



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 17 January 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:46 P.M., 17 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

CABINET OFFICE

■ Elections: Proof of Identity

Jon Trickett: [\[1280\]](#)

To ask Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government's plans to roll-out Voter ID will require (a) primary or (b) secondary legislation.

Jon Trickett: [\[1281\]](#)

To ask Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Written Statement, of 7 January 2020, HLWS17, The Government's Legislative Programme 2019, whether the Government plans to bring forward an Electoral Integrity Bill in this Parliament.

Chloe Smith:

The Government will bring forward measures requiring electors to show an approved form of photographic ID before casting their vote in a polling station in a UK parliamentary election in Great Britain and local election in England. Any voter who does not have an approved form of ID will be able to apply, free of charge, for a local electoral identity document.

The Government remains committed to introducing Voter ID ahead of the next scheduled general election. We will bring forward primary legislation enabling the implementation of Voter ID when Parliamentary time allows.

■ Elections: Public Consultation

Jon Trickett: [\[1282\]](#)

To ask Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to issue the public consultation on electoral integrity.

Chloe Smith:

The Government remains committed to ensuring elections are secure and fit for the modern age, and further detail will be announced in the coming months.

EDUCATION

■ Dedicated Schools Grant

Harriett Baldwin: [\[1401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to clear existing deficits in Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs block funding before the £780 million of additional funding is allocated in 2020-21.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has recently announced the high needs funding allocations for local authorities for 2020-21. This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-dsg-2020-to-2021>. These allocations include an additional £780 million compared to 2019-20, and every local authority will see a minimum increase of 8% per head for those aged 2-18 years old.

In the autumn of 2019, the Department undertook a consultation on clarifying the status of the Dedicated Schools Grant and we will respond to this consultation shortly.

■ Music: Secondary Education**Dr Matthew Offord:****[1384]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to roll out the Music in Secondary School Trust initiative throughout state schools in England.

Nick Gibb:

The Government believes that music is an important subject and that all pupils should receive a high-quality music education. The subject is compulsory in the national curriculum up to age 14 and the Government is providing funding of over £300 million for music education hubs between 2016 and 2020. We recently announced a further year's funding for music hubs, to help thousands more children learn to play musical instruments, as well as continued support for a range of smaller music and arts programmes, totalling £85 million.

Music education hubs have done excellent work to ensure there is more equitable access to music education. We are aware of the work of the Music in Secondary Schools Trust and thank them for their commitment to music education. My officials and I would welcome a meeting with officials from the Trust to discuss their work further.

■ Pupil Premium**Angela Rayner:****[1756]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2020 to Question 134 on Pupil Premium, when his Department plans to publish funding rates for the pupil premium in the financial year 2020-21.

Nick Gibb:

The Department plans to confirm the funding rates for the pupil premium in the financial year 2020-21 shortly.

■ Sex and Relationship Education

Caroline Lucas:

[1333]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has in place to enable early adopter schools of Relationships and Sex Education to feed back to his Department on (a) the effectiveness of its implementation and (b) whether further assistance is required to enable the teaching of high-quality lessons; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is working with over 1600 schools who are acting as early adopters of Relationships Education; Relationships and Sex Education (RSE); and Health Education, and began teaching the new requirements from September 2019. We have been working with these early adopter schools to develop a programme of support. Recently four national conferences took place to help early adopters plan for delivery of the new subjects, and to learn about their current practices.

This engagement with early adopter schools is helping the Department develop its programme of support for the new subjects, which will be available to all teachers from spring 2020. The programme will focus on tools that improve schools' practice and will offer opportunities for teachers to improve subject knowledge, build confidence and share best practice. This support will be accessed through a new online service and will include an implementation guide, which will accompany the statutory guidance, case studies from early adopter schools, and innovative materials to support staff training. The Department will continue to test this package with early adopter schools.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Aviation: Greater London

Ruth Cadbury:

[1904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of ultra fine particles from aircraft on levels of air pollution in London.

Rebecca Pow:

The Air Quality Expert Group were commissioned to review the latest evidence on ultrafine particles (UFPs) and the report was published in 2018. Recommendations made in that report will continue to inform our evidence development and monitoring strategy.

https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat09/1807261113_180703_UFP_Report_FINAL_for_publication.pdf

The Government's draft aviation strategy recognises the need to improve understanding of aviation's impact on local air quality, including the contribution of UFPs. In addition, the Government continues to work to improve international

standards on emissions from aircraft whilst engaging with airports and local authorities on measures to improve local air quality.

