



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 20 January 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:04 P.M., 20 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

■ Dangerous Driving: Appeals

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[1889\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of appeal and review processes for dangerous driving cases on access to justice for victims and their families.

Michael Ellis:

The Victims' Right to Review (VRR) scheme was launched in June 2013 and provides victims with the opportunity to request a review of a Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decision not to proceed with a prosecution. This can include cases where charges of death by dangerous driving have been considered.

Access to the scheme has been deliberately designed to be as simple and transparent as possible. No reasons or justification for requesting a review are required. A simple request from the victim that they wish for the decision to be reviewed is all that is required. The VRR scheme has been endorsed by the courts and published guidance is available online.

If the reviewing lawyer decides that the original decision was wrong, and a prosecution is required to maintain confidence in the Criminal Justice System, that decision will be overturned and proceedings reinstated, where possible. All decision making is taken in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors. Following a review under the VRR scheme, if a victim remains dissatisfied with the decision and wishes to challenge it further, they can apply to the High Court for a judicial review.

■ Domestic Violence: Prosecutions

Ruth Jones:

[\[2606\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent discussions he has had with the Director of Public Prosecutions on the effectiveness of the CPS in prosecuting cases involving domestic violence.

Michael Ellis:

The CPS takes cases of domestic abuse extremely seriously, and is determined to bring perpetrators to justice and provide victims with the greatest possible protection from repeat offending.

In 2019, the CPS – together with the police and HM Court and Tribunals Service – led the implementation of a national domestic abuse best practice framework for magistrates' court cases. This aims to ensure consistent good practice by criminal justice agencies involved in domestic abuse casework, from investigation through to court. For example, it encourages more timely court listings and the provision of

holistic support for victims, so that they are helped through both the criminal justice process and with wider issues, such as housing and finances.

■ **Forced Marriage: Prosecutions**

Ruth Jones: [\[2607\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps the CPS is taking to improve the prosecution rate of people responsible for forced marriages.

Michael Ellis:

The CPS takes the prosecution of forced marriage seriously. Each CPS Area has a lead prosecutor on forced marriage who works closely with the police and other prosecutors. The CPS's legal guidance on forced marriage assists prosecutors and is reviewed regularly. For example, it was revised last year to address cases where the victim lacks capacity to consent to marriage. Since April 2019, the joint police and CPS forced marriage working group has developed training for prosecutors and agreed a protocol for the investigation and prosecution of forced marriage. The CPS is also working with stakeholders to identify and address the obstacles to the prosecution of forced marriage.

■ **Human Rights**

Ruth Jones: [\[2608\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on the protection of human rights in the UK.

Mr Geoffrey Cox:

The United Kingdom has a long tradition of ensuring rights and liberties are protected domestically and of fulfilling its international human rights obligations. The decision to leave the European Union does not change this. We fully intend to maintain our leading role in the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Carbon Capture and Storage**

Henry Smith: [\[2480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans she has to support the creation of carbon capture and storage clusters; and if she will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS) will play a vital role in meeting our net zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050, supporting both our Industrial Strategy and the revitalisation of the economies of the UK's industrial areas.

The CCUS Action Plan outlined that deploying CCUS in industrial clusters has the potential to allow a number of carbon capture applications – for industry, to hydrogen, to low carbon gas or bio-energy with CCS in power – to connect to shared carbon dioxide infrastructure.

That is why this Government has committed to invest £800 million to build the first fully deployed CCUS cluster by the mid-2020s and £500 million to help energy-intensive industries move to low-carbon techniques.

CCUS is also likely to play an important role in achieving our Industrial Clusters Mission, creating the world's first net zero industrial cluster by 2040. This is supported by up to £170 million from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to support the deployment of low carbon technologies and enabling infrastructure in one or more clusters.

■ Conditions of Employment

Chi Onwurah: [\[3199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government has plans to diverge from the EU on employment rights after the UK leaves the EU.

Kelly Tolhurst:

It is a priority to make the UK the best place in the world to work. The Government has committed to protect and enhance workers' rights after the UK leaves the EU. Workers' rights in the UK already go above the EU minimum standards in a number of areas and as such the UK already diverges from these in a way which is positive for UK workers.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Pay

Grahame Morris: [\[2492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of staff in her 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.

Nadhim Zahawi:

This government is committed to paying people a decent living wage, which is being addressed through the statutory National Living Wage. In April 2020, the National Living Wage increases to £8.72 per hour. By 2024 the National Living Wage will rise to £10.50 per hour, reaching 66% of median UK earnings. The scope will be expanded to everyone aged 21 and over and is expected to benefit over 4 million low paid workers

All Civil Servants working in BEIS are paid above these hourly rates.

Chris Stephens: [\[2571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether her 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.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is compliant with section 3.1.8 of the Civil Service Management Code - that Health and Safety representatives are entitled to reasonable paid time off to undertake relevant training. Time off for non-industrial staff is not set against the facility time allowed under existing arrangements unless the period of time also discharges a liability under Section 168 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

■ **Driverless Vehicles: Research**

Julian Knight:

[\[3234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the 2018 Automotive Sector Deal, what steps her Department is taking to (a) allocate and (b) facilitate funding for research and infrastructure for (i) connected and (ii) autonomous vehicles; and if will she make a statement.

Julian Knight:

[\[3235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress her Department has made on the development of test tracks for (a) connected and (b) autonomous vehicles to ensure that the UK is a global leader in that sector; and if will she make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government has a long-standing programme of support to maintain the competitiveness of the UK automotive sector. Through the Automotive Sector Deal, we are working with industry to put the UK at the forefront of the next generation of new automotive vehicles and technologies. For example, together we have committed £1 billion through the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC) until 2023.

As part of the Sector Deal, we are also investing over £200 million, match-funded by industry, to accelerate the safe development and deployment of connected and automated vehicle technologies and anchor them in the UK. This funding supports more than 90 collaborative research and development projects involving over 200 organisations. It is also creating a world-leading ecosystem of controlled and real-world test sites stretching from the West Midlands to London, coordinated by Zenzic.

■ **Energy: Meters**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[3861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions she has had with British Gas on their decision to raise the minimum top up amount for customers with prepayment meters.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

This was a commercial decision for British Gas, but both Ofgem and BEIS officials have been in contact to understand British Gas's decision and how it is supporting its vulnerable customers in particular.

Customers are protected by the price cap on prepayment meters, and those who shop around can save even more.

This week is national Big Energy Saving Week and the Government is working with the Energy Saving Trust and Citizens Advice to deliver face to face and online sessions to help people save energy and switch to better deals. Prepay customers can switch to one of the many suppliers that have lower minimum top-ups.

■ Fireworks: Noise

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[3876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to encourage suppliers to stock fireworks with a noise level of less than 90 dB for public display.

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[3877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the effect of the use of fireworks on animal welfare.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We understand concerns about the potential impact caused by fireworks on individuals, animals and the environment. We also receive representations from a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the public, organisations and charities, with diverse views on what the issues are and what action they would like to see. This is why 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. Officials in OPSS have also been in contact with Government Departments including Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Devolved Administrations as part of this work. Therefore, the review 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 full picture of the data around fireworks in order to identify whether further action is appropriate.

■ Fireworks: Regulation

Julian Sturdy: [\[3186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the current regulatory framework on the sale and use of fireworks for preventing their anti-social use.

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 full picture of the data around fireworks in order to identify whether further action is appropriate.

Julian Sturdy:[\[3187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations she has received from members of the public and civil society groups on tighter restrictions on the use of fireworks; and what steps she is taking in response to those representations.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We receive representations from a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the public, organisations and charities, all with ranging views on what the issues are and what action they would like to see.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards is developing a fact-based evidence base on the key issues that have been raised around fireworks, including noise, 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. This work is an ongoing exercise, which is not time limited and we will report in due course.

