkirk to the answer I gave on 7 January 2020 to Question [333](#).

## ■ Free School Meals: Nutrition

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[2542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that schools cater for all dietary requirements for students entitled to free school meals.

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[2543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what funding he plans to allocate to support schools in the provision of meals for children with dietary requirements that are entitled to free school meals.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Food allergies can be complex and worrying for parents and because of their complexity, it would not be appropriate for the department to legislate that food providers cater for all dietary requirements. However, through legislation, the minimum standards for school food have been set out. Guidance for schools is available on gov.uk at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>. Additional supporting information on allergies is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/allergy-guidance-for-schools>.

Beyond this headteachers, school governors and their caterers are best placed to make decisions about their school food policies taking account of local and individual

circumstances. We allocate £440 of funding per child, per year (which is the equivalent of £2.30 per day for a school year) to local authorities for each of the pupils in their area eligible for free school meals. Local authorities then distribute this money to schools through their local funding formula. School leaders then have autonomy over how this funding is used in relation to their school meal arrangements.

#### ■ Nurseries: Wallasey

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [2435]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many nursery places were available in Wallasey in each of the last 10 years.

**Nick Gibb:**

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

#### ■ Pupil Exclusions: Battersea

**Marsha De Cordova:** [2674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of (a) school students and (b) BAME school students were excluded in Battersea in 2019.

**Marsha De Cordova:** [2675]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of (a) school students and (b) Black, African and Caribbean school students were excluded in Battersea in 2019.

**Nick Gibb:**

Exclusions data for 2019 are not yet available. The National Statistics release 'Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England 2017 to 2018' has further information on the number and rate of permanent and fixed period exclusions, the data for which has been presented in the attached table.

The release is available here : <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2017-to-2018> .

#### Attachments:

1. 2647\_2675\_Table [2674\_2675\_table\_on\_2017\_18\_exclusions\_in\_Battersea.xls]

#### ■ Schools: Standards

**Sir David Evennett:** [1292]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support and improve stuck schools; and what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the January 2020 Ofsted report, Fight or flights? How stuck schools are overcoming isolation.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is committed to tackling entrenched underperformance in schools wherever it exists. For inadequate maintained schools, this includes becoming an academy to benefit from the support of a strong sponsor; or for inadequate academies, transferring them to a stronger academy trust if necessary.

In addition, last September, following confirmation of the biggest funding boost for schools in a decade, totaling an additional £14 billion over three years, the Department announced that we will provide more support to “stuck” schools from high-performing, experienced school leaders, and these mechanisms are now being put in place.

We also confirmed that we would work with Ofsted so that it can provide more detailed analysis on areas for improvement for these schools. We have been doing so and will be confirming details in due course. This announcement can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-drive-to-continue-boosting-standards-in-schools>.

**Special Educational Needs: Admissions****Mr Steve Reed:**[\[2551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to provide more school places for children with complex special educational needs.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government is committed to investing in school places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The Department has allocated £365 million to local authorities across 2018 to 2021 through the Special Provision Capital Fund. This funding supports local authorities to create places for pupils with SEND. This funding also improves facilities for them in mainstream and special schools, nurseries, colleges and other education providers. The Department will continue to keep capital funding for pupils with SEND under review ahead of the next Spending Review.

In addition to this, 43 new Special Free Schools have opened since 2012 with a further 48 approved to open in the future. This will provide an additional 5,000 high quality new places. The Department also approved bids from local authorities for 37 new Special Schools and hope to announce the successful trusts to run these schools early this year.

**Students: Data Protection****Layla Moran:**[\[1920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of students who had personal confidential data distributed by the Office for Students to third parties since its inception in January 2018; and to which third parties that data was distributed.

**Layla Moran:**

**[1921]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Office for Students plans to publish (a) a register of the recipients of students' personal confidential data and (b) its terms of reference on data distribution.

**Chris Skidmore:**

The Office for Students (OfS) was established through the Higher Education and Research Act (2017), which gave it operational independence in the regulation of the higher education sector. This extends to the holding and sharing of different types of data. In December 2018 the OfS published its data strategy, setting out:

“Where we share data with third parties in support of our regulatory activities, we will only do so where we can be sure that the rights and privacy of individuals are assured. We will ensure that those that process students’ data on our behalf operate to the same high standards. Our uses of data should never go beyond those that students might expect from a responsible regulator acting in their interests.”

Further to this, the OfS Data Protection and Privacy Policy sets out how it complies with data protection legislation. This is available here:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/ofs-privacy>.

## ■ Teachers: Training

**Angela Rayner:**

**[2554]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that teachers have the training necessary to teach the new Relationships and Sex Education curriculum from September 2020.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is investing in a central programme of support for schools to help teachers introduce the new subjects of relationships education (for primary aged pupils), relationships and sex education (for secondary aged pupils) and health education (for all pupils in state-funded schools). This programme will include a new online service, featuring an implementation guide, training materials, and resources that teachers need to teach the new subjects. We are working with expert organisations, schools and teachers to develop this support. There will also be training available for teachers through regional networks, offering opportunities to improve subject knowledge and build confidence.

We have also been working closely with over 1,600 schools who are acting on a voluntary basis as early adopters of the new subjects, so that we can support their journey, learn lessons and share good practice amongst all schools.

## ■ Universities: Fossil Fuels

**Catherine West:**

**[2580]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Government is proactively encouraging universities to divest from fossil fuel based activities.

**Chris Skidmore:**

The government wants the public and higher education sectors to lead by example through reducing energy use and driving decarbonisation across the UK economy. Last year I published an article calling on Universities to lead the climate change debate:

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/climate-change-carbon-neutral\\_uk\\_5d08a9cae4b0ea7c4a4f220b](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/climate-change-carbon-neutral_uk_5d08a9cae4b0ea7c4a4f220b).

It is an important issue for universities to consider and we will continue to engage with them on this.

**EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**■ **Brexit****Hywel Williams:****[2441]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions he has had with the representatives of the Welsh Government on (a) Wales and (b) the UK participation in (i) Erasmus, (ii) Creative Europe and (iii) Horizon Europe after the UK leaves the EU.

**James Duddridge:**

The Secretary of State most recently had a bilateral meeting with Jeremy Miles AM on 9 January 2020 to discuss a number of topics. The Joint Ministerial Committee on EU negotiations also took place on 9 January 2020 which was attended by Lord Callanan, Minister of State.

If it is in the UK's interests we will seek to participate in some EU programmes, such as those related to science, research and innovation, as a third country. The Political Declaration provides for this possibility, and the terms of participation would be a matter for upcoming negotiations.

■ **NHS: Migrant Workers****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[1784]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the effect on NHS staffing levels of the UK leaving the EU.

**James Duddridge:**

DExEU Ministers continue to hold regular discussions with the Department of Health and Social Care Ministers. The Government hugely values the contribution of EU staff to the NHS. We have taken steps to ensure that existing staff are able to remain working and living in the UK through the EU Settlement Scheme; and we will seek to ensure qualifications from the EU will continue to be recognised after we have exited the European Union.

Since the referendum, there are almost 7,300 more EU nationals working in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the Government has pledged to increase nurse numbers by 50,000 in the next five years, and give all nursing students on courses from September 2020 a payment of at least £5,000 which they will not need to pay back.

Recruitment for the NHS does not stop at the EU, we recruit talented individuals from all over the globe. The Government will launch a new visa to ensure qualified doctors, nurses and health professionals have fast-track entry to work in the United Kingdom. This will help ensure that there will be sufficient numbers of staff following the UK's exit from the EU to enable the delivery of the high-quality services on which the public relies.

The Department for Health and Social Care continues to monitor and analyse staffing levels across the NHS and social care.

<sup>1</sup> NHS Hospital and Community Health Service (HCHS) Workforce Statistics in England, NHS Digital, (Dec 2019). Figure based on comparison between June 2016 and September 2019.

## ■ UK Relations with EU

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[2440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on taking a sector-by-sector agreements approach to negotiations on the future relationship between the UK and the EU.

**James Duddridge:**

We recognise the importance of working closely with colleagues in the devolved administrations on preparations for negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU, and the significant interests of the devolved administrations and responsibilities for implementation in a number of areas.

The Secretary of State most recently met with Jeremy Miles AM on 9 January 2020. The Joint Ministerial Committee on EU negotiations also took place on 9 January 2020 which was attended by Lord Callanan, Minister of State, and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### ■ Bahrain: Human Rights

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[1712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make it his policy to end UK assistance to Bahraini justice and security institutions and if he will maintain that policy until the implementation of human rights reforms in Bahrain; and if he will make a statement.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

Bahrain remains a Foreign and Commonwealth Office human rights priority country and there is further work to be done. The UK is committed to supporting Bahrain-led reform and are confident of its positive impact across a variety of areas including building effective and accountable institutions, strengthening the rule of law, and police and justice reform. We continue to monitor events closely, regularly raising human rights concerns with the Government of Bahrain at senior levels, both in private and public.

■ **Bahrain: Political Prisoners****Caroline Lucas:**[\[1711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterpart in the Bahrain Government on the reimposition of the death sentences for Bahraini prisoners Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa; and if he will make a statement.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

As I tweeted on 8 January, we are deeply concerned about the death sentence given to Mohamed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa. The UK has raised the matter with senior members of the Bahraini Government. The UK's position on the use of the death penalty is longstanding and clear; we oppose its use in all circumstances and countries. The Government of Bahrain is fully aware of our position.

**Dan Carden:**[\[2591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to undertake a review of the Government's support for (a) Bahrain's Special Investigations Unit and (b) the Ombudsman of the Ministry of the Interior, following the death sentences that were handed down on 8 January 2020 to Mohammed Ramadan and Husain Moosa.