■ Beverage Containers: Recycling

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[1366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will support Girlguiding's work to include young people in the planning and development of the Deposit Return Scheme to combat plastic pollution.

Rebecca Pow:

In the planning and development of the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), we will continue to engage with a large range of stakeholders, including young people and their representative organisations such as Girlguiding UK, to ensure everyone has their say. We have committed to introduce a DRS by 20223 using powers in the forthcoming Environment Bill. There will be an opportunity to engage during the relevant consultation.

■ Biodiversity: Lighting

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[1382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of artificial lighting on biodiversity loss.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra has published or contributed to a range of assessments of the impact of artificial light on insects and wider biodiversity, as well as global and national assessments of the drivers of biodiversity loss more generally.

Following publication of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's report, 'Artificial light in the environment' in 2009, Defra has supported assessments of impacts of artificial light on insects and on other organisms such as bats. These are published on our science website. Defra has also funded or co-funded national and international assessments of drivers of change on insects and wider biodiversity such as the global IPBES Assessment Report on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production, which notes effects of light on nocturnal insects may be growing and identifies the need for further study.

There have been a number of externally funded studies which have highlighted potential impacts of artificial light pollution on insects, which Defra keeps under review, for example, with our academic partners on the National Pollinator Strategy for England.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out how the possible ecological impacts of artificial light should be considered in the planning system. It makes clear that policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution on local amenity, dark landscapes and nature conservation, including where there may be impacts on wildlife and ecosystems. Defra has inputted to associated guidance, published by the

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, which also draws on evidence from various assessments, including the Royal Commission report.

■ Flood Control: Finance

Adam Afriyie: [\[1322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to allocate funding from the public purse to flood defences after 2021.

Adam Afriyie: [\[1323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to implement the recommendation in the report by the Environment Agency entitled, Long-term investment scenarios 2019, that flood and coastal erosion risk management in the UK will require an average annual investment of £1 billion until 2065.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is investing a record £2.6 billion from 2015-2021 to better protect 300,000 homes in England from flooding, and £1bn to maintain existing defences. Since 2015 some 600 new schemes are already providing better protection to over 200,000 homes across the country. The level of funding for flood defences beyond 2021 will be decided as part of a future Budget settlement, and will be informed by a range of evidence and forecasts, including the Environment Agency's Long Term Investment Scenarios report.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Brexit

Sir David Amess: [\[1656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, in what circumstances he would seek an extension from the EU to the Article 50 deadline.

Sir David Amess: [\[1657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, if he will make an assessment of the circumstances in which the UK would leave the EU without a withdrawal agreement.

James Duddridge:

Once our Brexit deal has been approved by parliamentarians we will leave the EU on 31 January, with certainty on the terms of our exit.

Page five of the Conservative manifesto set out that we would leave the EU in January. The Government has a clear mandate and is determined to honour the promises made to the British public.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE■ **Iran: Nuclear Power**

Robert Largan: [\[1352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of Iran's recent announcement to cease all commitments under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We are deeply concerned by Iran's recent announcement. As the Prime Minister said on 8 January, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) remains the best way of preventing nuclear proliferation in Iran and we hope it will remain. The Prime Minister made this clear to President Rouhani when they spoke on 9 January, strongly urging Iran to reverse all measures inconsistent with the deal and to come back into compliance with it.

On 14 January the E3 initiated the JCPoA's Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM). We are committed to using the DRM in good faith to find a viable resolution to Iran's compliance issues.

The Prime Minister and I have also spoken to European partners in recent days and will continue to do so to find a way forward. We need a deal which everyone respects the terms of, and which takes the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran off the table.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE■ **General Practitioners: Romford**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[1315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many GPs in Romford constituency have retired in the last 12 months.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[1316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information he holds on the number of GPs in Romford constituency who have given notice of their retirement in the last 12 months.

Jo Churchill:

Data on the number of general practitioners who have retired and/or given notice of their retirement in Romford constituency in the last 12 months is not currently held in the format requested.

■ Health Professions: Kent

Tracey Crouch:

[\[1719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) nurses, (b) GPs, (c) midwives and (d) mental health specialists are working in (i) Medway and (ii) West Kent.