■ **Fujitsu****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[3681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether Ministers in her Department have met representatives of Fujitsu in the past five years.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Departments publish quarterly details of Ministers' meetings with external organisations on GOV.UK. These can be found at the following links:

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (from July 2016) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (to July 2016) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bis-quarterly-publications-april-to-june-2012>

■ Nissan: Import Duties

Chi Onwurah: [\[3200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if she will publish the guarantees offered to Nissan with respect to tariffs upon the UK's exit from the EU.

Chi Onwurah: [\[3201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate her Department has made of the tariffs that will be imposed on Nissan's UK operations after the UK leaves the EU.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Political Declaration establishes the parameters for an ambitious and flexible partnership across trade and economic cooperation through a Free Trade Agreement with the EU. A key objective is to ensure that there are no tariffs, fees or quantitative restrictions across sectors, with modern and accompanying Rules of Origin, and ambitious customs arrangements.

We have not offered guarantees to Nissan specifically with respect to tariffs.

■ Post Office: Compensation

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[3682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions she has had with representatives from the Post Office following the settlement with sub-postmasters announced on 11 December 2019.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[3684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether she plans to introduce additional mechanisms for Government oversight of Post Office Ltd as a result of the settlement with sub-postmasters announced on 11 December 2019.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Ministers and officials are in regular contact with the Post Office.

Government has robust mechanisms in place to maintain oversight of the Post Office that are regularly reviewed. UKGI acts as Shareholder Representative for BEIS, overseeing POL's corporate governance, strategy, and the stewardship of POL's financial and other resources on behalf of the shareholder, as well as holding a non-executive seat on POL's Board.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[3683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether her Department has received a payment request from the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance regarding the settlement with sub-postmasters announced on 11 December 2019.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department has received a letter from the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance. This is being considered and a response will be provided in due course.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[3868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the expansion rate of offshore wind deployment.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We have provided more support for offshore wind than any other country in the world, helping us to reach record levels of renewable electricity generation in 2019. In 2010 offshore wind generated 0.8% of the UK's annual electricity. In 2018 it was 8% and by 2030 is projected to account for more than a third of generation.

The UK accounts for around one third of world's offshore wind capacity and has the world's largest offshore wind market with 9.8GW of installed capacity which is expected to rise to 14GW by 2023 and 19.5GW by 2026. The most recent (September 2019) Contract for Difference auction brought forward 5.5GW of new offshore wind capacity, 2.5 GW more than the 2017 auction.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Cabinet Office: Pay****Grahame Morris:**[\[2485\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, 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 (c) £10.

Jeremy Quin:

The National Living Wage is currently £8.21 per hour, set with effect from 1 April 2019.

Cabinet Office is compliant with this rate.

The Government announced on 31 December 2019 that the new National Living Wage, effective from 6 April, will be £8.72 per hour.

The table below sets out the number and proportion of staff in my Department, at 31 December 2019, who would receive an increase in their Annual Salary if their hourly pay rate was increased to the rates shown:

PROPOSED PAY RATE	£8.72	£9.30	£10.00
No of Staff pay Increases	86	162	189
% of Workforce	1.2%	2.2%	2.5%

■ Schools: Propaganda

Layla Moran: [\[3305\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether the social media team in his office has contacted an MP about the existence of anti-Government messages displayed by children in schools (a) since the 2019 general election, (b) in the last six months and (c) in the last year.

Chloe Smith:

The social media team does not engage with MPs on these matters.

■ Young People

Rachael Maskell: [\[3832\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent estimate he has made of the number of people under 24 years of age that are in (a) training, (b) employment and (c) education in (i) York Central constituency, (ii) York Unitary Authority and (iii) England.

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 [PQ3832.pdf]

■ Zero Hours Contracts: York

Rachael Maskell: [\[3834\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of the workforce in (a) York Central constituency and (b) City of York local authority area were employed on zero hours contracts in (a) 2015 and (b) each subsequent year.

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 [PQ3834.pdf]

DEFENCE**■ Armed Forces: Pensions****Dan Jarvis:**[\[3749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 21 October 2019 to Question 175 on Armed Forces: Pensions, whether he has plans to review the process by which members of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme transferred their pension benefits to non-defined benefit schemes between 2010 and 2015.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has no such plans. It is deeply regrettable that some Service personnel incurred a monetary loss when they made the decision to transfer their Armed Forces' pension benefits to non-defined benefit schemes in the period 2010 to 2015. However, this is an issue which is common to all public sector pension schemes, not just the Armed Forces.

The transfer of an individual's pension to another pension scheme was, and remains, the decision and the right of the scheme member. It would have been unacceptable for the Armed Forces' pension schemes to have denied members' wishes or challenged them following the satisfactory completion of the necessary checks. Scheme members have always been encouraged by Veterans UK to seek advice from an independent financial adviser prior to transfer.

I am satisfied that MOD officials applied due diligence throughout the pension transfer process and acted in line with the recommendations of the Pensions Regulator by providing the appropriate guidance, acting only with the written authorisation of individual members.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles: Procurement**Gerald Jones:**[\[3261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish representations his Department has received on value for money in relation to Armoured Fighting Vehicle procurements.

James Heappey:

The approach taken by the Ministry of Defence to both achieving and demonstrating value for money follows clear policy and guidance, with the evidential case being subject to full independent scrutiny. Comprehensive market analysis of the options available for the procurement of Armoured Fighting Vehicles is conducted as part of this process, and this includes industry representation.

■ Army Reserve: Pensions**Paul Girvan:**[\[4471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether former Army Reserve Soldiers who left the service prior to 2015 are entitled to an armed forces pension.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Prior to the introduction of Armed Forces Pension Scheme 15, service in the Reserve Forces (TA or Regular Reserve) was not classed as reckonable for pension purposes unless the individual was mobilised whereupon the mobilised, service would count towards a pension.

There are some exceptions. These include; Full Time Reserve Service and Additional Duties Commitments which are pensionable. Further explanations on the types of service which are now classed as pensionable can be found at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819757/RFPSMMP146_your_pension_explained_version2.pdf

■ Army: Sickle Cell Diseases**John Spellar:****[3136]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking in response to the coroner's report of 30 December 2019 that linked the deaths of two Army recruits on military exercises to sickle cell anaemia.

Johnny Mercer:

The Army takes the safety of applicants and Serving personnel extremely seriously. Following the deaths of two Commonwealth applicants, a version of the NHS Family Origins Questionnaire is now used at assessment centres to screen all candidates. This enables a medical assessment identifying those at risk of Sickle Cell Trait (SCT) with a follow on blood test as necessary. Those who are found to be SCT negative can participate as normal in the Role Fitness Test (Entry) including a 2km run at the assessment centre. Candidates who have passed all other parts of the assessment but who have been identified as SCT positive are offered a tailored pre conditioning course to mitigate against Exertional Collapse Associated to Sickle Cell Trait (ECAST). This process has been developed based on an Evidence-Based Medicine approach drawing on available research and NHS best practice, tempered by best available experience of UK Subject Matter Experts and US Armed Forces. The inquests into the two tragic deaths are yet to take place, but a full response to the Coroner's Prevention of Future Deaths Report is being prepared, which will include direction on identifying and supporting serving military personnel who are as yet undiagnosed as SCT positive.

■ Army: Vehicles**Gerald Jones:****[3260]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his Department's policy to ensure that future vehicle procurement programmes for the British Army are awarded through open competition.

James Heapey:

The Government's default position on defence procurement remains competition wherever appropriate. The Ministry of Defence has a responsibility to procure the

best equipment for our Armed Forces whilst achieving value for money for the taxpayer.

■ **Australia: Defence**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[3148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to strengthen the UK's defence relationship with Australia.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As one of the UK's closet allies we maintain close defence cooperation with Australia on a wide variety of levels. This includes: working together to improve global and regional security either bilaterally or in multi-lateral fora such as the International Maritime Security Construct, Five Eyes Grouping and the Five Powers Defence Arrangements; cooperating on major operations such as Afghanistan; collaborating on capability projects such as the production of the Type 26 Global Combat Ship or regular exchanges of personnel. All this cooperation is underpinned by regular meetings between Ministers and senior officials, culminating in the annual AUKMIN dialogue.