**Dan Carden:**[\[2592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the re-imposition of the death sentence for Bahraini prisoners Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa, if he will publish the assessment made under the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance guidance for training provided by the College of Policing to Bahrain's Special Investigations Unit and Ombudsman; and whether that guidance was approved by a Minister of his Department.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The UK welcomed the investigation conducted by the Special Investigation Unit on the cases of Mohammed Ramadhan and Hussain Moosa and its recommendation that the cases should be re-tried – a first in Bahrain. As I tweeted on 8 January, we are deeply concerned about the death sentences given to Mohammed Ramadhan and Hussain Moosa. The Government of Bahrain are fully aware that the UK is firmly opposed to the death penalty, in all circumstances. The UK has, and will, continue to monitor the cases closely and raise concerns with senior members of the Bahraini Government.

Bahrain remains a Foreign and Commonwealth Office Human Rights Priority Country; there is more to do, but we believe progress will only be made by working with Bahrain. Assistance, which is kept under regular review, is provided in line with international standards, and fully complies with our human rights obligations and the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance process.

## ■ Fires: Australia

**Royston Smith:** [\[1770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Government is providing humanitarian aid to assist Australia in tackling its bushfire crisis.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

As I set out in my Oral Statement of 9 January in the House of Commons, we have deployed a team of UK experts to Australia.

The team includes a senior member of UK Fire and Rescue Service, a medical specialist in trauma and mental health, and a military liaison officer specialising in crisis response.

They have been working with Australian counterparts to establish what further UK support will be of most use to Australian emergency responders, and ensure that such contributions are fully integrated with Australian efforts.

## ■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Trade Unions

**Chris Stephens:** [\[2622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation has affected the right of recognised unions in his Department to bargaining information in relation to section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The General Data Protection Regulation has not affected our legal obligations regarding sharing information under section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

## ■ Iran: USA

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[1329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made representations to US President Trump requesting him not to authorise military attacks on Iran's sites of cultural heritage following the President's threat to do so on his Twitter account on 4 January 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

Cultural sites are protected under international law and we would expect that to be respected. As we have emphasised in the House in recent days, we are in close contact with all sides to encourage de-escalation. The Prime Minister has spoken to

President Trump, President Macron, Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Abdulmehdi of Iraq and will have calls with other leaders in the coming days.

## ■ Metropolitan Police: Counter-terrorism

**Harriett Baldwin:** [\[1353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information she holds on when the Metropolitan Police counter-terrorism command plans to complete its investigation into the leak of diplomatic telegrams from the former UK Ambassador to the United States.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

The Metropolitan Police Service investigation is ongoing. This is an active criminal investigation and we have no information as to when it may conclude.

## ■ Prosperity Fund

**Dan Carden:** [\[2589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with reference to the Prosperity Fund's Global Trade Programme, what criteria was used to decide which countries would be chosen for the programme.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

The middle income countries covered by the Prosperity Fund's Global Trade Programme (GTP) were selected based on findings from qualitative and quantitative analysis, which included assessments on the potential benefits to poverty reduction through supporting their economic development, and their willingness and capacity of countries to engage with UK expertise. The GTP is currently focusing on interventions in Indonesia, Vietnam, Turkey, India, South Africa, Nigeria, Columbia, Mexico and Brazil; countries which account for a significant share of global economic activity: together they account for 26% of global GDP and 20% of global trade flows. We will keep open options to expand interventions regionally, including into other Prosperity Fund eligible countries, where there are benefits to be gained from synergies with the core programme.

**Dan Carden:** [\[2590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with reference to the Prosperity Fund's Global Trade Programme, what steps he is taking to ensure that aid funding allocated under this programme reaches the poorest people in the countries involved.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

No country can defeat poverty without sustained economic growth. Middle income countries are home to around two thirds of the world's poor, and therefore need to not only generate new investment, growth and jobs, but also need to ensure that economic growth resulting from trade is inclusive and genuinely helps to reduce poverty, support gender equality and women's economic empowerment. It is in the UK's interest to support middle income countries to tackle these challenges.

Through the Prosperity Fund Global Trade Programme we are providing technical assistance to facilitate free trade and open markets for Official Development Assistance eligible middle income countries, in turn enabling greater investment with global value chains to create jobs and prosperity and lift the poorest sectors of society out of poverty.

#### ■ Qassem Soleimani

**Jack Lopresti:** [1390]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the late General Qasem Soleimani's involvement in Lebanon.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

As the Prime Minister has said, Qasem Soleimani posed a threat to all our interests and was responsible for a pattern of disruptive, destabilising behaviour in the region.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Bereavement Counselling

**Alex Sobel:** [1793]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's 2017 response to the Review of Choice in End of Life Care, what progress his Department has made on ending variation in bereavement care by 2020.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

The funding and delivery of National Health Service bereavement services is a local matter. Bereavement care is a key part of the provision of good end of life care as set out in the Government's end of life care Choice Commitment and Government Response to the Review 'One Year On' published in September 2017.

Health Education England, in partnership with Skills for Care and Skills for Health, published a refreshed End of Life Care Core Skills Education and Training Framework in March 2017. This aims to standardise end of life care training and education, including around bereavement care.

The importance of bereavement care is also reflected in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Quality Standard on end of life care, and other NICE end of life care guidance, which commissioners should take into account when planning services for local populations. Further information is available at the following link:

[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs13/resources/end-of-life-care-for-adults-pdf-2098483631557](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs13/resources/end-of-life-care-for-adults-pdf-2098483631557)

## ■ **Drugs: Rehabilitation**

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

[\[2433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much has been spent from the public purse on substance misuse services in (a) the North West, (b) Liverpool City Region, (c) Wirral and (d) Wallasey.

**Jo Churchill:**

Reported spend on substance misuse services by local authorities in the Public Health England North West Centre area, Liverpool City region and the Wirral from 2013/14 to 2018/19 are shown in attached tables. Spend on these services was not reported in this way prior to 2013/14.

Data is not available for the Wallasey area because it is not collected at parliamentary constituency level.

**Attachments:**

1. Spend on substance misuse services [Tables for PQ2433 formatted.docx]

## ■ **Eating Disorders: Young People**

**Tim Farron:**

[\[2467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to introduce the specialist one-to-one eating disorder service for young people in south Cumbria.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

It is intended that the specialist eating disorder service in South Cumbria, which will include one to one and family-based therapies, will commence in April 2020. This is dependant on a number of factors, including consultation with existing staff and recruitment of new staff.

## ■ **General Practitioners: Training**

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**

[\[2604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department plans to allocate in 2020 to support expanding training places in general practice.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**

[\[2605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many additional GP training places his Department plans to create in 2020.

**Jo Churchill:**

In 2019/20, Health Education England (HEE) advertised 3,250 general practitioner (GP) training posts and recruited 3,540 GP trainees.

From 2020/21 HEE is planning on advertising to recruit to 3,500 GP training posts.

Discussions around the funding for training places in general practice for 2020/21 are ongoing with HEE and will be confirmed shortly.

**■ General Practitioners: Wallasey****Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[2432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce GP waiting times in Wallasey.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government wants everyone to be able to access a primary care professional when they need to. The actions set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, backed by the extra £4.5 billion of investment in primary and community care by 2023/24, and the five-year contract framework for general practice, are already being implemented and will build the general practice workforce and improve access to primary care services. The Government is creating an extra 50 million general practice appointments a year within the next five years and is committed to growing the workforce by 6,000 more doctors in general practice and increasing the skills mix with 6,000 more primary care professionals.

Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has advised that general practice services are available between 8am and 8pm seven days a week at 27 sites across the Wirral through its Enhanced Access service. A range of healthcare professionals are available for patients to see including general practitioners, nurse prescribers, physician associates and clinical pharmacists. The CCG has advised this service provides an additional 45 appointments per 1,000 patients per week on top of the individual practices' appointment capacity per week.

**■ Mental Health Services: Children****Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[2436\]](#)

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) the North West, (b) Liverpool City region, (c) Wirral and (d) Wallasey.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

This information is not held centrally.

**■ Mental Health Services: Cumbria****Tim Farron:**[\[2466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding was allocated from the public purse to preventative mental health programmes in Cumbria in each year from 2010 to 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

This information is not available in the format requested.

**■ Mental Health Services: Working Hours**

**Tim Farron:** [\[2468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to commission 24-hour specialist emergency services for mental health patients; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to the National Health Service developing comprehensive crisis pathways so that 24 hour, age appropriate mental health crisis care is available across England, via NHS 111, by 2023/24.

**■ NHS: Migrant Workers**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[2536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the effective transition of employment terms and conditions for NHS staff from the EU after the UK leaves the EU.

**Edward Argar:**

The United Kingdom exiting the European Union will not trigger changes to the terms and conditions of National Health Service staff. Any changes to the terms and conditions of service for staff working in the NHS, regardless of their country of origin, have to be agreed with the NHS Trade Unions under a collective agreement and this will not change following exit from the EU.

**■ Psychiatric Hospitals: Standards**

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[2462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many of the mental health hospitals currently rated as (a) inadequate and (b) requires improvement are (i) independent mental health hospitals and (ii) NHS hospitals.

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[2463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many mental health hospitals are rated by the Care Quality Commission as (a) inadequate and (b) requires improvement for safety.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The data in the following tables provide figures for independent and National Health Service mental health hospitals that have been rated by the Care Quality Commission as requires improvement or inadequate and mental health hospitals that have been rated as requires improvement or inadequate for safety. These figures are up to date as of 15 January 2020.

-	Locations and providers rated overall Requires Improvement or Inadequate, by Primary Inspection Category		Total number of locations and providers rated overall Requires Improvement or Inadequate
Location/Provider Primary Inspection Category	Requires improvement	Inadequate	
Mental health - community and hospital – independent	40	18	58
Mental health - community and residential - NHS	16	0	16
Total	56	18	74
-	Locations and providers rated Requires Improvement or Inadequate in the safe domain, by Primary Inspection Category		Total number of locations and providers rated Requires Improvement or Inadequate in Safe domain
Location/Provider Primary Inspection Category	Requires improvement	Inadequate	
Mental health - community and hospital - independent	81	20	101
Mental health - community and residential - NHS	35	0	35
Total	116	20	136

Grouped Questions: 2462

### ■ Psychiatric Patients: Children

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[2461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children aged 17 years old and under received inpatient care in NHS hospitals for mental health reasons in each of the last five years.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The information is not held in the format requested.