Edward Argar:

NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups, but not staff working in primary care or in GP surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

The following table shows the number of nurses and health visitors, midwives and mental health staff as at September 2019, the latest available data at Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, Kent Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Medway NHS Foundation Trust, NHS Medway CCG and NHS West Kent CCG, full time equivalent (FTE).

	NURSES AND HEALTH VISITORS	MIDWIVES	MENTAL HEALTH STAFF
Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust	811	0	1,625
Kent Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	1,084	0	68
Medway NHS Foundation Trust	1,020	159	21
NHS Medway CCG	5	0	0
NHS West Kent CCG	4	0	0

Note:

CCGs are National Health Service bodies responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for their local area. They are made up of a governing body directly employed by the CCG and local general practitioner (GP) practice members within the area of the CCG.

The following table shows the number of doctors, nurses and other direct patient care staff employed in general practice as at September 2019 within the areas NHS Medway CCG and NHS West Kent CCG. These are in addition to those nurses employed directly by the CCG in the previous table. The figures presented include GP registrars and GP locums, FTE.

	ALL GENERAL PRACTITIONERS	ALL NURSES IN GENERAL PRACTICE	ALL DIRECT PATIENT CARE STAFF IN GENERAL PRACTICE
NHS Medway CCG	115	69	69
NHS West Kent CCG	250	111	118

Note:

Figures shown here do not include general practice staff working in prisons, army bases, educational establishments, specialist care centres including drug rehabilitation centres, walk-in centres and other alternative settings. figures contain estimates, for practices that did not provide fully valid general medical practice GP, nurse or direct patient care staff records.

■ Suicide

Julian Sturdy:

[\[1431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much new funding from the public purse he plans to allocate to suicide prevention under the NHS Long Term Plan.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

From 2019/20, we are investing £57million in suicide prevention through the NHS Long Term Plan. A breakdown of funding for each year to 2023/24 is shown in the attached table.

This funding will see 100% of sustainability and transformation partnerships (STPs) having received investment for localised suicide reduction programmes by the end of 2022/23, and 80% of STPs having received investment for bereavement support services. By 2023/24, 100% of STPs will have received investment for both suicide reduction programmes and bereavement support services.

Other mental health commitments in the NHS Long Term Plan will support suicide prevention, such as 24 hours a day, seven days a week crisis care for all ages available via NHS 111, and integrated community support for adults with severe mental illness.

Attachments:

1. pq1431 table [pq1431 table.docx]

Julian Sturdy:

[\[1433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the regional variation in suicide rates; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure the allocation of the NHS mental health budget reflects those variations.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

From 2019/20 to 2023/24, we are investing a total of £57 million in suicide prevention through the NHS Long Term Plan. This will see investment in all areas of the country by 2023/24 to support local suicide prevention plans and establish suicide bereavement support services.

The NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24 sets out how funding allocations for suicide reduction programmes will be phased through a targeted allocation process, based on rates of suicide in each sustainability and transformation partnership area, with funding amounts being based on the number of suicides in an area and as a proportion of suicides in England.

■ Tobacco: Labelling**Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[1692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that labelling on imported tobacco products complies with UK legislation.

Jo Churchill:

All tobacco products imported into the United Kingdom are required to adhere to existing UK tobacco legislation. This is enforced by local authority trading standards officers.

■ Trikafta**Neil O'Brien:**[\[1452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the (a) effectiveness and (b) availability of the drug Trikafta for people with cystic fibrosis.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has made no such assessment. Elexacaftor, tezacaftor and ivacaftor combination therapy (or triple therapy, marketed in the United States as Trikafta) does not yet have a marketing authorisation for use in the United Kingdom and the dates for licensing have not yet been confirmed.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body that makes recommendations for the National Health Service on whether new medicines represent a clinical and cost effective use of NHS resources. It is a condition of the agreement reached between NHS England, NHS Improvement and Vertex that the company will submit its full portfolio of cystic fibrosis medicines, including its new triple therapy to NICE for appraisal.

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

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

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

Subject to licensing, in order to recommend the triple therapy for routine NHS funding, NICE will need to be assured that Vertex have priced it at a level that is fair to both the NHS and UK taxpayer. In the period leading up that, NICE will work extensively with the company and other stakeholders on putting the best possible evidence submission to its independent advisory committee.