■ **Clyde Naval Base: Security**

Deidre Brock:

[\[2567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many unauthorised incursions there have been at (a) Faslane and (b) Coulport naval bases in each of the past ten years.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The number of unauthorised access incidents at HMNB Clyde, Faslane and Royal Naval Armaments Depot Coulport, is provided in the table below:

YEAR	TOTAL	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Unauthorised 10 access Faslane	-	-	~	~	~	~	~	~	-	-	-
Unauthorised ~ access Coulport	-	-	~	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 in line with disclosure control policy. Figures ending in 5 are rounded to the nearest 20 to avoid bias, 5 or fewer is represented by '~', 0 is represented by '-'.

Unauthorised access is defined as an individual, or individuals, gaining access to a defined Restricted access area within HMNB Clyde by circumventing the site security system. There was no risk to the safety of personnel or vessels arising from these incidents.

■ Defence**Nia Griffith:** [\[3707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to publish (a) Defence Space Strategy and (b) Defence Arctic Strategy.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Defence Space Strategy has developed significantly. We are currently reviewing the right timing for publication and how best to align it with the emerging National Space Strategy. The Ministry of Defence is firmly committed to a number of space programmes, and we are assessing our space capabilities, coherence and requirements. The strategy on the UK's Defence Contribution in the High North will be published shortly.

Nia Griffith: [\[3708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to publish his Department's next Strategic Defence and Security Review.

Mr Ben Wallace:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my noble Friend, Earl Howe, on 8 January 2020 in the House of Lords (Official Report, column 177).

Attachments:

1. Hansard Extract 8 January 2020
[20200108_Intergrated_Security_Defence_and_Foreign_Policy_Review.docx]

■ Iraq: Peacekeeping Operations**Dan Jarvis:** [\[3747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has held discussions with the Prime Minister on withdrawing UK military personnel from Iraq.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Defence Secretary has regular conversations about operations overseas with the Prime Minister.

■ Ministry of Defence: Land**Gerald Jones:** [\[3257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will include a land sector strategy in its Defence Industrial Strategy refresh.

Gerald Jones: [\[3258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reasons his Department has not published a strategy for the land sector similar to those for the air and maritime sectors.

Gerald Jones: [\[3259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to revise the Defence Industrial Strategy policy.

James Heappey:

Our refreshed Defence Industrial Policy, published in December 2017, sets out our commitment to encouraging a thriving and globally competitive UK defence sector. The Ministry of Defence keeps its approach under constant review to ensure that the implementation and impact of our policies remain effective. We have decided in the past to adopt alternative approaches in specific areas, as we have done in Shipbuilding and Combat Air, and we continually assess our approach to other sectors to determine whether we need to develop separate strategies. Our approach to the Land sector is no different. Last year the Army launched the Army Industrial Engagement Framework which defined how the Army will develop a more cohesive and effective relationship with industry throughout the procurement and development process. The refreshed Defence Industrial Policy from 2017 remains the overarching policy document which describes our approach to industry more broadly.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Broadband: Optical Fibres****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[3869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the proportion of homes that will have full-fibre broadband by 2025.

Matt Warman:

The Government's Manifesto set out its ambition to bring full fibre and gigabit capable broadband to every home and business across the UK by 2025.

■ Disinformation**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[3705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress she has made on implementing the recommendations of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee's Special Report on Disinformation and Fake News set out in the online harms white paper.

Matt Warman:

Following our formal response to the Select Committee report on 'Fake News' and Disinformation in May 2019, we continue to reflect on the Committee's recommendations in our ongoing work to counter disinformation in all its forms. Disinformation is one of the harms which was proposed to be in scope of the new regulatory framework announced in the Online Harms White Paper. We are currently analysing the responses to the White Paper's public consultation, and considering the issues raised.

■ Electronic Government: Proof of Identity**Anna McMorrin:** [\[3866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to publish her Department's response to the consultation on Digital Identity that closed on 19 September 2019.

Nigel Adams:

The Department's response to the Digital Identity call for evidence will be published in Spring 2020.

■ Olympic Games 2012**Seema Malhotra:** [\[3759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the legacy benefits of the London 2012 Olympics.

Nigel Adams:

Government commissioned an independent consortium to carry out a meta-evaluation of the benefits of London 2012. These reports are published on GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/london-2012-meta-evaluation>) and cover a broad range of research areas such as economic benefits, sustainability standards and the impact on volunteering.

Government, in conjunction with the Mayor of London, published four annual reports on legacy between 2013 and 2016. These described legacy benefits in the areas of sport and physical activity, economic impact, communities, East London regeneration and the impact from the Paralympics. Again, these reports are available on GOV.UK via <https://www.gov.uk/society-and-culture/2012-olympic-and-paralympic-legacy>.

■ Television: Licensing**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[3870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the effect of the policy to no longer fund free TV licences for people aged over 75 on loneliness among older people.

Nigel Adams:

Following the licence fee settlement agreement in 2015, the future of the over 75s concession and how it is funded is the responsibility of the BBC, not of the government.

The government is disappointed with the BBC's decision to restrict the over 75 licence fee concession to only those in receipt of pension credit.

We recognise the value of free TV licences for over-75s and believe they should be funded by the BBC.

■ UN Convention On the Rights of Persons With Disabilities

Marion Fellows:

[\[3242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to meet the requirements of Article 30 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Nigel Adams:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is committed to protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport.

A number of positive measures are being taken forward by DCMS and its Arms' Length Bodies. These include: Arts Council England commissioning 'Making A Shift' (published January 2018) to understand barriers preventing disabled people from entering and progressing within the arts and culture sector workforce; the British Film Institute promotes awareness through curated content like Disabled Britain on Screen and ensures that events at the BFI Southbank are open to everyone, including by offering relaxed and accessible screenings; and Sport England's investment of £1.6m from 2017 - 2020 into seven National Disability Sports Organisations that represent specific impairment groups.

EDUCATION

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Martyn Day:

[\[900253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on the potential effect of the Government's proposed immigration legislation on tertiary education.

Chris Skidmore:

The Department remains closely engaged with the Home Office around the future immigration system, its design and its impact on tertiary education.

Officials are involved in a number of cross-Whitehall meetings on system design, and attend the Education Sector Forum where the sector shares their views directly with the Home Office.

■ Brexit

Hywel Williams:

[\[3147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what level of cooperation the Government will seek to negotiate with the EU on (a) Erasmus, (b) Creative Europe and (c) Horizon Europe after the UK leaves the EU.

Chris Skidmore:

This government values the strong collaborative partnerships that we have across Europe in many areas including science, research and innovation, education, culture and media. We want to continue to support these opportunities.

We will continue to collaborate with the EU on these areas and we have been clear that where it is in the UK's interests we will seek to participate in some specific EU Programmes. The Political Declaration agreed with the EU in October 2019 demonstrates a shared intent between UK and EU leaders to agree a framework that supports collaboration in science and innovation.

The shape and content of EU Programmes post-2020, including Horizon Europe, Creative Europe and Erasmus+, are currently being negotiated in the EU Institutions and have not yet been finalised. These EU Programmes must be adopted by the EU before any potential formal negotiations on association could begin.

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

■ Children in Care: Mental Health Services

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[3181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of mental health assessments for looked after children.

Ian Paisley: [\[3203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of mental health assessments for looked after children.

Helen Hayes: [\[3262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of mental health assessments for looked after children.

Nick Gibb:

Healthcare and social care are devolved matters.

The Department jointly commissioned with Department for Health and Social Care an Expert Working Group to look at how the mental health needs of looked-after children, previously looked-after children and care leavers in England could be better met. In November 2017, the group made a set of recommendations including on improving assessment of the mental health needs of looked-after children.