**HOME OFFICE****■ Counter-terrorism: Airports****Dr Matthew Offord:****[1448]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been stopped under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000 at British airports in each of the last three years.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Home Office receives a quarterly dataset from the National Counter-Terrorism Police Headquarters (NCTPHQ) reflecting the use of counter-terrorism powers, including those under Schedule 7 to the Terrorism Act 2000. This data is collected and published on a quarterly basis in the "Operation of Police Powers under the Terrorism Act 2000" publication, which is available online.

Data is included within this publication to show the total number of examinations in Great Britain over the defined period. This is not, however, broken down by airport or seaport as the Home Office does not receive this data from NCTPHQ. Even if this data was provided, it would not be appropriate to publish it on the grounds of national security.

From the latest available dataset, in the year ending 30 September 2019, there were 10,344 examinations in Great Britain, compared to 12,752 to the previous year, and 16,919 in the year before that.

**Dr Matthew Offord:****[1450]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) racial and (b) religious identification was of those stopped under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000 at British airports in each of the last three years.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Home Office receives a quarterly dataset from the National Counter-Terrorism Police Headquarters (NCTPHQ) reflecting the use of counter-terrorism powers, including those under Schedule 7 to the Terrorism Act 2000. This data is collected and published on a quarterly basis in the "Operation of Police Powers under the Terrorism Act 2000" publication, which is available online.

Data is included within this publication to show the total number of examinations in Great Britain over the defined period, which includes a breakdown by ethnicity. This does not, however, include a breakdown by the type of port (airport or seaport) or religious identification as the Home Office does not receive this data from NCTPHQ.

From the latest available dataset (year ending 30 September 2019), this is the breakdown of the total number of examinations in Great Britain by ethnicity:

EXAMINATIONS	YEAR ENDING 30 SEP 2017	YEAR ENDING 30 SEP 2018	YEAR ENDING 30 SEP 2019
Total	16,919	12,752	10,344
White	5,017	3,212	2,335
Mixed	637	699	574
Black or Black British	1,277	922	749
Asian or Asian British	4,694	3,088	2,690
Chinese or Other	3,255	2,680	2,905
Not stated	2,039	2,151	1,091

#### ■ Counter-terrorism: Romford

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[1307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much has been spent and from which initiatives by the Prevent programme in Romford constituency in each of the last five years.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Romford constituency falls within the remit of the London Borough of Havering. The Prevent Statutory Duty 2015 requires all local authorities, to have due regard to the need to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Prevent funding is prioritised based on threat and risk. The Home Office does not currently disclose the geographical allocation of Prevent funding.

#### ■ Firearms: Licensing

**Ben Lake:**

[\[2584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department holds on the proportion of firearms licensing applications and renewals completed within eight weeks of the applications being received, by constabulary.

**Ben Lake:**

[\[2585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department holds on the practice of extending the life of firearms certificates by Dyfed–Powys police firearms licensing department.

**Ben Lake:**

[\[2586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department holds on the number of firearms certificates whose life has been extended by Dyfed–Powys police firearms licensing department.

**Ben Lake:** [\[2587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that police firearms licensing services are adequately resourced.

**Ben Lake:** [\[2588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of police firearms licensing departments.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office does not hold data on the proportion of firearms licensing applications and renewals that are completed within eight weeks of being received. Under the Firearms Act 1968, firearm and shotgun certificate administration is a matter for the chief officer of police for the area in which the applicant lives. The time taken to process a firearm or shotgun application can vary between forces as the respective chief officer must take into account the need to manage risk and ensure public protection in their respective force area.

In respect of applications for renewal of firearm certificates, the Policing and Crime Act 2017 added provisions to the Firearms Act 1968 which

automatically extend the validity of firearm and shotgun certificates for a

limited period of up to eight weeks where the application for renewal has been made at least eight weeks prior to the expiry of the certificate. This allows the police extra time to complete all the necessary checks without it impacting on a certificate holder's activities through the expiry of the certificate. The Home Office does not collect data on the number of applications which have

benefitted from these provisions since they were introduced on 17 April 2018 but the table below provides statistics on the number of new and renewal

applications processed by Dyfed-Powys police firearms licensing department since 2008/09.

**FIREARM CERTIFICATES BY POLICE FORCE AREA: APPLICATIONS, REVOCATIONS, CERTIFICATES ON ISSUE AND FIREARMS COVERED BY CERTIFICATES, 2009/10 TO 2018/19**

New applications		Renewal applications					
Year	Region Police force area	Granted	Refused	Total	Granted	Refused	Total
2008/09	Wales Dyfed-Powys	222	10	232	190	0	190
2009/10	Wales Dyfed-Powys	223	8	231	285	0	285
2010/11	Wales Dyfed-Powys	315	3	318	777	7	784
2011/12	Wales Dyfed-Powys	391	3	394	901	4	905
2012/13	Wales Dyfed-Powys	317	9	326	871	0	871

**FIREARM CERTIFICATES BY POLICE FORCE AREA: APPLICATIONS, REVOCATIONS, CERTIFICATES ON ISSUE AND FIREARMS COVERED BY CERTIFICATES, 2009/10 TO 2018/19**

2013/14 Wales Dyfed-Powys	284	7	291	394	0	394
2014/15 Wales Dyfed-Powys	230	0	230	443	0	443
2015/16 Wales Dyfed-Powys	269	4	273	796	0	796
2016/17 Wales Dyfed-Powys	309	4	313	1,008	3	1,011
2017/18 Wales Dyfed-Powys	249	10	259	884	1	885
2018/19 Wales Dyfed-Powys	190	7	197	451	1	452

Note: The police force area recorded on the NFLMS for a certificate holder relates to the holders primary address, therefore this may not necessarily be where their weapon(s) is held.

The resourcing of police firearms licensing departments is a matter for chief constables. Monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of police firearms licensing departments is carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. In 2015 HMICFRS carried out a thematic inspection of police firearms licensing departments and recommended that chief constables should assess the demand placed on their firearms licensing department and ensure it has the capacity to meet this demand and provide an efficient and effective service at all times.

**■ Immigration: Northern Ireland**

**Stephen Farry:** [\[471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the speech of former Prime Minister the Rt Hon. Theresa May, of 5 February 2019, in Belfast, what progress her Department has made in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Office on reviewing how UK immigration rules treat residents in Northern Ireland exercising their rights under the Good Friday Agreement to be Irish.

**Stephen Farry:** [\[472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the review announced by former Prime Minister the Rt Hon. Theresa May in Belfast on 5 February 2019, what the terms of reference are of that review; and how many meetings have been held in relation to that review.

**Stephen Farry:** [\[473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to bring forward proposals to amend the British Nationality Act 1981 to reflect the status of people from Northern Ireland who want to solely identify as Irish and to retain Irish citizenship.

**Stephen Farry:** [\[475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how an Irish citizen from Northern Ireland who does not hold a British passport or identify as British can sponsor a family member to reside in the UK.

**Stephen Farry:** [\[476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how Irish citizens born in Northern Ireland can access their EU entitlement to family reunification.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Government is firmly committed to upholding the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, which recognises the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and to be accepted as Irish, British, or both, as they may so choose, and also confirms their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship.

The Home Office and the Northern Ireland Office have reviewed the consistency of the UK's family migration arrangements, taking into account the letter and spirit of the Belfast Agreement and recognising that the policy should not create incentives for renunciation of British citizenship by those citizens who may wish to retain it.

As a result of this review, the Government will change the rules governing how the people of Northern Ireland bring their family members to the UK. This change will mean that eligible family members of the people of Northern Ireland will be able to apply for UK immigration status on broadly the same terms as the family members of Irish citizens in the UK.

This immigration status will be available to the family members of all the people of Northern Ireland, no matter whether they hold British or Irish citizenship or both, and no matter how they identify.

Under UK nationality law, most people of Northern Ireland are automatically British from birth. This is consistent with the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, as confirmed by the Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) in its decision of 14 October 2019 in the case of Jake De Souza. As such, there are no plans to amend the British Nationality Act 1981 in this respect.

Until the family migration rules change is implemented, Irish citizens from Northern Ireland who do not hold a British passport or identify as British can sponsor family members under the UK's domestic route, set out in Appendix FM to the Immigration Rules. These apply to family members of a person who is a British citizen (including where they are a dual British/EU citizen), or is settled in the UK, or is in the UK with limited leave as a refugee or person granted humanitarian protection. Irish citizens are considered to be settled from the day they arrive in the UK which means their family members can use this route.

As Appendix FM applies equally to family members of British citizens, Irish citizens, and dual British/Irish citizens, family members of the people of Northern Ireland can use this route regardless of the person of Northern Ireland's legal citizenship or choice of identity. This means that a person of Northern Ireland who identifies solely

as Irish does not need to provide evidence of British citizenship or to identify as British to facilitate their family member's application: they need only provide evidence of Irish citizenship.

Where Irish citizens born in Northern Ireland have EU law rights to family reunification, their family member can apply for a document confirming those rights, which are implemented in UK law through the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016. In addition, the EU Settlement Scheme has been established for resident EEA nationals and their family members to implement the UK's commitments under the EU Withdrawal Agreement.

## ■ Police

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[1446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what statistics her Department holds on the (a) ethnic and (b) religious affiliation of police officers in post in England and Wales in the last 12 months.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects and publishes data on the ethnicity of the police officers in England and Wales on an annual basis.

The latest available data are published in the 'Police Workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2019' statistical bulletin: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2019>

Data on the religious affiliation of police officers is not held centrally.