HOME OFFICE

■ Animal Experiments: Licensing

Caroline Lucas:

[1331]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 9 September 2019 to Question 282282 on Animal Experiments: Licensing, regarding licencing of the forced swim test under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, (a) whether project licences authorising multiple generic projects may include authorisation of the forced swim test and (b) what severity classification, according to definitions of severity described in the Act, is assigned to projects that include the forced swim test as an element of the programme of work.

Victoria Atkins:

Project licences authorising multiple generic projects under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (as amended) may include authorisation for the forced swim test.

Severity classification is not assigned at project level.

During the harm-benefit analysis the Home Office assigns severity classification to protocols in accordance with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (as amended) which is published at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/14/contents>. The classification takes account of the highest severity likely to be experienced by any animal used in the protocol.

The Home Office ensures that animals are only used when necessary and under strict controls which keep suffering to a minimum. Any research which we licence must undergo a thorough harm-benefit analysis including ensuring that the planned work implements the 3Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement).

■ Asylum: Families

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[1700]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for family reunification with a beneficiary of international protection were received by the UK in 2019, by nationality.

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[1701]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many decisions were made on applications for family reunification with a beneficiary of international protection in 2019; and how many of those applications were (a) accepted and (b) rejected.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on Family Reunion in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

Data on grants of Family Reunion visas by nationality are published in table Fam_D01 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets. Data on applications and outcomes of Family Reunion visas by nationality are included in the 'Family: other' visa subgroup in tables Vis_D01 and Vis_D02 of the <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/managed-migration-datasets#entry-clearance-visas-granted-outside-the-uk>

Although 'family reunion' visas are not separately available, the vast majority of 'Family: other' visas are family reunion.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to year ending September 2019. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the asylum summary tables and entry clearance summary tables. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on asylum and entry clearance visas.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'. https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?keywords=immigration&content_store_document_type=upcoming_statistics&organisations%5B%5D=home-office&order=relevance

■ Deportation

Stephen Doughty:

[1444]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were wrongly (a) detained and (b) deported by her Department in each of the last six months.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data from 2012 onwards in its Annual Report and Accounts for the number of claimants who have been compensated following legal challenge of the lawfulness of their detention.

Whilst providing a clear sense of overall scale, the numbers are subject to caveats: (i) 'number of cases' is drawn from records of unique names of people, solicitors acting for them and Government Legal Department reference numbers; (ii) amounts paid are the amounts paid in each year (individual cases might see payments in more than one year, for example, if there are staged payments that fall across financial year boundaries).

Providing the information requested in relation to deportations or returns, would require a manual check of individual records and I am therefore not able to provide this to you. In a small number of cases each year individuals are brought back to the UK either by the Home Office or a Court for further consideration of their case. When this occurs, we review all circumstances with the Courts as appropriate.

■ Retail Trade: Crime

Gareth Thomas: [1671]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the economic cost of retail crime in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

The economic and social costs of crime research report which was published by the Home Office in July 2018 gives an estimate of the cost of commercial crime at £8.7bn.

These estimates are based on data from the Home Office Commercial Victimization Survey and based on several sectors including the Wholesale & Retail sector. Data are based on the survey years 2012 to 2015 but are not broken down further to allow to make an estimate of the costs of retail crime in isolation.

Further information on the report can be found on:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732110/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-crime-horr99.pdf

■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

Gareth Thomas: [1670]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what further steps she will take to prevent violence against shop workers; and if she will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [1672]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to make violence against retail workers a criminal offence; 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: Festivals and Special Occasions

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[2442\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member representing the House of Commons Commission, what the cost was of Big Ben chiming on (a) Remembrance Sunday 2019 and (b) New Year's Eve 2019.

Sir Paul Beresford:

The costs associated with striking Big Ben on Remembrance Sunday and New Year's Eve in 2019 were £14.2k including VAT on each occasion.

The striking of Big Ben on these occasions was coordinated around the planned works so as to minimise the impact on the project costs and to ensure it did not result in any delay. If the project team are required to strike the bell with less notice, the costs would substantially increase due to the unexpected impact on the project schedule.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Council Housing: North of England

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[1286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to tackle the shortage of council housing in the north of England.

Esther McVey:

We have given councils a range of tools to deliver a new generation of council housing. We abolished the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap, we have given councils a longer-term rent deal for 5 years from 2020, and councils can bid into the £9 billion Affordable Homes Programme to secure funding for new council homes. Our manifesto commits to renewing the Affordable Homes Programme, which will provide further stability for councils to build new affordable homes. More homes were built by local authorities in the last year than the total 1997-2010.