The Department is taking forward a number of these recommendations through our £1 million mental health assessment pilot programme, which is testing improved approaches to the mental health and wellbeing element of the health assessment on entry to care.

The Department has appointed SQW Limited to carry out an evaluation of the pilot and fieldwork is currently underway. This will help inform our assessment of the changes needed to the mental health assessments of looked-after children.

■ Children: Social Services

Helen Hayes: [\[3263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on allocating additional funding to children's services in the forthcoming Budget.

Michelle Donelan:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and officials in the Department for Education discuss and work with other government departments on a regular basis, including HM Treasury and my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on a range of issues, including children's social care funding.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[900259\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of local authority funding for children's services.

Michelle Donelan:

The Government is providing councils with an additional £1 billion for adults' and children's social care in every year of this Parliament. This is on top of the continuation of the £410 million social care grant in 2020-21. This will support local authorities to meet rising demand.

■ Department for Education: Pay

Grahame Morris: [\[2516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the increase in the National Living wage announced by the Government on 31 December 2019, what discussions he is having with private sector companies undertaking facility management work for his Department to ensure that the cost of wage increases for their employees are not passed on to his Department.

Chris Skidmore:

Facilities Management (FM) at the Department for Education offices is delivered via the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) FM contract.

Changes to the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage are covered by the 'change of law' provisions within the MoJ FM contracts. As a result, the MoJ discusses with each of the FM service providers the potential impact of any such changes in order to assess the financial impact, considering the overall contractual terms and conditions.

■ Educational Exchanges

Ben Lake:

[\[2671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that students have access to educational and cultural exchange programmes after the UK leaves the EU.

Chris Skidmore:

The government highly values international cultural exchange and cooperation in education and training and recognises the benefits that such cooperation brings.

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

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

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

Ben Lake:

[\[2672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on ensuring that students at Welsh universities have access to educational and cultural exchange programmes after the UK leaves the EU.

Chris Skidmore:

The government highly values international exchange and cooperation in education and training and recognises the benefits that such cooperation brings.

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

The UK as a whole participates in the current Erasmus+ programme and the Department for Education is the National Authority for the programme in the UK. The department oversees the work of the UK National Agency, which is responsible for the management and delivery of the programme across the UK, including in the devolved administrations.

My right hon. Friend, Secretary of State for Education and I regularly discuss matters relating to education and EU exit with the devolved administrations including on Erasmus+.

The department officials also hold regular meetings on the topic of Erasmus+ with officials from the devolved administrations to ensure close cooperation on this matter.

■ Free School Meals

Chris Stephens: [R] [3826]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children eligible for free school meals are not registered to receive them.

Chris Stephens: [R] [3827]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the value of (a) free school meals and (b) Pupil Premium that has not been claimed by eligible children in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Michelle Donelan:

Responsibility for free school meals and disadvantage policy is devolved and is therefore the responsibility of the devolved administrations.

In England, free school meal eligibility is used as a proxy measure for allocating the pupil premium. This remains the best available measure at an individual pupil level and the most reliable predictor of academic underperformance. Focusing pupil premium on pupils who have claimed free school meals in the past 6 years ensures schools have additional resources to tackle the educational impact of household economic deprivation.

The continuing provision of free school meals to children from out of work families or those on low incomes is of the utmost importance to this government. Take-up of free school meals is strong, estimated at 89% of eligible pupils.

We want to make sure as many eligible pupils as possible are claiming their free school meals, and to make it as simple as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility. To support this, we provide an Eligibility Checking System to make the checking process as quick and straightforward as possible for schools and local authorities. We have developed a model registration form to help schools encourage parents to sign up for free school meals. We also provide guidance to Jobcentre Plus advisers so that they can make Universal Credit recipients aware that they may also be entitled to wider benefits, including free school meals.

■ Further Education and Higher Education: Standards

Mary Robinson: [900256]

What steps his Department is taking to improve quality and choice in the provision of (a) further and (b) higher education.

Chris Skidmore:

We are increasing funding to improve participation for 16 to 19 year olds, introducing T-Levels, investing in further education (FE) and providing support for college improvement.

The Office for Students and Ofsted hold higher education and FE providers to account for delivering quality and successful outcomes.

The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework incentivises quality teaching, and new digital tools support student choice.

■ Primary Education: Admissions

David Linden: [\[3871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to change the School Admissions Code to allow summer-born children to automatically start reception at five years old.

Nick Gibb:

The Government remains committed to making the necessary changes to allow children to start Reception aged five where this is what their parents want. The Department will consider the appropriate time for consulting on these changes in the context of competing pressures on parliamentary time.

■ Pupils: Per Capita Costs

Tom Randall: [\[900261\]](#)

What plans the Government has to increase the level of per pupil funding.

Nick Gibb:

Next year, our National Funding Formula is delivering an average increase in per pupil funding of 4.2%, while ensuring that pupil-led funding for every school can rise at least in line with inflation. We are levelling up the lowest funding schools to receive minimum per pupil amounts of £3,750 at primary and £5,000 at secondary.

■ Pupils: York

Rachael Maskell: [\[3831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps he has taken to tackle the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in the City of York.

Nick Gibb:

Since 2011, the Department has provided extra funding through the pupil premium to support disadvantaged pupils. The Department has provided £2.4 billion in funding this year alone so that schools have the resources to focus on improving the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. This year, schools in York are receiving £5 million in additional funding through the pupil premium.

School leaders can use the grant in any way they choose to meet their pupils' needs. Through the establishment of the £137 million Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), the Department commissioned extensive research into how schools can best improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

The EEF's definitive Pupil Premium Guide, published last summer, brings together 8 years of evidence. The guide recommends that, when spending the pupil premium,

schools prioritise the quality of teaching (for example, by investing in professional development). The guide also advises that targeted academic programmes and wider readiness-to-learn support should be prioritised as these approaches are proven to make a difference to pupil outcomes when delivered effectively. The guide is available at the following link:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/pupil-premium-guide/>.

The EEF has recently established a network of Research Schools across England, such as Huntingdon Research School, to help school leaders to access and implement effective practice.

■ School Exclusions Review

Dr Matthew Offord: [3183]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what is the timeframe is for the implementation the undertakings given by the Government in its response to the Timpson Review of School Exclusion, published in May 2019.

Ian Paisley: [3205]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Timpson review of school exclusion: Government response, published in May 2019, what the timetable is for the steps his Department plans to take to make schools accountable for the children they exclude.

Helen Hayes: [3264]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the timeframe is for the implementation of the actions contained in the Government's response to the Timpson Review of School Exclusion in relation to the accountability of schools for the children they exclude.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is taking forward an ambitious programme of action on behaviour, exclusion and alternative provision (AP) which will respect head teachers' powers to use exclusion when they need to, enable schools to support children at risk of exclusion, and ensure that excluded children continue to receive a good education. We will expand AP and improve the quality of the sector so that pupils in AP receive an education on a par with that received by their mainstream peers and receive the support they need in other areas. Further information on the timeframes for this work will be provided in due course.

■ Schools: Worsley and Eccles South

Barbara Keeley: [3711]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of school provision in Worsley and Eccles South constituency.

Nick Gibb:

Local authorities are accountable for providing sufficient school places and are funded by the Department to deliver this. The Department collects School Capacity Data annually from local authorities to monitor school place demand. According to this data, Salford and the constituency of Worsley and Eccles South has sufficient school places. Where changes are forecast by the local authority, plans are put in place to ensure sufficiency.

The Department collects and publishes information about the quality of places on GOV.UK on an annual basis. Local authorities are responsible for the quality of maintained schools and in the context of academies this lies with Regional School Commissioners who act in accordance with the Schools Causing Concern Guidance. Since 2010, we have provided through basic need funding capital to provide 3,942 additional school places. Salford has been allocated £58.3 million to provide new school places from 2011-2021.