## ■ Police: ICT

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[1354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps Fujitsu has taken to ensure the reliability of the (a) police national computer database and (b) digital policing command and control system.

**Kit Malthouse:**

As per current contract with the Home Office, Fujitsu provide onsite support 9-5 with an offsite 24/7 support including full Disaster Recovery service.

The system is regularly patched to keep it running at optimum efficiency. Performance monitoring shows close to 100% availability, with no major instances of unavailability reported over the last 12 months.

Separately there is an initiative underway to plan for the strategic availability of PNC in the coming years.

Fujitsu don't supply the police command and control system.

## ■ Religious Buildings: Security

**Gareth Thomas:**

[1266]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much financial assistance she has made available to improve security for people attending (a) Hindu Temples, (b) Synagogues, (c) Churches, (d) Mosques, (e) Gurdwaras and (f) other places of worship in the 2019-20 financial year; and if she will make a statement.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Home Office are finalising decisions on funding for the 2019-2020 Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme and will notify successful applicants shortly.

Over the first three years, we have awarded 134 grants (45 in Round 3 of the scheme) worth approximately £1.5m to places of worship across England and Wales - with 63 to churches, 49 to mosques, 5 to Hindu temples and 17 to Gurdwaras. We use an Independent Advisory Panel made up of representatives of faith communities to recommend which bids should be funded.

Synagogues are covered by the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant. In 2019-2020 a grant of £14 million was provided, mainly to fund security guarding at all Jewish schools, nurseries and some synagogues.

## ■ Religiously Aggravated Offences

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[1723]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information his Department holds on the religion of victims of religiously aggravated hated crime.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office has collected data on the number of religious hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales by perceived religion of the victim on a mandatory basis since 2017/18.

The latest available data, for 2018/19, can be found in 'Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2018/19' which can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019>

## ■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

**Kate Green:**

[1725]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with representatives of the British Retail Consortium on the findings of City, University of London's report entitled It's not part of the job: Violence and verbal abuse towards shop workers, published in September 2019.

**Kate Green:** [\[1726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking with (a) Police and Crime Commissioners and (b) Chief Constables to reduce incidences of violence against shop-workers.

**Kate Green:** [\[1727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has plans to ask H.M. Inspectorate of Constabulary And Fire & Rescue Services to undertake an assessment of the adequacy of the performance of police forces in relation to violence in the retail sector, and if she will make a statement.

**Kate Green:** [\[1728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of section 176 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 on shoplifting and associated violence against shop-workers, and if she will make a statement.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government recognises the damaging impact that violence and abuse can have on victims, businesses, and the wider community; and we are committed to tackling this issue.

To ensure that our response to retail crime is as robust as possible we work with a wide range of partners through the National Retail Crime Steering Group, including the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and British Retail Consortium.

In addition, we launched a call for evidence on violence and abuse toward shop staff to help strengthen our understanding of the scale and extent of the issue. The call for evidence has now closed and we are carefully analysing the responses before deciding what further action may be required. We intend to publish the government's response in due course.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

### ■ Big Ben

**Michael Fabricant:** [\[2417\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member representing the House of Commons Commission, if the Commission will allow Big Ben to chime at 11pm GMT on 31 January 2020 to mark the UK leaving the EU; what estimate has been made of the cost of activating the clock mechanism to enable those chimes; and if he will make a statement.

**Sir Paul Beresford:**

The Speaker has indicated that this is a matter for Members of the House of Commons. The House of Commons Commission will respond to any decision of the House on this matter. In the absence of any such decision, the Commission's position on the sounding of Big Ben remains unchanged.

For the Bell to ring on 31 January, the temporary striking mechanism used for Remembrance Sunday and New Year's Eve would need to be reattached and tested to ensure the timing is correct. Alongside this work, a temporary floor of the belfry where Big Ben is housed would also need to be installed, as extensive work is currently taking place in this area. The cost for the temporary floor and installing, testing and striking Big Ben would be approximately £120,000.

In addition to the set-up, the delay to work in the belfry would push back the planned programme of works by two to four weeks, with each week of delays costing approximately £100,000 a week. As such, the minimum cost of sounding Big Ben would be £320,000 but could be much higher (up to £500,000). These costs are based on a notice period of approximately two weeks. Should the project team be required to strike the bell with less notice, these costs would increase substantially.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Buildings: Insulation

**Sarah Jones:**

[\[2593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Answer of 8 October 2019 to Question 290851 on Buildings: Insulation, for what reasons the Government has not yet published the results of the analysis of bespoke non-ACM tests.

**Esther McVey:**

The results of this research will be published in the Spring. This is to allow for further tests on additional cladding materials including timber cladding and Class D High Pressure Laminates of various thicknesses and manufacturers. So far, the results show that none of the materials tested present a significant fire hazard like that of Aluminium Composite Material with unmodified polyethylene core and other metal composites. If any of the additional tests suggest an immediate public safety concern, the Government will consult the Independent Expert Advisory Panel urgently, consider appropriate action, and inform the House and public accordingly.

### ■ Buildings: Safety

**Sarah Jones:**

[\[2594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to figure five in his Department's publication entitled Data update 30, Building Safety Programme: monthly data release, November 2019, how many and which of the 74 private residential buildings had remediation work funded by the (a) developer and (b) freeholder.

**Esther McVey:**

Out of the 74 private residential buildings which are being funded by the building owner, 64 are by the developer and 10 by the freeholder.

## ■ Empty Property

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [1284]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many houses in (a) Huddersfield constituency, (b) Yorkshire and (c) England were unoccupied in 2019.

**Esther McVey:**

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

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

Statistics on vacant dwellings at parliamentary constituency level are not centrally collected. Statistics for 2019 are scheduled to be published in Spring 2020.

## ■ Flats: Fire Prevention

**Mr Steve Reed:** [2550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an estimate of the amount of money spent by leaseholders on interim fire safety measures in blocks which require remedial fire safety works.

**Esther McVey:**

The Department does not hold this information and has not made estimates. We recognise the stress and strain that living in a building with unsafe Aluminium Composite Material cladding is causing to residents. The priority must therefore be to remove and replace unsafe cladding as quickly as possible to ensure buildings are safe in the long term.

## ■ Fracking: Planning Permission

**Mr Clive Betts:** [2422]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the status is of planning approvals for fracking following the announcement of a moratorium on that process.

**Esther McVey:**

The Government has set out its position in the Written Ministerial Statement of 4 November 2019, confirming that it will take a presumption against issuing any further Hydraulic Fracturing Consents, creating an effective moratorium.

There is no change to the status of planning permissions that have been granted for development which includes hydraulic fracturing. These planning permissions remain in force until they expire.

**Mr Clive Betts:** [\[2423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance he has issued to local authorities on dealing with fracking applications since the announcement of a moratorium on that process.

**Esther McVey:**

Planning authorities should continue to take national planning policy and guidance into account in considering any relevant applications. No additional guidance has been issued.

## ■ Freehold

**Steve McCabe:** [\[2418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Written Statement of 31 October 2019, Leasehold update, HCWS55, what steps his Department is taking to give freehold homeowners the same rights as leaseholders to challenge the reasonableness of estate maintenance fees on new build properties.

**Esther McVey:**

The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. We are moving forward with legislation to ensure freehold homeowners can access equivalent rights to leaseholders to challenge the reasonableness of estate rent charges and go to the Tribunal to change their managing agent if necessary.

Last year, the Government asked the Regulation of Property Agents working group, chaired by Lord Best, to also look at how service charges for leaseholders - and estate rent charges for resident freehold homeowners - could be made more transparent. The group also considered in what circumstances other fees and charges, such as administration charges or permission fees (which affect both leaseholders and freeholders) are justified or whether they should be capped or banned. The working group's final report was published on 18 July and we are considering the recommendations set out in the report. We will respond in due course.

## ■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

**Sarah Jones:** [\[2595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2020 to Question 120 on High Rise Flats: Insulation, how many local authorities have provided (a) fully complete data, (b) partially complete data and (c) no data on high rise residential buildings in their area.

**Esther McVey:**

The Department has commenced a data collection exercise which will enable us to build a picture of external wall systems in use on high rise residential buildings. The exercise will collect data on residential buildings 18 metres and over covering private

and social buildings, student accommodation and hotels in England. We will publish appropriate summary information from the data collection in our monthly Building Safety Programme data release in due course. Local authorities and housing associations are working to complete the collection by the end of March 2020.

## ■ Housing: Construction

**Mr Clive Betts:** [\[2421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to review the warranties offered on new build housing in cases where the warranty provider will not cover any failures in the building regulations approval if the building inspector was not appointed by the warranty provider.

**Esther McVey:**

It is the responsibility of the Financial Conduct Authority to regulate new build warranties and protect consumers. If a consumer is unhappy with the warranty provider's action they can contact the Financial Ombudsman Services for free.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[2649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the trends in the number of (a) shared ownership and (b) other low-cost homes for sale being built.

**Esther McVey:**

The number of Shared Ownership and Affordable Home Ownership units completed by local authority, including new builds and acquisitions, can be found in live tables 1007bC and 1007cC. These live tables can be found here:

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

The Department is taking forward Manifesto commitments to increase the supply of homes made available for sale at a discount of at least 30 per cent to local residents. These new homes will be paid for through developer contributions and local authorities may wish to prioritise them for local key workers, such as nurses, teachers or police officers. We will shortly publish a consultation on how to put these plans into action.

## ■ Housing: Energy

**John Healey:** [\[2424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish proposals on energy efficiency standards for work carried out in existing dwellings.

**Esther McVey:**

The Government has committed to introduce a Future Homes Standard by 2025. This means new homes will be future proofed, with low carbon heating and lower energy use through high levels of energy efficiency. We propose that new homes built to the

Future Homes Standard from 2025 should have carbon dioxide emissions up to 80 per cent lower than those built to current building regulations standards.