■ Hate Crime

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[1441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment her Department has made of the equity of the protections afforded under the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 to those on grounds of race and those afforded to religious groups.

Luke Hall:

The Government takes all forms of hate crime very seriously. We have one of the strongest legislative frameworks in the world to protect communities from hostility, violence and bigotry, and to deal with the perpetrators of hate crime. We have asked the Law Commission to undertake a full review of the coverage and approach of current hate crime legislative provisions. The Commission is due to open a public consultation in early 2020.

■ **Homelessness****Royston Smith:****[1410]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent steps the Government has taken to (a) eradicate rough sleeping and (b) prevent homelessness.

Luke Hall:

This Government is clear that no one should be without a roof over their head. That is why we have committed to end rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament and to enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act.

The Government has already taken important steps to prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping. This includes implementing the most ambitious legislative reform in this area in decades, the Homelessness Reduction Act, which is transforming the culture of homelessness service delivery and actively prevents homelessness, meaning people will get the help they need quicker.

The Government has already committed over £1.2 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the spending review period to April 2020. In 2020/2021 we are providing a further £422 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. This marks a £54 million increase on what Government provided in 2019/20. On 23 December 2019, we announced that £263 million of this will be allocated to local authorities in the form of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and the Homelessness Reduction Grant in order to support local authorities reduce homelessness.

In September 2019, this Government launched a second year of the Cold Weather Fund, making up to £10 million available. On 23 December 2019, we committed an extra £3 million to the fund to support as many people as possible this winter. This fund is available to all local authorities to provide a robust, local response to support rough sleepers off the streets prior to the winter period. The funding will be available until the end of March 2020 and will build on the success of last year's Cold Weather Fund.

■ Parking: Fines

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[\[1771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to tackle illegal displays of unauthorised parking signs by parking management companies in North East Hampshire.

Luke Hall:

Outdoor advertisements are controlled by local planning authorities under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. Local authorities have a wide range of enforcement powers to deal with advertisements if they are displayed unlawfully and it is for them to determine the most appropriate course of action to take when an advertisement is displayed in contravention of the regulations.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[\[1772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that private parking management companies comply with the relevant legislation on the display of parking fine notices.

Luke Hall:

The private parking industry is currently self-regulating. However, the Government is committed to enacting the Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019 as soon as possible. It will lead to the creation of an independent code of practice for private parking companies, covering parking fine notices and related issues. On 3 November 2019 we announced we were contracting with the British Standards Institution (BSI) to develop the Code of Practice as British Standard, to ensure the new regulation will be robust and of the highest quality. We are also committed to carrying out a public consultation on the draft Code of Practice, allowing all interested parties to directly respond to the proposals.

■ Roads: Lighting

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[1374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance his Department issues on reducing the level of light pollution from local authority street lighting.

Esther McVey:

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that local planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light. The Framework is supported by our planning guidance, revised in November last year, which sets out how light pollution should be considered in the planning system.

Local planning authorities must take the Framework into account when preparing their plans, and their policies - including those on light pollution - also need to be taken into account in making individual planning decisions.

■ Southend Airport: Planning Obligations

Sir David Amess: [\[1661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, under what criteria the section 106 agreement at Southend Airport could be amended.

Esther McVey:

A section 106 agreement is a legal agreement between a local planning authority and a person with an interest in the land. Section 106 planning obligations are entered into to mitigate the impact of otherwise unacceptable development. As in the case of the section 106 agreement for Southend Airport, section 106 planning obligations can be modified or discharged with the agreement of parties to the section 106 agreement (the local planning authority and the current landowner). Where no agreement to modify or discharge a planning obligation can be reached, and the planning obligation is over five years old, the landowner can apply to the local planning authority to modify or discharge the obligation (under section 106A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). This could be to discharge it where it no longer serves a useful purpose, or to modify it if it would continue to serve a useful purpose equally well in a modified way.

If, following an application under section 106A, a local planning authority refuses to discharge or modify a planning obligation there is a right of appeal against that decision (under section 106B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). Such an appeal must be made to the Planning Inspectorate within 6 months of the date of the refusal by the local planning authority.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Overseas Trade

Jonathan Edwards: [\[3173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress has been made on the development of a Ministerial forum with the devolved Administrations international trade.