More information on the data is available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-capacity-academic-year-2017-to-2018>.

■ **Schools: York**

Rachael Maskell:**[3833]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding his Department allocated to the City of York Council for school capital spending in (a) 2010-11 and (b) each subsequent year.

Nick Gibb:

The City of York Council received £46.1million of core capital allocations from the Department for Education from 2011-12 to 2019-20 financial years. A breakdown of spend per year is included in the table below.

YEAR	TOTAL
2011-12	£4.4 million
2012-13	£5.5 million
2013-14	£3.5 million
2014-15	£3.4 million
2015-16	£6.9 million
2016-17	£9.5 million
2017-18	£7.8 million

YEAR	TOTAL
2018-19	£2.4 million
2019-20	£2.7 million

This figure includes condition allocations for local authority maintained and voluntary aided schools and basic need funding to the local authority for new school places. It also includes funding provided to the local authority through the Healthy Pupils Capital Fund in 2018-19, and additional capital funding provided for schools in the budget 2018. The capital funding available to academy trusts is calculated on the same formulaic basis as maintained schools, school condition allocations for Academy trusts are available on GOV.UK. Data on capital funding allocated to local areas prior to 2011-12 is not readily available. We expect to announce condition funding for 2020-21 this spring.

In addition to this, the City of York has been allocated a further £197,000 through the Special Provision Capital Fund in 2020-21. This funding is intended to help local authorities create new places and improve facilities for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. On top of this funding the priority school rebuilding programme (PSBP) is rebuilding or refurbishing buildings in the worst condition at over 500 schools across England. Two projects in York have been completed in the first phase of PSBP (Carr Infant School and Lord Deramore's Primary School) and Badger Hill Primary Academy is near completion in the second phase of PSBP.

Published data on capital allocations is available on the GOV.UK website.

■ Sex and Relationship Education

Layla Moran:

[\[3881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he is having with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on how local sexual health services can be utilised to assist with education on HIV and sexual health under the new relationships and sex education guidance.

Nick Gibb:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, meets regularly with Cabinet colleagues to discuss the Department for Education's agenda. This includes relevant topics covered by the new subjects of Relationships Education (for primary age pupils), Relationships and Sex Education (for secondary age pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools). The Department is working with Public Health England (PHE), through the RSHE Working Group, to promote join-up on these issues locally.

PHE have regional leads who work with local sexual health services and schools and they provide support to schools with aspects of curriculum delivery; for example with resources covering a range of health issues including sexually transmitted diseases.

In addition, the Department is working with local authorities to understand the breadth of support available for all schools, and what further support local authorities need to ensure strategic co-ordination of school improvement and health priorities.

■ **Sixth Form Education: Finance**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[3157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to introduce dedicated capital expansion and maintenance funds for sixth form providers in England.

Michelle Donelan:

Our ambition is to level up the skills of the entire nation and ensure that post-16 education providers are in a great shape to deliver this. The department is considering how best to achieve this ambition and will announce details of any future capital funding in due course. This will build on the significant uplift in recurrent funding for 16-19 education which we are putting in place for the next academic year, 2020-21.

■ **Special Educational Needs**

Anne Marie Morris: [\[900258\]](#)

What steps he is taking to ensure that children with special educational needs are able to access support services close to home.

Michelle Donelan:

Most children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities access support in their local area. We have allocated £365 million capital funding to local authorities from 2018 to 2021 for them to enhance the facilities and the number of places available locally to those with SEND.

Mrs Flick Drummond: [\[900260\]](#)

What steps he is taking to support children with special educational needs.

Sara Britcliffe: [\[900262\]](#)

What steps he is taking to support children with special educational needs.

Michelle Donelan:

To help ensure those with special educational needs get the right support we have, for example:

- provided an extra £780 million high needs funding next year, bringing the total for those with the most complex needs to £7.2 billion; and
- launched a major review of the SEND system. We will update on progress shortly.

■ Special Educational Needs: Primary Education

Chris Bryant:

[900257]

What estimate he has made of the number of primary school children receiving specialist educational support following an acquired brain injury.

Michelle Donelan:

We do not collect this data, but the special educational needs system is designed to put in the right support for children irrespective of their condition. We are committed to driving up the quality of this support across the country, including through an extra £780 million high needs funding next year.

■ Special Educational Needs: Surveys

Seema Malhotra:

[3758]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent surveys his Department has undertaken with young people on their educational needs.

Nick Gibb:

The Department commissions or co-funds a number of studies with young people. Current live projects include longitudinal studies such as the Millennium Cohort Study and the second Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE2), which collect evidence about the lives and experiences of young people and the transitions they make from education into early adulthood.

Other surveys include the 'Pupils and their parents or carer: omnibus survey', which gathers the views from pupils (and their parents or carers) in state-funded secondary schools on a wide range of topics, including subject choice, careers guidance and career aspirations. In addition to commissioned social research, the Department also engages with young people on an ad hoc basis to inform policy development and improve existing services.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Air Pollution

Sarah Owen:

[1805]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which towns and cities have the worst levels of air pollution in England.

Rebecca Pow:

An annual assessment of air pollution in the UK is published on the UK-AIR website at the following URL: <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/annualreport/index>

■ Animal Welfare

Christian Matheson: [3774]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Queen's Speech of December 2019 and background briefing notes, what plans she has to bring forward legislative proposals on recognising animals as sentient beings.

George Eustice:

The Government has committed to bringing in new legislation on animal sentience. Any necessary changes required to domestic law will be made in a rigorous and comprehensive way after we leave the EU. Legislation will be brought forward when Parliamentary time allows.

■ Badgers Act 1991

Caroline Lucas: [1325]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many people were (a) proceeded against and (b) convicted of offences under the Badgers Act 1991 in (i) 2018 and (ii) 2019; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Lucas: [1326]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many people were (a) proceeded against and (b) convicted of offences under the Deer Act 1991 in (i) 2018 and (ii) 2019; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Lucas: [1327]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many people were (a) proceeded against and (b) convicted of offences under the Wild Animals (Protection) Act 1996 in (i) 2018, and (ii) 2019; and if she will make a statement.

Caroline Lucas: [1328]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many people were (a) proceeded against and (b) convicted of offences under the Hunting Act 2004 in (i) 2018 and (ii) 2019; and if she will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

The Ministry of Justice publishes information on prosecutions, convictions and sentencing outcomes of court proceedings in England and Wales up to December 2018. Data for 2019 is planned for publication by the Ministry of Justice in May 2020. The information requested on specific crimes can be found using the '[Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code](#)' data tool.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/804510/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2018.xlsx

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Pay**Grahame Morris:**[\[2489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many and what proportion of staff in her 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.

George Eustice:

This Government is committed to paying people a decent living wage, which is being addressed through the statutory National Living Wage (NLW). In April 2020, the NLW increases to £8.72 per hour. By 2024 the NLW will rise to £10.50 per hour, reaching 66% of median UK earnings. The scope will be expanded to everyone aged 21 and over and is expected to benefit over 4 million low paid workers.

No staff in core-Defra would require an increase in salary in the event that their hourly pay rate was either £8.72 or £9.30.

Less than 5 staff (0.09% of all staff) in core-Defra would require an increase to salary in the event that their hourly rate of pay was £10.

Grahame Morris:[\[2515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the increase in the National Living wage announced by the Government on 31 December 2019, what discussions she is having with private sector companies undertaking facility management work for her Department to ensure that the cost of wage increases for their employees are not passed on to her Department.

George Eustice:

Defra's facilities management (FM) contract will not be affected by the announcement on 31 December 2019 of the increase in the National Minimum Wage. This is because we require, and the contract states, that the FM provider will pay the Foundation Living Wage which is already higher than the National Living Wage. As a result there is no need for a contract variation or engagement with the supplier on this subject.

■ European Environment Agency**Caroline Lucas:**[\[3725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to seek membership of or co-operator country status with the (a) European Environment Agency and (b) European Environment Information and Observation Network after the UK leaves the EU.