We are currently consulting on a meaningful and achievable increase to the energy efficiency standards for new homes to be introduced through the Building Regulations in 2020, as a stepping stone to this commitment. The preferred option is to set a standard that should result in a 31 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions.

A further consultation will follow, in the coming months, proposing changes to the energy efficiency standards for non-domestic buildings and for building work to existing homes and non-domestic buildings; and on preventing overheating in new buildings.

### ■ **Housing: Infrastructure**

**Jane Hunt:**

[R] [1807]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to establish the Single Housing Infrastructure Fund; and to what timescale planning rules and regulations will be amended to reflect that policy.

**Esther McVey:**

As set out in the Queen's Speech, this Government will introduce Single Housing Infrastructure Fund to provide the roads, schools and GP surgeries needed to support new homes. We will set out further details shortly.

### ■ **Housing: Insulation**

**Mr Clive Betts:**

[2419]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many properties with ACM cladding have yet to have it removed; and how many residents live in those properties.

**Esther McVey:**

Information on the number of buildings with ACM cladding systems that have yet to be remediated and the numbers of dwellings within them is available in the monthly Building Safety Programme data release. The latest data release is available [here](#) .

**Mr Clive Betts:**

[2420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many properties in the (a) public and (b) private sector still have each type of cladding which is not of limited combustibility but which is not ACM.

**Esther McVey:**

The Department has commenced a data collection exercise which will enable us to build a picture of external wall systems in use on high rise residential buildings. The exercise will collect data on residential buildings 18 metres and over covering private and social buildings, student accommodation and hotels in England. We will publish a summary of information from the data collection in our monthly Building Safety Programme data release in due course.

## ■ Landlords and Letting Agents: Contracts

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[1317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that landlords and letting agents meet contractual obligations to tenants.

**Esther McVey:**

Local authorities have been given a wide range of robust enforcement powers to ensure landlords and letting agents meet their contractual obligations, including civil penalties and banning orders for the worst offenders.

Landlords and letting agents are prohibited from charging certain fees in connection with a tenancy under the Tenant Fees Act 2019. We have established a new lead enforcement authority for lettings to assist local authorities across England in their enforcement of this and other letting agent legislation.

## ■ Leasehold: Service Charges

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[2546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to review the handling of disputes by (a) housing associations and (b) property management companies in respect of service charge increases for leaseholders.

**Esther McVey:**

The law is clear that service charges must be reasonable and, where costs relate to work or services, these must be of a reasonable standard. Where leaseholders feel that the increase in the level of service charges which they are asked to pay is unreasonable, they can make a complaint to one of the Government-recognised redress schemes: The Property Redress Scheme or The Property Ombudsman, which all managing agents are required to belong to. They may also make an application to the First-tier Tribunal to make a determination on the reasonableness of their service charges.

In October 2018 the Government established an independent *Regulation of Property Agents* working group, chaired by Lord Best, to raise standards across the property sector, which also considered how fees such as service charges should be presented to consumers.

The working group published its final report to Government on 18 July 2019. The report recommended that a new regulator be given a statutory duty to include provisions to ensure transparency of service charges in its regulatory code, as well as responsibility for enforcement action where infringements by managing agents take place. We are considering the report's recommendations and will announce next steps in due course.

The Government also announced plans in January 2019 for a new Housing Complaints Resolution Service by establishing a single point of access to all current

redress schemes. The Service aims to provide housing consumers with a clear and simple route to redress.

We have established a Redress Reform Working Group with existing housing redress schemes and consumer bodies, and intend to develop the Service in collaboration with them.

## ■ Owner Occupation

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[2648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of home ownership.

**Esther McVey:**

Government-backed schemes have helped nearly 600,000 households to purchase a home since 2010. In 2018 the number of first-time buyers reached 357,090, an eleven-year annual high and an increase of 84 per cent since 2010. For the first time in over a decade, the proportion of 35-44 year olds in owner-occupation has increased. In the Queen's Speech of December 2019, the Government committed to take steps to support home ownership, including by making homes available at a discount for local first-time buyers.

## ■ Retail Trade

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[2443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when the remaining six pilot locations to receive funding and support from the High Street Task Force will be announced.

**Jake Berry:**

The High Street Task Force will support local leaders in their work revitalising their high streets and town centres. It will provide access to expert advice, training and a repository of data and best practice and will also help to coordinate the range of groups with an interest in the evolution of our high streets and town centres.

The first 14 locations to pilot the products and services of the Task Force were announced on 30 December and were chosen due to their status as "near misses" in their Future High Street Fund bids.

The remaining pilot locations will test individual products and services and will be announced in due course. This will include a range of other Task Force users, including Business Improvement Districts, community groups and a Local Enterprise Partnership.

Following the pilot, the Task Force will rollout the products and services tested in the pilot phase across England from July.

## ■ Social Rented Housing: Construction

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[1283]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many and what proportion of houses have been built in (a) Huddersfield constituency, (b) Yorkshire and (c) England in each year of the last ten years were (i) social and (ii) council houses.

**Esther McVey:**

The department holds data on the number of new social rent properties provided (both new build and acquisitions), split by local authority and region in live table 1006C which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply>.

The number of new affordable homes provided by local authorities and region is available in live table 1011C which can also be found here:

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

The department doesn't hold any of this data at constituency level as it is collected on a local authority basis.

## ■ Social Rented Housing: Waiting Lists

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[1285]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the average waiting time is from application to moving date for (a) social and (b) council housing in (i) Huddersfield constituency, (ii) Yorkshire and (iii) England.

**Esther McVey:**

The department does not hold data on the average waiting time from application to moving date. The total number of households on the waiting list split by local authority (constituency not available) can be found in section C of the Local Authority Housing statistics dataset, which can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data> and a time

series can be found in Live Table 600, which can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-rents-lettings-and-tenancies> .

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### ■ Developing Countries: Education

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[1687]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what proportion of the aid budget goes to projects which work to fulfil the UN sustainable development goal of 12 years of education for every girl.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Prime Minister has publicly stated that education, particularly girls' education, is a priority for the UK. All UK aid education programmes have a focus on girls and young women.

Between 2009 and 2018 DFID's spend on education doubled from almost £500 million to nearly £1 billion.

The latest data, from Statistics on International Development shows that 7% of total bilateral ODA is spent on bilateral education, all of which benefits girls. Between 2015 and 2019 DFID supported 14.8 million children to gain a decent education, of which at least 5.8 million were girls. DFID reaches and supports girls through our education investment in multilateral, international and non-governmental organisations, international influencing with other donors, foundations and non-governmental organisations.

The UK is also multilaterally the largest donor to the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait and the new International Finance Facility for Education and we will continue to ensure that these deliver for the most marginalised girls.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[1688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps he is taking to help achieve UN sustainable development goal of 12 years of education for every girl worldwide.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The UK is leading global action to ensure 12 years of quality education for all girls by 2030. All UK aid education programmes have a focus on girls and young women. The UK's Flagship Girls' Education Challenge, the largest global fund to girls' education, is now supporting up to 1.5million girls across 17 countries. The UK is spearheading the global girls' education "Leave No Girl Behind" campaign, focussing on getting girls learning, building international political commitment and boosting global investment so that all girls have access to 12 years of quality education by 2030.

In August 2019 at the G7 Summit, the Prime Minister announced £90 million of new UK support for education in emergencies and crises across the world. This will support 600,000 children living in conflict areas and areas of proacted crises. In September 2019 at the UN General Assembly, the UK announced £515 million to help get over 12 million children – half of them girls – into school.

**■ Developing Countries: Energy****Catherine West:**[\[2583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what amount of funding his Department has invested in (a) renewable and (b) non-renewable energy projects in the last five years.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

For the most recent five-year period of complete data (2014-2018), DFID bilateral spend on energy projects was £473m. Of this, £211m was on renewable energy and £12m on non-renewable. The remaining £250m spend was on energy policy, research, efficiency and distribution not directly associated with any fuel.

One of the UK's development priorities is to help developing countries establish a secure and sustainable energy supply, in support of economic growth and poverty reduction, whilst simultaneously pursuing our climate and environmental objectives. DFID increasingly supports renewable energy projects to unlock affordable and clean energy and has not provided ODA bilateral assistance for coal-fired power generation since 2012.

Since 2011, the UK has provided 26 million people with improved access to clean energy and installed 1,600 MW in clean energy capacity.

**■ Developing Countries: Environment Protection****Chris Grayling:**[\[1890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what (a) grants and (b) other funding his Department has allocated to international re-greening projects in each of the last three years.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

DFID supports activities related to re-greening in various areas. This includes forestry, where DFID contributes to the UK's efforts to protect biodiversity, reduce carbon emissions and support the livelihoods of communities reliant on forests and agriculture. Between 2016-2019, DFID provided grants totalling £211 million (bi-lateral and multi-lateral) for international forestry projects.

The UK is also doubling its International Climate Finance to at least £11.6 billion over the period 2021-2025 to help developing countries take action on climate change. This will include a major uplift to support nature-based solutions to climate change.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Trade Agreements****Caroline Lucas:**[\[2470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with which countries the UK has (a) trade working groups, (b) trade policy dialogues and (c) trade and investment working groups that (i) are currently operating and (ii) have concluded since the finalisation of a continuity trade agreement.

**Conor Burns:**

We are working with countries across the world to develop our current trade relationships and ensure that Britain becomes a global free trade leader once we leave the EU.

The UK regularly engages with partners through dialogues, visits and events. These are led by ministerial discussions and visits, our network of Posts, HM Trade Commissioners, discussions with embassies in London, and the Prime Minister's Trade Envoys.

In addition to the ongoing engagement in the Trade Agreement Continuity Programme, we have established Working Groups with the USA, Australia, New Zealand, China, India, Japan and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), comprising Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE.

## ■ UK-Africa Investment Summit

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[2474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2019 to Question HL9 on UK-Africa Investment Summit, if she will publish a list of all businesses and business representatives (a) invited to and (b) attending the UK-Africa Investment Summit being hosted by the UK on 20 January 2020.