Conor Burns:

The Department for International Trade has been making good progress establishing the Ministerial Forum for Trade with the devolved administrations. We hope to hold the first meeting this month.

■ UK-Africa Investment Summit

Caroline Lucas: [\[2475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make it her policy that new (a) investment mobilised and (b) trade opportunities showcased at the UK-Africa Investment Summit in January 2020 are compatible with the UK's climate change commitments and the Paris Agreement.

Graham Stuart:

[Holding answer 16 January 2020]: The UK has already legislated to deliver net zero emissions in the UK, becoming the first major economy to do so. The target will end the UK's contribution to climate change and shows real global leadership ahead of the crucial COP26 talks which we are proud to be holding in Glasgow.

The UK is a world leader in cutting emissions while creating wealth. Between 1990 and 2017, the UK reduced its emissions by over 40 per cent while growing the economy by more than two thirds - decarbonising our economy faster than any other G20 country.

We want the UK to be Africa's investment partner of choice, and meeting energy needs will be a critical part of unleashing Africa's potential and powering new industries and jobs.

That is why we are supporting the energy sector in Africa, with a priority on clean energy. The UK is increasing access to renewable energy across Africa, including solar and electricity, to help protect our environment for future generations and power green jobs and innovative new industries.

JUSTICE**■ Dangerous Driving****Mr Barry Sheerman:****[1888]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to improve transparency of dangerous driving (a) prosecutions and (b) sentencing in the judicial system.

Chris Philp:

Published information on defendants prosecuted and sentencing decisions can be found in the "Outcomes by Offence data tool" at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2018>

Mr Barry Sheerman:**[2426]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment the Government has made of the effect on families of road death victims of defendants charged with dangerous driving being granted anonymity.

Chris Philp:

In accordance with the principle of open justice, defendants in criminal cases are not granted automatic anonymity, for any offence, if they are over the age of 18. The court has the power to grant discretionary reporting restrictions to prevent the name of the defendant being published in exceptional circumstances; this would be considered if revealing the identity of the defendant would pose a real risk to the administration of justice. The Government is not considering granting defendants automatic anonymity.

However, suspects who have not yet been charged with a criminal offence should not be routinely named. The identity of a suspect should only be released if there is a compelling reason to do so, for example if they pose a risk to the public.

The majority of support services for victims of crime are provided or commissioned by Police and Crime Commissioners through grant funding provided by the Ministry of Justice. This includes services to support the bereaved families of victims of road crime.

■ Fixed Penalties: Shoplifting

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[2637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many fixed penalty notices have been issued for offences of shop (a) of goods under £100 and (b) overall in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[2638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many out of court disposals have been issued for shop theft offences in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[2640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of offenders who received (a) a fixed penalty notice and (b) another type of out of court disposal for a crime committed on retail premises were repeat offenders in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[2641\]](#)

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

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[2642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of convictions were for offences of violence against the person committed (a) on retail premises and (b) against retail workers in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice publishes information on prosecutions and convictions in England and Wales. However (PQ 2640, 2641, 2642), this data does not identify the context or specific location of offences, i.e. whether that offence has been carried out on a shop worker or on retail premises.

The Home Office collates and publishes information on fixed penalty notices.

The Ministry of Justice has published information on out of court disposals including Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND) and cautions up to December 2018. This information, relating to specific offences, 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 PQ 2637 • In the PND pivot replace 'Outcome' with 'Offence' in the 'Row' field. The total number of PNDs issued for 'DA12 Theft (retail under £100)' will then be displayed in row 28.

PQ 2638 • In the Cautions filter by 'offence' to include only '46 Theft from Shops'. The total number of cautions issued for these offences in each year will then be displayed.

■ Ministry of Justice: Pay

Chris Stephens:

[\[2629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, 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.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has an obligation to provide reasonable paid time off to recognised trade union representatives to undertake trade union duties. This includes paid time off to Health and Safety representatives as set out in section 3.1.8 of the Civil Service Management Code.

The Ministry of Justice, in line with the legislative obligation set out in the Trade Union Act (2016), annually publishes information relating to facility time for relevant union officials. Facility time is defined by the Act as including time off taken by a relevant union official that is permitted by the official's employer, including under "regulations made under section 2(4) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974".

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.

■ Prosecutions

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[2425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of (a) the effectiveness of the law on automatism as a legal defence and (b) its role in miscarriages of justice.