George Eustice:

Our future relationship with the EU is the subject of negotiations. The Government will consider our future working relationship with EU bodies as part of the discussions about our future partnership.

■ Farmers: Yorkshire and the Humber

Mr David Davis: [\[1683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support farmers in (a) Haltemprice and Howden constituency and (b) Yorkshire and the Humber.

George Eustice:

Farmers currently have access to a range of support measures, including direct payments under the CAP. We have published the Agriculture Bill that sets out how we will support the industry as we leave the EU and this includes rewarding farmers for delivering public goods.

We would expect farmers in Yorkshire and Humber to participate in the scheme and to be able to apply for the wider support we intend to make available to farmers through the Bill.

■ Forests: North of England

Dan Jarvis: [R] [\[3216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to support the Northern Forest initiative.

Rebecca Pow:

As part of the 25 Year Environment Plan, we are providing £5.7 million to support the existing Northern Forest Partnership of the Community Forests and the Woodland Trust to accelerate and further develop the Northern Forest. Specifically, this kick-start investment is funding the planting of at least 1.8 million new trees across the Northern Forest by 2022.

We continue to work with the Northern Forest Partnership to identify, develop and implement delivery models to ensure new trees are planted in the places of greatest need and that these trees are well managed and maintained for current and future generations to enjoy and benefit from.

■ Horse Racing: Animal Welfare

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[1916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of banning the use of the whip in horse racing.

George Eustice:

Defra is keen to ensure that we uphold our high standards of animal welfare including in relation to horseracing. Irresponsible use of the whip is completely unacceptable.

The British Horseracing Association (BHA) requires that whips be used responsibly and jockeys may only use the whip within certain strict rules. The BHA policy on the whip was drawn up in consultation with animal welfare groups, such as the RSPCA and World Horse Welfare and is published on the BHA website. The latest rules

include a threshold on the number of times the whip can be used before racing stewards can consider an inquiry. If the rules are broken, the jockey may be banned from racing for a certain number of days depending on the seriousness of the offence. Stewards also have the ability to impose a fine on a rider between £200 and £10,000.

In addition to sanctions from the sport, using the whip indiscriminately on a horse could be a criminal offence under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Defra is satisfied that the laws and rules in place are sufficient to restrict and limit the use of the whip in horse racing.

■ Livestock: Exports

Tracey Crouch: [\[1720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the criteria is for live animal exports for slaughter to be classified as long distance.

George Eustice:

We have a manifesto commitment to end excessively long journeys for live animals going for slaughter and fattening once we leave the EU. We will shortly consult on how we deliver on that commitment and look forward to inviting views on the criteria that will be used to define an excessively long journey.

■ Reindeer: Exports

Henry Smith: [\[1346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many (a) reindeer and (b) consignments of reindeer were exported from the UK in (i) 2018 and (ii) 2019; and to which countries those exports were sent in each year.

George Eustice:

The number of reindeer and the number of consignments exported from the UK to the EU in 2018 is as follows:

COUNTRY OF DESTINATION	NUMBER OF CONSIGNMENTS	NUMBER OF REINDEER
France	1	2

There were no exports of reindeer to third countries recorded in 2018.

There were no recorded exports of reindeer from the United Kingdom to third countries or EU Member States in 2019.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) can access information using Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) for species of animals that require a health certificate for movement to the EU.

APHA does record Export Health Certificates issued for animals to third countries that do not use the TRACES system.

■ Reindeer: Imports**Henry Smith:**[\[1345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many (a) reindeer and (b) consignments of reindeer were imported into the UK in 2019; from which countries they were imported; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The information regarding reindeer imports is based on Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) data. This data is provided by third parties.

There have been no recorded imports of reindeer into the United Kingdom from the EU in 2019.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency are not able to provide any data regarding the number of imports from third countries. This is because they are covered by a commodity code in TRACES which does not allow a breakdown by species.

■ Salmon**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[1383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to increase salmon stocks throughout England.

George Eustice:

To increase salmon stocks throughout England, the Environment Agency (EA) recently published a new programme of action in the England and Wales North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) Implementation Plan 2019-2024.

In 2018, 10,328 salmon were caught by net fisheries in England. In 2019 the EA made a number of changes to reduce the exploitation of salmon by closing all major salmon net fisheries around the English coast and introducing mandatory catch and release by anglers on rivers where salmon populations are most at risk. In 2019, no salmon were reported taken by the remaining net fisheries.

The EA have been working with a number of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) to minimise unintentional by-catch by inshore sea fisheries (within six nautical miles). By-catch is when salmon are unintentionally caught by nets aiming to catch other species. New byelaws have been introduced by the Devon and Severn IFCA and Cornwall IFCA that significantly increase in the level of protection for migratory fish.

To safeguard sufficient river flows for salmon, the EA's Restoring Sustainable Abstraction programme has changed 81 unsustainable abstraction licences on England's 42 principal salmon rivers preventing damage, or the risk of damage. The remaining 14 licences will be modified by 2020.

The EA has also improved water quality to maximise salmon spawning success and the Water Companies' National Environment Programme 2016-2021 is scheduled to

deliver 42 improvements, 160 investigations, 15 catchment schemes and 10 water resource schemes on England's 42 principal salmon rivers.

To restore salmon habitat and address barriers to migration, in 2018 on England's 42 principal salmon rivers 9 weirs/barriers were removed and 8 fish passage easements were delivered, improving access for salmon to 152km of river on the Rivers Ribble, Crake, Kent, Wear, Severn, Tamar, Camel, Fowey, Taw, and Monks Brook (Lower Itchen). Over the last 5 years (2014-18) 57 barriers have been removed or altered, which has improved access to 2,398km of river catchment.

The England and Wales NASCO Implementation Plan 2019-2024 can be found at [http://www.nasco.int/pdf/implementation_plans/Cycle3/IP\(19\)13rev_IP_EU-UK%20\(England%20and%20Wales\).pdf](http://www.nasco.int/pdf/implementation_plans/Cycle3/IP(19)13rev_IP_EU-UK%20(England%20and%20Wales).pdf)

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Caroline Lucas:

[3166]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether funding has been allocated to local authorities to support vulnerable (a) homeless and (b) elderly EU citizens in applying for the EU Settlement Scheme by covering the costs of (i) new identity documents and (ii) travelling to embassies or consulates.

James Duddridge:

The EU Settlement Scheme makes it easy for EU citizens and their family members who want to stay in the UK to get the UK immigration status they need. It is free to make an application to the scheme so that there is no financial barrier to anyone who wishes to stay.

Applicants will only need to complete three key steps - prove their identity, show that they live in the UK and declare any criminal convictions. The Home Office will check the employment and benefits records the Government holds to establish their period of residence, meaning most applicants won't need to do anything to evidence their residence. Where there are gaps, a wide variety of documents can be submitted as evidence, including a dated bank statement showing payments received or spending in the UK, a dated letter from a UK GP or indefinite leave to remain documentation.

There is also provision in the EU Settlement Scheme for applicants to apply without a valid identity document where they are unable to obtain one for compelling practical or compassionate reasons or due to circumstances beyond their control.

There is a wide range of support available online, over the phone and in person to help people apply. We have awarded £9 million this financial year to 57 voluntary and community sector organisations across the UK to help us reach an estimated 200,000 vulnerable or at-risk EU citizens and their family members.

Additional support is also available to those EU citizens in the UK who do not have the appropriate access, skills or confidence to apply online. This includes over 300 assisted digital locations across the UK where people can be supported through their application. Since 30 March 2019, there have only been around 6,300 appointments for Assisted Digital support. It is one of several ways people can verify their identity, including by post. There are also over 80 locations where applicants can have their passport scanned and verified across the UK.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Australia: Fires

Tommy Sheppard:

[\[3806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether financial support has been (a) requested by and (b) provided to the Australian Government by the UK Government as a result of the bushfires in that country.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

As I (Minister Wheeler) set out in my Oral Statement of 9 January, we deployed a team of UK experts to Australia which returned to the UK on 16 January.