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[2476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2019 to Question HL9 on the UK-Africa Investment Summit, if she will list the businesses and business representatives invited to the UK-Africa Investment Summit in January 2020 that operate or have interests in the (a) fossil fuel exploration or production, (b) aviation, (c) agrochemicals, and (d) genetically modified crop sectors.

**Graham Stuart:**

We have invited a wide range of UK and African businesses and civil society organisations from a variety of sectors to the UK-Africa Investment Summit. The Summit will bring together these representatives, African leaders and delegations from 21 countries, international institutions and young entrepreneurs.

We are prevented from publishing the names of business representatives attending the Summit by General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act (Commercial Interests), we are prevented from publishing in advance a list of businesses (a) invited to and (b) attending the Summit.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Disasters

**Bill Esterson:** [\[2529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to establish an independent public advocate.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Government is committed to supporting bereaved families after public disasters and during public inquests.

We have consulted on proposals to establish an independent public advocate and will publish a response in due course.

**■ Police Cautions: Retail Trade****Stella Creasy:****[2531]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many police cautions were issued for crimes committed on retail premises in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

**Chris Philp:**

The Ministry of Justice publishes information on out of court disposals, including cautions, in England and Wales, up to December 2018. This does not identify whether the offence was committed on retail premises.

However, statistics are available for cautions classified by police as “theft from shops” as the principle offence.

This information can be found using the Out of Court Disposals data tool:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/802305/out-of-court-disposal-tool-2018.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/802305/out-of-court-disposal-tool-2018.xlsx)

**■ Prisoners' Release****Andrew Rosindell:****[1318]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to ensure that dangerous prisoners are not (a) released early and (b) allowed into contact with the public.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Queen's speech announced that this Government will introduce new sentencing laws to ensure the most dangerous offenders, including terrorists, serve longer in custody. There is already a robust sentencing framework for such dangerous offenders, comprising of life sentences and extended determinate sentences.

In the case of life sentences, offenders can only be considered for release once they have served a minimum 'tariff' set by the courts. They are then assessed by the Parole Board, and will only be released when the Board are satisfied that any risk posed to the public can be safely managed in the community. If released, they are then subject to a life licence.

Offenders serving extended determinate sentences may be released at the discretion of the Parole Board between the two thirds point of their custodial term and the end of their custodial term. They are then subject to an extended licence period.

For both groups of offenders, release on licence is granted with strict conditions. Offenders who breach a condition of their licences or who are determined to be at increased risk of reoffending can be recalled to custody at any time.

We are also legislating to deal with the most serious violent and sexual offenders who receive a standard determinate sentence, to end automatic half way release from prison for serious crimes.

## ■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

**Kate Green:**

[\[1729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of (a) the effectiveness of the sentencing, (b) the length of sentencing or (c) the effect of custodial sentencing on levels of violence against shop staff; and whether he will make a statement.

**Kate Green:**

[\[1730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has plans to increase the length of sentences for violent offences against shop-workers.

**Chris Philp:**

Everyone has the right to feel safe at work and assaults on shop workers are unacceptable.

There are a range of offences someone can be convicted of if they assault a shop worker. Maximum penalties for offences are set by Parliament and include five years' custody for assault occasioning actual bodily harm and life imprisonment for the most serious cases of causing grievous bodily harm.

When making sentencing decisions the courts must follow any relevant sentencing guidelines, produced by the independent Sentencing Council. The Overarching Principles: Seriousness Guideline and Assault Guideline require the court to treat the fact that an offence was committed against those working in the public sector or providing a service to the public as an aggravating factor, making the offence more serious. The Council produced expanded explanations in 2019 which made clear that this factor "applies whether the victim is a public or private employee or acting in a voluntary capacity". The Sentencing Council is reviewing its guidelines on assault and a consultation on a revised guideline is anticipated early this year.

On 5 April 2019 the Home Office launched a call for evidence on violence and abuse towards shop staff. The aim of this work is to strengthen our understanding of the issue, including how existing legislation is being applied. The call for evidence has now closed and the Home Office are carefully analysing the responses before deciding what further action may be required. The government's response will be published in due course. The National Retail Crime Steering Group will continue to provide input on tackling this issue.

**■ Young Offenders: Criminal Records****Bim Afolami:**[\[900233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the effect of criminal records acquired by minors on their life opportunities.

**Wendy Morton:**

We believe that that children who offend should have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and move ahead positively with their lives while ensuring ensure the public are adequately protected.

The criminal records disclosure regime is designed to help employers make informed recruitment decisions through the disclosure of appropriate and relevant information, particularly for roles involving children and vulnerable adults.

We have noted the Supreme Court judgment in P and others and my department is working closely with the Home Office to reform the existing regime.

**LEADER OF THE HOUSE****■ Holocaust Memorial Day****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[2453\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, if he will allocate a three hour debate in Government time, on a motion, That this House has considered Holocaust Memorial Day 2020, before the end of January 2020.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

In my Business Statement today I announced a general debate on the Holocaust Memorial for Thursday 23 January 2020.

**TRANSPORT****■ Airports: Drinking Water****Julian Sturdy:**[\[1380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the provision of water fountains at UK airports to reduce reliance on single-use plastic bottles.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Government recognises the importance of making drinking water more readily available in public places, as a means of reducing single-use plastic bottles. As laid out in the 25 Year Environment Plan, and Resource and Waste Strategy we are already taking action in this area. The Government has encouraged retailers, coffee shops and transport hubs, including airports, to provide tap water to support refilling water bottles.

**■ Aviation: Compensation****Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[1386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to replace EU Regulation EC 261 on the compensation for airline passengers when the UK leaves the EU.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

After the UK leaves the EU, air passengers on flights departing the UK will have the same passenger rights that apply today. EU passenger rights legislation will be retained in domestic law by the Withdrawal Act.

**■ Lifeboats: Finance****Jonathan Edwards:** [\[1713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has for (a) continuation and (b) replacement of the Rescue Boat Grant Fund after March 2020.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

The Rescue Boat Grant Fund has already awarded £4.7 million to 103 charities around the UK.

We have already extended the Fund by making a further £1 million available for 2019-20 and I expect to announce the successful applicants shortly.

A decision on the future of the Fund will be taken in due course.

**■ Motorcycles: Accidents****Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[1685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of victims of motorcycle road deaths were working for (a) food and (b) other delivery services in each of the last five years.

**George Freeman:**

The Department does not hold data on whether casualties in reported road accidents were working for food or other delivery services, as this information is not required from the police in the Stats19 data collection.

**■ Railways: Fares****Peter Kyle:** [\[2636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to make rail travel more affordable.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Government has frozen regulated rail fares in line with inflation for the seventh year in a row. In addition, we have already cut costs for thousands of young people with the 16-17 Saver railcard, and announced our intention to establish a new 'fares trials fund' to explore the benefits and costs of a clearer, more flexible and fairer fares

system. Fares revenue is crucial to funding day-to-day railway operations and the massive upgrade programme we are delivering, all of which benefit passengers.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[2665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with TfL on extending TfL Oyster fare zones to Berkshire stations beyond West Drayton.

**George Freeman:**

The Secretary of State has had no such discussions. Proposals about fare zones are subject to an agreement between TfL and the rail industry and would need to be discussed and agreed between the parties to this agreement.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[2666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the merits of the decision not to extend TfL Oyster fare zones to Berkshire stations beyond West Drayton once the Elizabeth Line is open.

**George Freeman:**

This was a decision made by TfL; however, the Oyster system, developed nearly 20 years ago, cannot accommodate additional fare zones. The DfT has recently worked with TfL to extend pay-as-you-go (PAYG) to Luton Airport and Welwyn Garden City, and in both cases the extensions involved TfL's Contactless system but not Oyster. We are exploring with TfL how to extend the benefits of PAYG to those who receive concessionary or discounted travel, but in the meantime these passengers can continue to buy discounted tickets in advance of travel.

## ■ Railways: West Midlands

**Michael Fabricant:** [\[1679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will meet with (a) the hon. Member for Lichfield and (b) officials from the West Midlands Rail Executive to discuss the re-opening of the existing Lichfield City to Derby via Burton on Trent freight line for use for passenger traffic.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

I understand that officials from Transport for the West Midlands have met with the Hon. Member and that they are undertaking a study to evaluate the business case for this proposal. As the Minister responsible for rail, I would be happy to meet with him and officials in due course to discuss the findings.

## ■ Roads: Accidents

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[1375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the effect of street lighting on trends in the level of road traffic accidents.

**George Freeman:**

It is for each highway authority responsible for street lighting in their area to decide the level of service they wish their street lighting network to deliver. No assessment has been made by the Department for Transport on the effects of street lighting with regard to the trend in road traffic accidents. Statistics on personal injury road accidents reported to the police, published by the Department for Transport, show that of the reported accidents in darkness in Great Britain in 2018, 72% occurred with lights lit, compared with 18% where there was no lighting provision, 3% with lights unlit and 7% with lighting unknown. It is important that highway authorities consider safety, cost and environmental savings before determining their lighting provision.

**Roads: Finance****Grahame Morris:**[\[2488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will bring forward proposals to increase the levels of funding allocated to roads in the English regions to similar levels to those allocated to roads in London.

**George Freeman:**

The responsibility for local highways maintenance in London is a devolved matter and therefore falls to Transport for London (TfL) and the London boroughs.

The Government is providing local highways authorities in England (outside of London) over £6.6 billion between 2015 and 2020 for local highways maintenance. Every local highway authority in England (outside London) receives maintenance funding based on a formula that considers local factors such as road length, bridges, and street lighting. Highways authorities are able to prioritise their spending as they wish in order to meet local needs.

**Roads: Worcestershire****Harriett Baldwin:**[\[1400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much of the pothole fund he plans to allocate to Worcestershire County Council in each of the next five financial years.