Chris Philp:

Automatism has developed as a defence under the common law for a long period of time and is a full defence to a criminal charge where the defendant's consciousness was so impaired that they were acting in a state of physical involuntariness.

The Government understands how difficult it must be for innocent victims of acts for which automatism may be a defence to accept that in law no one is to blame but we believe it remains unjust to punish someone for something they genuinely had no control over.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Companies**

Caroline Lucas: [1330]

To ask the Prime Minister, whether (a) he, (b) his officials or (c) advisors in his Department have had (i) oral and (ii) written communications with (A) Andrew Law, CEO of Caxton Associates, or other representatives of Caxton Associates, (B) Jonathan Wood of SRM Global, or other representatives of SRM Global, (C) representatives of Shore Capital, (D) James Reuben, director at Reuben Brothers Resources Group, (E) other representatives of Reuben Brothers Resources Group, (F) Lakshmi Mittal, CEO of ArcelorMittal, (G) other representatives of ArcelorMittal, (H) Usha Mittal, former director of ArcelorMittal, (I) representatives of Pelham Capital and (J) representatives of Unatrac in the last six months.

Boris Johnson:

Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations and individuals are published and can be found on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Details of communications by officials and advisers are not collated centrally.

TRANSPORT**■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Costs**

Joy Morrissey: [1360]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies of the findings in sections 7.6 and 7.7 of the report on HS2 published by Lord Berkeley on 5 January 2020.

Paul Maynard:

The Government commissioned Doug Oakervee to provide advice on how and whether to proceed with HS2 and his report will inform our decisions. We will of course give appropriate consideration to Lord Berkeley's personal views.

Mr David Davis: [1682]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of High Speed Two.

Paul Maynard:

The Oakervee Review has been tasked with rigorously examining HS2 Ltd's costs and schedule. The Review findings and Government's assessment of the likely costs of High Speed 2 will be published in due course.

■ London-Exeter Railway Line: Rolling Stock

Andy McDonald: [1751]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 4 November 2019 to Question 7726 on London-Exeter Railway Line: Rolling Stock, whether he has exercised the call option over the leasing costs of the 36 Eversholt Rail funded class 802 b-modes operating on the West of England route of the Great Western Region; and whether the discussions with the incumbent operator to secure the best price for all train leases for the existing train fleet have concluded.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As part of considerations for the future of the franchise, the Department is engaged with the incumbent operator in commercially confidential discussions in order to secure the best prices available for all train leases for the existing train fleet, which includes the Class 802's.

■ Northern Rail Franchise

Julian Sturdy: [1724]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assurances he can provide to employees based at Arriva Rail North's offices in York who are concerned about the uncertainty around the future of the Northern franchise.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The current financial position of the Northern franchise will not impact on the railway's day-to-day operations. The business will continue to operate as usual with no impact on Northern services or staff.

■ Railways: Franchises

Andy McDonald: [1752]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to review the rail franchising passports held by the parent group operators (a) First Group, (b) Arriva and (c) Abellio in the light of recent performance by respective subsidiary train operating companies.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The criteria under which the Department may undertake a review of any prequalification Passport is clearly set out in the Passport documentation, which is publicly available:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-franchising-pgg-passport-documentation>

Should these criteria be met for any current operator, the Department would initiate a review.

■ South Western Railway**Andy McDonald:** [\[1753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) forward and (b) backward looking financial ratios of First/MTR on South Western Railway.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department can confirm that South Western Railway was fully compliant with the relevant financial ratio requirements of its Franchise Agreement based on the financial performance data received on 20 December 2019.

TREASURY**■ Child Benefit: Romford****Andrew Rosindell:** [\[1314\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many households in Romford constituency are in receipt of child benefit.

Jesse Norman:

In August 2018, there were 12,520 families in receipt of Child Benefit in the Westminster parliamentary constituency of Romford.

This information is published in HMRC's latest annually released Child Benefit statistics "*Child Benefit Statistics: Geographical analysis, August 2018*".

■ Motorhomes: Excise Duties**Mr David Davis:** [\[3140\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has been made of the effect of recent changes to Vehicle Excise Duty on the motorhome industry in (a) the UK, (b) Yorkshire and the Humber and (c) Haltemprice and Howden constituency.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government reformed VED for motorhomes to encourage the uptake of vehicles with lower carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions to help us meet our legally binding climate change targets. It is right that under the reformed system motorhomes with high CO₂ emissions pay greater first year VED than those with lower emissions.