The team included 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. At this stage the Australian government has made no specific requests for assistance however we are exploring areas where we can offer assistance.

■ Bahrain: Political Prisoners

Dan Jarvis:

[\[3750\]](#)

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 make representations to his Bahraini counterpart on overturning the death sentences of those prisoners on appeal.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As I said on 8 January, we are deeply concerned about the death sentences given to Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa. The UK has raised the matter with senior members of the Government of Bahrain. 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.

■ Burma: Political Prisoners

Chris Law:

[\[2563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions the UK Government has had with Aung San Suu Kyi on the detention of political prisoners in Burma.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The UK Government continues to be concerned about the many journalists and political prisoners who are incarcerated in Myanmar. Myanmar's laws on freedom of expression remain oppressive and are used, particularly by the military, to imprison opponents. In September 2018, , the former Foreign Secretary raised the cases of the two imprisoned Reuters journalists with Aung San Suu Kyi. They were released in May 2019. The British Ambassador continues to raise the issue of political prisoners with other Myanmar Ministers as well as urging reform of repressive legislation.

■ Burma: Rohingya

Tim Farron:

[\[2469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent diplomatic steps he has taken to prevent further human rights violations against the Rohingya.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The prevention of further human rights violations against the Rohingya remains a priority for the British Government. It is our view that further violations can only be prevented by addressing the underlying causes of the crisis, specifically through the implementation of the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission and through ensuring there is accountability for the atrocities that took place. We continue to engage the Myanmar Government and regional governments on these issues. In October 2019, Baroness Sugg during her visit to Myanmar raised with ministers the plight of refugees and pushed for faster progress with the remaining Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations. The UK has also shone a spotlight on violations by the Myanmar military by co-sponsoring resolutions on Myanmar at the UN Human Rights Council in September 2019, and at the UN General Assembly in December 2019.

■ China and Hong Kong: Human Rights

Catherine West:

[\[2658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make it his policy to introduce Magnitsky sanctions to officials in (a) Hong Kong and (b) China that are responsible for serious human rights violations.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The UK will establish a UK autonomous global human rights sanctions regime once we leave the European Union. A global sanctions regime will allow us to respond to serious human rights violations or abuses anywhere in the world. The UK is

committed to the promotion and protection of human rights. A human rights sanctions regime will help support our human rights objectives. We will look to cooperate with others, including the US and Canada, who use sanctions to address human rights. The proposed human rights sanctions regime is still in development.

■ **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Interserve**

Grahame Morris: [\[3735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many reports he has received from Interserve about a potential break-in at a confidential waste room in his Department's headquarters between June and July 2019.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

There was no break-in at a confidential waste room. The door to a room containing confidential waste was forced in a controlled manner by appropriately cleared Interserve staff. This was the result of the key being misplaced. The room is managed by Interserve in accordance with the delivery of contracted facility management services.

■ **Hong Kong: Demonstrations**

Catherine West: [\[2655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what protection the British Consulate-General in Hong Kong is able to provide to demonstrators in Hong Kong that are British National Overseas passport holders.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

British National (Overseas) passport holders are not entitled to British consular protection in Hong Kong or other parts of the People's Republic of China. This position is set out clearly in the United Kingdom Memorandum alongside the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration. The UK has made clear our position on the situation in Hong Kong. The Rules-Based International System must be upheld and the rights and freedoms set out in the Joint Declaration maintained.

■ **Hong Kong: Human Rights**

Catherine West: [\[2657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Hong Kong Government on that Government's decision to deny entry to (a) Mr Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch and (b) other human rights activists.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The UK is concerned at the Hong Kong authorities' decision to deny entry to the Executive Director of Human Rights Watch. We hope that there will be an explanation of the reasons for the refusal.

We have consistently set out our concerns regarding the situation in Hong Kong to both the Hong Kong SAR government and the authorities in Beijing.

■ Iran: Diplomatic Relations

Afzal Khan: [\[3307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking with the UK's allies to (a) reduce tensions and (b) return to diplomacy with Iran.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK continues to call on all sides to de-escalate to reduce tensions in the region. Escalation is in nobody's interest. The Prime Minister has spoken to President Trump, President Rouhani, President Macron, Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi in recent days, and will have calls with other leaders in the coming days to encourage de-escalation. It is vital that all leaders now pursue a diplomatic way forward.

■ Iran: Sanctions

Jonathan Edwards: [\[3167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of sanctions against the Iranian regime.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Our strategic aim remains to de-escalate tensions; to hold Iran to account for its destabilising regional activity; and to keep the diplomatic door open for Iran to negotiate a peaceful way forwards. Sanctions are only one of a number of tools available to the international community to achieve these goals. Sanctions relief in return for commitments by Iran is a core part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) – it is essential that Iran engage in good faith with the dispute resolution mechanism under the deal and return to full compliance with its commitments. We continue to support the JCPoA and have always said we regret US withdrawal from the deal and the re-imposition of US sanctions on Iran.

■ Oman: Pipelines

Jonathan Edwards: [\[3170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether Oman's proposed project to develop a natural gas pipeline between Oman and Iran would violate international sanctions against Iran.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We are not aware of any developments on the proposed natural gas pipeline. Any project would have to seek their own legal advice about how to ensure international sanctions are not violated.

■ Palestinians: Foreign Relations**Seema Malhotra:** [\[3756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with his EU counterparts on Palestine ahead of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on 20 January 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

The United Kingdom is strongly supportive of a regional and international approach to the Middle East peace process. We have regular discussions with EU counterparts, the United States, other key partners and multilateral institutions like the UN, to support resolutions and policies that encourage Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories to take steps that rebuild trust. This is crucial for negotiations to succeed. We work closely with EU partners to make clear our serious concerns about the situation on the ground.

■ Qassem Soleimani**Afzal Khan:** [\[3306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he had with his US counterpart on Iran prior to the assassination of Qasem Soleimani; and whether the Government was given prior notice of the US intention to strike.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We became aware of the operation as it happened. We do not comment on our allies' operational decisions.

■ Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said**Jonathan Edwards:** [\[3169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether there was a Government representative at the coronation of Sultan Haitham bin Tariq of Oman.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Following the death of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said on 10 January, a three day official condolence period began on 12 January. The UK was represented on the first day with three delegations led by HRH The Prince of Wales, the Prime Minister and the Defence Secretary, each of whom had an audience with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al Said.

■ Syria: Military Intervention**Tommy Sheppard:** [\[3244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations his Department has made to the Syrian Government on recent attacks on schools and civilian buildings in Idlib, Syria; and whether the UK Government has offered assistance to help protect civilians in that region.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We condemn the attacks on schools and civilian buildings by the Syrian regime and Russian forces in Idlib, Syria. We have made this clear in the UN Security Council and UN Human Rights Council. We have had no diplomatic relations with the Syrian regime since 2012, and therefore have made no representations to the Syrian Government on recent attacks in Idlib. We are using UK aid to support protection of civilians in Idlib, including an early warning system to alert civilians of airstrikes and support to emergency search and rescue teams. This is in addition to our significant humanitarian assistance to the people of Idlib.

■ **UNRWA****Seema Malhotra:**[\[3757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to provide support to the UN Relief and Works Agency.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is an essential humanitarian and stabilising force in the region, providing vital services to millions of Palestinian refugees every day. In 2019/20 the UK has committed £65.5 million to UNRWA, matching our 2018 contribution. The UK's support helps provide education to more than 532,000 children (half of which are girls), health services for around 3.1 million people and social safety net assistance for 255,000 of the most vulnerable. UNRWA's three year mandate was renewed at the UN General Assembly's Fourth Committee on 13 December; the UK voted in favour.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE■ **Autism: Diagnosis****Helen Hayes:**[\[3857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the average waiting time for an autism assessment in the most recent period for which figures are available; and what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for an autism assessment.