**George Freeman:**

The Government is committed to improving local infrastructure and expects to announce details of the available funding shortly. Individual allocations of this funding will be subject to Ministerial decisions.

**Trains: Diesel Fuel****Catherine West:**[\[2581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to curtail the use of diesel trains on the rail network.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government is ensuring the railway plays its part in delivering our ambitions to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and to reduce air pollution created by transport.

We continue to expand the electrified rail network where it delivers passenger and environmental benefits and value for money. This allows removal of diesel trains. For example from this month electric trains can run between London and Cardiff.

Network Rail is developing a Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy to inform Government decisions on the scale and pace of further rail decarbonisation, and the reduced use of diesel trains that this will require.

**■ Tyres: Standards**

**Maria Eagle:** [\[2427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the outcome is of his Department's consultation, entitled Banning tyres aged 10 years or older, published in June 2019 on public service vehicles and other vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

**Maria Eagle:** [\[2428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the response to his Department's consultation, entitled Banning tyres 10 years and older, published in June 2019.

**Maria Eagle:** [\[2429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to ban tyres aged 10 years and over on (a) public service vehicles, (b) HGVs and (c) other vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

**George Freeman:**

The previous Government announced its intention to bring forward legislation to ban the use of tyres aged 10 years and over on HGVs, heavy trailers, buses, coaches and minibuses in February 2019. A statutory consultation on legislative proposals, which concluded on 1 September 2019, received more than 1100 responses reflecting a wide variety of views.

The Government is committed to improving road safety. The Department for Transport is analysing the consultation responses and finalising the regulatory impact assessment. We expect to publish the conclusions of the consultation this Spring.

**TREASURY****■ Business: Fossil Fuels**

**Catherine West:** [\[2579\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government is proactively encouraging businesses and investment funds to divest from fossil fuel based activities.

**Catherine West:** [\[2582\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether any Ministers of his Department will be (a) attending the World Economic Summit and (b) calling for investment firms to divest from fossil fuels at that summit.

**John Glen:**

The Chancellor of the Exchequer will be attending the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting where sustainability is the overarching theme.

In July 2019, the Government published the UK's Green Finance Strategy. This set out the steps the Government is taking to encourage companies to consider and disclose their exposure to the financial risks posed by climate change. This includes the risks for investments into economic activities which can be considered as "brown".

#### ■ **Electric Vehicles: VAT**

**Adam Afriyie:** [\[2460\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans the Government has to increase the uptake of electric cars by removing VAT on the purchase of zero emission vehicles.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The Government has set an ambitious, legally binding target to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from the UK by 2050.

Although there are no plans at present to reduce the VAT charge on electric vehicles, the Government keeps all taxes under review and assesses them against a range of fiscal and environmental considerations. The Government already makes available an incentive for the public to purchase electric vehicles over conventional vehicles: the Plug-in Car Grant (PiCG) provides grants of up to £3,500 for the purchase of a new battery electric vehicle. PiCG was launched in 2011 and has supported the purchase of around 170,000 Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.

#### ■ **Motor Vehicles: Excise Duties**

**Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** [\[2569\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of applying vehicle excise duty based on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions recorded under laboratory conditions at the point of manufacture; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The Government uses a graduated VED system to encourage the uptake of cars with low CO<sub>2</sub> to help meet our legally binding climate change targets.

In July 2019 the Government announced that the UK will use Worldwide harmonized Light vehicles Test Procedures (WLTP) to measure vehicle carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from 1 April 2020 for VED.

WLTP is a laboratory test which is used internationally, and aims to accurately reflect real world driving conditions. Its implementation will strengthen the link between vehicle taxation and the true environmental impacts of motoring.

### ■ Treasury: Pay

**Chris Stephens:**

[2634]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department is compliant with the requirement in section 3.1.8 of the Civil Service Management Code that time off with pay for safety representatives will not be set against facility time allowed under existing arrangements.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

HM Treasury has a dedicated health & safety team, but does not have a safety representative, due to it being a small department. However, if trade unions were to participate in activity relating to the role of safety representative, the Department would comply with section 3.1.8 of the Civil Service Management Code.

The Government recognises there are significant benefits to both employers and employees when organisations and unions work together effectively to deliver high quality public services, but facility time within the public sector must be accountable and represent value for money.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Carers Allowance

**Alberto Costa:**

[3237]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of increasing the national living wage on people's potential to exceed the weekly income limit for carer's allowance.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

We are proud of the National Living Wage and the significant increases the Government has been able to make to it. Universal Credit flexes to take increased earnings into account. Carer's Allowance has a weekly earnings rule.

Subject to Parliamentary approval, this will increase from £123 to £128 net a week from April 2020, in line with average earnings growth.

The Department is to undertake research into carers employment and potential barriers to working. We will look at the findings from the research and other evidence with an open mind when the level of the earnings limit is next considered.

### ■ Employment: Autism

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[1761]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what stage her discussions have reached with the Office for National Statistics on including the number of autistic people

in work as a recordable characteristic in the labour force survey; and when that recordable characteristic will be included in that survey.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Following testing in late 2019, the Office for National Statistics has added a measure of autism to the Labour Force Survey questionnaire for interviews carried out from January 2020 onwards and I welcome this development. In time, this will give us a better understanding of the employment status for many people with autism as a long standing health condition. It is anticipated that early data will be available from May 2020, however, numbers are likely to be low to start with and it may be longer before numbers are high enough to support further analysis of the data.

■ **Employment: Poverty**

**Neil Gray:**

[\[2555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2020 to Question 318 on Employment: Poverty, what assessment her Department has made of the effect on in-work poverty of raising the statutory National Living Wage to at least the level of the Real Living Wage.

**Will Quince:**

It is not possible to predict the impact of the real living wage on in-work poverty as poverty projections are inherently speculative as they require projecting how income will change for every individual in society which are affected by a huge range of unknown factors.

On 1 April 2020, the Government will increase the National Living Wage (NLW) for over 25s by 6.2% to £8.72. This increase is projected to meet the Government's target of reaching 60% of median earnings by 2020. This latest increase will mean that the annual earnings of a full-time worker on the NLW will have increased by nearly £3,700 since the year the policy was announced. In September last year, the Chancellor pledged to raise the NLW to two-thirds of median earnings within five years, making the UK the first major economy in the world to set such an ambition.

The Government considers the expert and independent advice of the Low Pay Commission (LPC) when setting the NMW and NLW rates. The LPC draws on economic, labour market and pay analysis, independent research and stakeholder evidence. The key distinction between the NLW and other rates, such as the Living Wage Foundation's voluntary Living Wage, is that the LPC considers the impact on businesses and the economy when making its recommendations.

**Neil Gray:**

[\[2556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 07 January 2020 to Question 318 on Employment: Poverty, what steps she is taking to reform to the welfare system to tackle in-work poverty; and if she will end the sanctions regime for universal credit.

**Will Quince:**

Universal Credit, at the heart of our welfare reforms, aims to reduce the number of workless households by reducing the financial and administrative barriers to work that existed in the previous system of legacy benefits.

In recent years the Government has made significant investment to improve work incentives including:

- o the reduction in the UC taper rate from 65% to 63% in 2017; and
- o An extra £1.7 billion a year put into UC work allowances for working parents and disabled claimants to increase them by £1,000 a year from April 2019. Providing a boost to the incomes of the lowest paid and resulting in 2.4 million families keeping an extra £630 per year of what they earn.

We have also taken a range of broader steps to help families keep more of what they earn including another rise in the National Living Wage to £8.21 and increasing a full-time worker's annual pay by over £2,750 since its introduction. Tax changes have also made basic rate taxpayers over £1,200 better off since April, compared with 2010. The most recent changes mean that, from April, a single person on the National Minimum Wage is taking home over £13,700 a year after income tax and National Insurance – £4,500 more than in 2009/10. Additionally, further help is being provided to working families by doubling free childcare to 30 hours a week for nearly 400,000 working parents of three and four-year-olds and introducing Tax-Free Childcare, worth up to £2,000 per child per year;

The Government has no plans to remove sanctions but continue to monitor the operation of the policies and processes to ensure the sanctions system remains clear, fair and effective in promoting positive behaviours.

The Government believes that these improvements help people on UC to keep more of what they earn, support employment and help to make work pay.

**■ Personal Independence Payment: Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross****Jamie Stone:****[2664]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many former disability living allowance claimants living in Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross constituency receive (a) a reduced mobility element or (b) a zero mobility element as a result of moving to personal independence payment.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The latest available data on the outcomes of reassessments of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claimants to personal independence payment (PIP) at initial decision can be found on Stat-Xplore here: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

The 'DLA to PIP reassessment' data table includes a breakdown of a claimant's DLA Mobility component entitlement and their PIP Mobility award at initial decision, broken down by geographical area (local authority and parliamentary constituency), for clearances made from the introduction of PIP in April 2013 to October 2019.

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html>

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Fraud

**Chris Stephens:**

[1101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many employees in her Department investigate benefit fraud: what recent estimate she has made of the cost to the public purse of that fraud; and if she will make a statement.

**Will Quince:**

As of the end of December 2019, the equivalent of around 1,400 full time staff were working as fraud investigators.

In 2018/19 the total value of benefit overpaid as a result of fraud was £2.3bn. This accounts for 1.2% of benefit expenditure.

The vast majority of benefit expenditure is paid correctly, with front line staff working hard to prevent overpayments from occurring. We are constantly improving our processes and continue to invest in the use of data and analytics to identify fraud and to better target our investigations.

It is important to clarify that any overpayment made as a result of fraud is fully recoverable. Last year, DWP and Local Authorities recovered £1.1bn in benefit debt.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses

**Mike Amesbury:**

[1403]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to make an assessment of the effectiveness of the rules on access to benefits for terminally ill claimants; and if she will make a statement.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

On 11 July the Secretary of State announced an in depth evaluation of how the benefits system supports people nearing the end of their life and those with severe conditions.