However, I have met with representatives of the industry and I am sensitive to their concerns. The Government is committed to levelling up economic performance throughout the country, including in Yorkshire and the Humber.

As with all taxes, the Government keeps the VED treatment of motorhomes under review. Any changes will be considered by the Chancellor and announced at fiscal events.

■ Tax Avoidance

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns: [\[1351\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to eliminate the retrospective aspects of the loan charge.

Jesse Norman:

The Government published Sir Amyas Morse's independent review of the Loan Charge on 20 December, alongside the Government's response to his recommendations. The Government welcomes Sir Amyas's recognition that Disguised Remuneration schemes are a form of tax avoidance and that it was right for the Government to take action to ensure the tax was collected.

Sir Amyas's careful and considered report examines the question of from when the Loan Charge should apply. He concludes that from 9 December 2010 the law about the tax treatment of loan schemes was clear and that the Loan Charge should apply from this date.

The Government accepts Sir Amyas's clear view on this point and intends to legislate to implement all but one of the recommendations in the next Finance Bill.

Mr David Davis: [\[1681\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of people who would remain within scope of the Loan Charge if the recommendations of the Independent Review into the Loan Charge are fully implemented.

Jesse Norman:

The Government published Sir Amyas Morse's independent review of the Loan Charge on 20 December, alongside the Government's response to his recommendations.

The Government accepted all but one of Sir Amyas's recommendations. This means that out of the estimated 50,000 individuals who used a loan scheme between 1999 and 2019 and did not settle with HMRC before March 2016, it is estimated that more than 30,000 people will benefit from the significant package of measures announced, 11,000 of whom will be taken out of scope of the charge altogether.

WALES

■ Wales Office: Pay

Grahame Morris: [\[2500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many and what proportion of staff in his Department would receive an increase in their salary in the event that their hourly pay rate was (a) £8.72, (b) £9.30 and (c) £10.

David T C Davies:

No staff would receive an increase in their salary in the event that their hourly pay rate was (a) £8.72 or (b) £9.30. Fewer than five staff would receive an increase if the

hourly rate was (c) £10. To protect the identification of staff, an exact number cannot be provided. These staff are based outside London and still receive an hourly rate above the UK Living Wage.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Angela Crawley:

[\[1765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints her Department has received in relation to (a) ATOS and (b) Maximus health assessments in the last 12 months.

Justin Tomlinson:

Any complaint received by the department relating solely to the service provided by the Assessment Provider is passed to them to action. Providers have their own complaints process to deal with dissatisfaction about the service they provide.

Information on the total number of complaints received by Independent Assessment Service (IAS), formally ATOS and Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA), which is a MAXIMUS company, for the period January 2019 to December 2019 are shown in the table below.

ASSESSMENT PROVIDER	TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	COMPLAINTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF ASSESSMENTS
IAS (prev ATOS)	6,140	0.91%
CHDA	3,640	0.45%

* All data collated from provider MI, all numbers rounded to the nearest 10

Angela Crawley:

[\[1766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress she has made on the introduction of a single digital platform for personal independence payments, employment and support allowance and universal credit assessment services.

Justin Tomlinson:

We remain committed to delivering the new single, integrated assessment service for health assessments across PIP, ESA and UC. We are developing the new digital service and are already using it in a small number of assessment centres. To date the service has handled over 300 assessments. We are using feedback from DWP staff, service users, our assessment providers, and wider stakeholders to involve them in the design of our digital service, making sure we deliver a more user-friendly, streamlined process.

■ Universal Credit**Angela Crawley:****[1767]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of universal credit.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit has now rolled out in every Jobcentre with a caseload of 2.7 million, growing every month, now able to access the additional support and flexibilities it offers. The latest data shows the proportion of all Universal Credit claims that received their full payment on time was over 95 per cent.

The Universal Credit Full Service Claimant Survey (June 2018) shows that 9 months into a Universal Credit claim, 40 per cent of claimants are working for an employer in a paid role, as opposed to only 23 per cent at the start of their claim, and people on Universal Credit spend around 50% more time looking for a job than they did under Jobseeker's Allowance. 86 per cent of people on Universal Credit were actively looking to increase their hours, compared to just 38 per cent of people on Jobseeker's Allowance. This is because they can take on more hours without losing their benefit.