The Department is taking this work forward as a priority and is seeking input from a range of stakeholders, including clinicians and those who have first-hand experience of the special rules, as well as others supporting people applying for benefit.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[2471]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to bring forward legislative proposals to allow all people with a terminal illness to access welfare benefits quickly and sensitively under the fast-track process.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Department already has legislation in place to support people with a terminal illness access benefits. There are special rules for people who are terminally ill and

claiming benefits. Claims are dealt with sensitively, without a face-to-face assessment, and are fast-tracked through the system.

On 11 July the Secretary of State announced an in depth evaluation of how the benefits system supports people nearing the end of their life and those with severe conditions. The Department is taking this work forward as a priority and is seeking input from a range of stakeholders, including clinicians and those who have first-hand experience of the special rules, as well as others supporting people applying for benefit.

**Scott Benton:**

[\[2598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress she has made on amending the Special Rules for Terminal Illness fast-track process in relation to illnesses that qualify under those rules; and what the timeframe is for the publication of those changes.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

On 11 July the Secretary of State announced an in depth evaluation of how the benefits system supports people nearing the end of their life and those with severe conditions.

The Department understands how important it is to support those nearing the end of their life and is taking this work forward as a priority. We have made progress on all areas of this work, and will be engaging with clinicians and claimants over the coming months.

## ■ Unemployment: Romford

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[1313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the level of unemployment in Romford constituency.

**Mims Davies:**

Since 2010, the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Labour Force Survey data shows that the level and rate of unemployment has fallen in every region and country of the UK.

The number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits in Romford has fallen by 32% in the last seven years and was 1,855 as at August 2019.

This Government is committed to providing targeted support for people so that everyone, no matter what their start in life, is given the very best chance of getting into work.

Jobcentre Plus is geared-up to offer support and advice to those claiming welfare benefits. Through Jobcentre Plus, individuals can get advice on finding a job; help with retraining or skills advice, CV and job applications; and access to thousands of new vacancies we record every day. They can also access a range of tailored opportunities to improve their likelihood of entering or re-entering the labour market, including demand-led training for higher skilled jobs in specific sectors.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Jamie Stone:**

[\[2660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to reduce the five-week wait for universal credit.

**Will Quince:**

No one has to wait five weeks for their first payment. New claim advances are available to support those in financial need until their first payment is made. Claimants can access up to 100% of the total expected monthly award, which they can pay back over a period of up to 12 months. We have announced that from October 2021, the repayment period for these advances will be extended further, to 16 months.

Our Work Coaches gauge claimants' financial needs from their first interview. As part of this, every claimant is offered an advance payment on application. Proposed repayments of the advance are explained, and all claimants are advised to request a level of advance which is manageable both now and when considering the repayments required.

Work Coaches can also refer claimants to more specialist support for personal budgeting and money guidance if required.

The Department has delivered a number of improvements to support claimants during their first assessment period, such as removing waiting days and paying those claimants moving from Housing Benefit onto Universal Credit a two week 'transitional housing payment'. We are also introducing a two-week run on for eligible claimants of Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance from July 2020.

## ■ Work Capability Assessment

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[1885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average cost to her Department is of undertaking a work capability assessment.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Health and Disability Assessment Services (HDAS) Contract is let on a target cost of service basis alongside performance incentives and remedies rather than on an output cost per assessment or administrative task basis. Therefore we are unable to provide an average cost per assessment undertaken.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

#### ■ Agriculture Bill: Introduction

##### **Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Theresa Villiers):** **[[HCWS43](#)]**

Today, I am introducing the Government's landmark Agriculture Bill to the House of Commons. This Bill delivers a new settlement for agriculture and those involved in this vital industry should be in no doubt of this Government's absolute commitment to them and all those who produce our food and protect our environment.

Agriculture is one of this country's great industries and nearly three-quarters of land in England is farmed. But despite its scale and importance to our nation, decisions about its future have, for the past half century, largely been decided in Brussels. All the while, our priorities have been overlooked, our productivity stifled, and farmers hindered in their preservation of our environment. These are the legacies of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The CAP awarded subsidies based on the size of individual land holdings, and not the contribution farmers make to our society. The top 10% of recipients received the lion's share of payments – almost 50% – while the bottom 20% received just 2%. Meanwhile, our farmers struggled with burdensome and inflexible bureaucracy at the expense of our countryside and their own well-being.

Our Agriculture Bill marks a decisive shift and will remove the constraints and burdens of the CAP and replace it in England with a new and fairer system that rewards farmers properly for the work they do to enhance our environment and safeguard high animal welfare standards. And it will do so gradually allowing farmers and land managers time to adapt to our reforms and transform the agriculture sector for the better. Change takes time and the Government is conscious that farmers will need to plan and adapt. The Bill will enable a seven-year agricultural transition in England as we gradually move away from the CAP.

At the heart of the Government's proposal is a new system for England that pays public money for the delivery of public goods – goods, such as clean air and water, from which we all benefit but the market alone does not provide. The Bill will allow us to invest public money in enriching wildlife habitats, preventing flooding, improving the quality of air and soil, planting more trees and raising standards of animal welfare. The enhancement of these public goods will help manage and mitigate the effects of climate change which is of profound public concern. The Bill will therefore be instrumental in delivering on the Government's crucial goal to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

This Bill champions food producers and makes ground-breaking strides to allow for a fairer, more transparent supply chain that will increase productivity and protect producers

and consumers from unfair trading practices. It will create opportunities for new entrants who want to farm but have in the past had little prospect to do so. And it will incentivise longer-term thinking and investment while helping farm businesses to become more resilient and productive.

The Bill will also modernise aspects of agricultural regulation and make sure that they are tailored to the domestic market. It will include new UK wide provisions on organics and fertiliser regulations. It will enable new marketing standards to be set for agricultural products in England and reform agricultural tenancies in England and Wales to reflect a more modern and fair agricultural system.

It has always been the Government's intention to change our agricultural policy once we had left the EU. The Agriculture Bill introduced on 12 September 2018 fell with the dissolution of Parliament last year, but the principles in that Bill had broad support in this House and with our farmers and land managers across this country. We now have a second chance to pass an Agriculture Bill that will set a bold new course for farming in this country for decades to come.

The Government is clear that future policy will respect the devolved status of farming. By bringing back powers from Brussels to Cardiff, Belfast and Edinburgh, devolved administrations can design policies that meet the needs of their own farmers, foresters and consumers and the challenges of their unique landscapes. The Welsh Government and Northern Irish Executive have asked the Government to extend certain powers in the Bill to Wales and Northern Ireland. The Scottish Government have chosen not to take any powers in the Bill and have instead introduced the Agriculture (Retained EU Law and Data) (Scotland) Bill in the Scottish Parliament in November 2019.

This is an ambitious Bill which makes the most of the opportunities created from leaving the European Union. It marks the first domestic farming policy in nearly 50 years and the first step towards a brighter, better and greener future for farming and our environment outside the EU.

#### ■ **December Agriculture and Fisheries Council**

**Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (George Eustice):**

[\[HCWS42\]](#)

George Eustice

### FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

#### ■ **Foreign Affairs Council – 20 January 2020**

**Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Christopher Pincher):**

[\[HCWS41\]](#)

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRVP), Josep Borrell, will chair the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) in Brussels on 20 January.

The FAC will discuss Current Affairs, the Sahel, Climate Diplomacy, and will be followed by an informal Ministerial lunch to discuss the Middle East Peace Process.

#### *Current Affairs*

HRVP Borrell will raise Bolivia, ahead of the future elections, and the prospects of sending an EU electoral observation mission for May's elections.

On Venezuela, the HRVP will touch on recent developments following the Parliamentary elections on 5 January and plans for EU engagement.

We also expect Germany to debrief on the planned Berlin summit on Libya. HRVP Borrell will focus on what role the EU can play in support of any outcomes in Berlin.

#### *The Sahel*

We expect HRVP Borrell to debrief on the outcomes of the G5 Sahel summit in Pau on 13 January. Ministers will discuss the EU's approach to the Sahel in the context of the deteriorating security situation in the region.

#### *Climate Diplomacy*

Ministers will assess the EU's Climate Diplomacy Strategy, drawing on the December European Council outcome. They will consider how they can work together to drive ambitious action at COP26, in order to deliver on the promise of the 2015 Paris Agreement. The United Kingdom will emphasise the importance of, and its commitment to, tackling climate change as a national and global priority ahead of COP26.

#### *Informal Ministerial Lunch on the Middle East Peace Process*

Following the FAC, Ministers will discuss the Middle East Peace Process and the wider security and stability in the Middle East. The United Kingdom will reiterate its support for a negotiated settlement based on the two-state solution, leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state. Ministers may also discuss developments in the wider region which were last discussed at the FAC on 10 January, following the E3 (France, United Kingdom and Germany) triggering the Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM) on 14 January.

#### *Council Conclusions*

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on Climate Diplomacy to give momentum and focus to its external engagement ahead of COP26.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Transport Update

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Ms Nusrat Ghani):**

[\[HCWS40\]](#)

I have been asked by my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State, to make this Written Ministerial Statement. This statement concerns the application made by RiverOak

Strategic Partners Ltd (“the Applicant”) under the Planning Act 2008, of 17 July 2018 for the proposed reopening and development of Manston Airport in Kent.

Under sub-section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must make his decision within 3 months of receipt of the Examining Authority’s report unless exercising the power under sub-section 107(3) to extend the deadline and make a Statement to the House of Parliament announcing the new deadline. The Secretary of State received the Examining Authority’s report on the Manston Airport Development Consent Order application on 18 October 2019 and the current deadline for a decision is 18 January 2020.

The deadline for the decision is to be extended to 18 May 2020 (an extension of 4 months) to enable further information on a range of issues to be provided by the Applicant and other Interested Parties before determination of the application by the Secretary of State.

The decision to set a new deadline is without prejudice to the decision on whether to give development consent.