Caroline Dinenge:

We are determined to drive up performance on autism assessments and diagnosis.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that people with possible autism who are referred to an autism team for a diagnostic assessment should have the diagnostic assessment started within three months of their referral. We expect clinical commissioning groups to take account of clinical guidelines published by NICE when commissioning services for their local populations.

On 14 November 2019, NHS Digital published statistics that present the number of new referrals to mental health services for which the referral reason was suspected autism, as well as their waiting times to first appointment. These are experimental statistics and have been published by NHS Digital to involve users and stakeholders in the future development of the data, including work to improve the quality of the data. The data is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/autism-statistics/autism-statistics>

The NHS Long Term Plan has set out that over the next three years, autism diagnosis will be included alongside work with children and young people's mental health services to test and implement the most effective ways to reduce waiting times for specialist services.

■ Aviation: Exhaust Emissions

Ruth Cadbury: [\[1905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of ultra fine particles from aircraft on the health of the population of (a) London and (b) the Home Counties.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has made no assessment of the effect of ultrafine particles (UFP) from aircraft on the health of the population of London and the Home Counties.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Air Quality Expert Group published a report in 2018, which included a brief overview of the health concerns related to ambient UFP, but not specifically deriving from aircraft. The overview, which draws upon evidence reviewed by the World Health Organization and the Health Effects Institute concluded that there is currently limited evidence on the effects on health of UFP. The report can be viewed at the following link:

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

■ Care Homes: Closures

Barbara Keeley: [\[3712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many care home operators have permanently ceased trading in each of the last five years.

Barbara Keeley: [\[3713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many care homes have permanently closed in each of the last five years.

Caroline Dinéage:

The information requested is not centrally held.

■ Fertility: Medical Treatments

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[3320]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will (a) update the national guidance issued to Clinical Commissioning Groups on fertility treatments to restrict that treatment to people who are in a stable relationship and (b) bring forward legislative proposals to ensure CCGs adhere to that guidance.

Caroline Dinenge:

There are no plans to restrict treatment to people who are in a stable relationship. The Government expects all clinical commissioning groups to commission fertility treatment services in line with their Public Sector Equality Duty.

■ HIV Infection: Drugs

Paul Bristow:

[2597]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with health professionals to ensure that gay and bisexual men in Peterborough constituency have access to places on the PrEP Impact Trial.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has not had discussions with health professionals to ensure that gay and bisexual men in Peterborough have access to places on the pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) Impact Trial.

PrEP is currently provided in England through the three-year PrEP Impact Trial. Participation in the trial is on a voluntary basis and it is for clinics and local authorities to decide the number of allocated places they can accept. The PrEP Impact Trial website includes a map showing the distribution of the 154 clinics level 3 Sexual Health Services participating in the trial at the following link:

www.prepimpacttrial.org.uk

■ Hospitals: Pharmacy

Helen Hayes:

[3855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of NHS Trusts that have outsourced their (a) pharmacies and (b) outpatient pharmacies.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is not aware of any acute National Health Service trust that has outsourced its entire pharmacy service.

An NHS benchmarking survey, last year, in which 110 of 151 acute and specialist NHS trusts took part, indicated that around 50% of NHS trusts had outsourced their outpatient pharmacies: of these, 16% are wholly owned subsidiaries and 34% with a commercial partner.

■ Learning Disability: Health Services**Barbara Keeley:** [\[3715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people with learning disabilities covered by the transforming care programme are receiving care in inpatient units or hospitals rated (a) inadequate and (b) requires improvement by the Care Quality Commission.

Caroline Dinenge:

Cross-referencing Assuring Transformation data and Care Quality Commission (CQC) data on service ratings indicates that of the 2,190 inpatients as at the end of November 2019, 225 (10%) were in services rated as requiring improvement and 125 (6%) were in services rated as inadequate by the CQC.

Inpatient counts have been rounded to the nearest five to minimise disclosure risks associated with small numbers.

■ NHS: Drugs**Helen Hayes:** [\[3856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of VAT charges on medication on the finances of NHS Trusts.

Edward Argar:

The Department has made no such assessment. While irrecoverable VAT will be charged to National Health Service trusts on most supplies of drugs and medicines made by pharmaceutical companies, the overall funding settlements made by the Department to individual trusts includes provision for all irrecoverable VAT incurred by them. As a result, there should be no negative impact of this VAT charge on the overall finances of the NHS.

■ Northwick Park Hospital: Repairs and Maintenance**Gareth Thomas:** [\[3130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what further steps he will take to tackle the high significant risk maintenance backlog at Northwick Park hospital; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[3131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to (a) increase the number of operating theatres and (b) refurbish the (i) intensive treatment unit and (ii) high dependency unit facilities at Northwick Park hospital; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

Individual National Health Service organisations are responsible for maintaining their estates. NHS provider organisations invest in excess of £3 billion of capital annually.

Providers should ensure capital investments are consistent with their clinical strategies and the delivery of safe, productive services

We recognise the challenge for providers in maintaining their existing estates and investing in new facilities. To support this, the Government announced £3.9 billion of additional capital funding in the 2017 Spring and Autumn Budgets and a further £2.1 billion boost of funding in 2019 - £1 billion for existing upgrade programmes to proceed and to tackle the most urgent infrastructure projects, £850 million for 20 hospital upgrades and £200 million for new MRI and CT scanners for 78 trusts.

In September, the Government launched a new Health Infrastructure Plan (HIP), which will deliver a long-term, strategic investment in the future of the NHS, including a new hospital building programme – through which the Government plans to build 40 new hospitals over the next 10 years. Critical Infrastructure Risk was a key criterion when considering suitable schemes for the first phase of HIP.

■ **Nurses: Training**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[3706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether all student nurses in England beginning their studies in September 2020 will be eligible for the nursing bursary.

Edward Argar:

As part of the Government's commitment to deliver 50,000 more nurses, new and continuing students enrolled in an eligible pre-registration undergraduate or postgraduate nursing course at an English university from September 2020 will be eligible for the new financial support package. The NHS Business Services Authority will publish further information on the scheme as soon as possible.

■ **Social Services: Finance**

Barbara Keeley:

[\[3714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the level of revenue local authorities will raise through the social care precept in 2020-21.

Caroline Dinéage:

The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, published on 20 December 2019, proposed that local authorities will be able to increase council tax by an additional 2% exclusively for adult social care without holding a local referendum.

This will allow councils to raise a further £500 million for adult social care in 2020-21.

■ **Speech and Language Therapy: Children**

Steve McCabe:

[\[3666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for assessments for children's speech and language therapy.

Steve McCabe: [\[3667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for children who have met the threshold for speech and language therapy to receive that therapy.

Steve McCabe: [\[3668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is from referral to first assessment for children's speech and language therapy.

Steve McCabe: [\[3669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time was from assessment appointment for children to receive speech and language therapy in each of the last two years.

Caroline Dinenge:

The NHS Long Term Plan recognises the importance of speech and language therapy. Local areas will design and implement models of care that are age appropriate, closer to home and bring together physical and mental health services.

In the development of the NHS People Plan, the capacity requirements, as set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, have been modelled to ensure appropriate capacity for all the allied health professions. This includes speech and language therapy.

'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s', the Prevention Green Paper, confirmed the Government will continue to prioritise improving early speech and language outcomes as a preventative measure.

The following table shows the mean and median waiting time ¹ for a first outpatient attendance ² for patients aged under 18 with a treatment specialty of Speech and Language Therapy ³ in England from 2017-18 to 2018-19 ⁴.

YEAR	TOTAL FIRST OUTPATIENT ATTENDANCES	MEAN WAITING TIME (DAYS)	MEDIAN WAITING TIME (DAYS)
2017-18	11,306	76	48
2018-19	9,740	87	59

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Digital

Notes:

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

1. The waiting time is the period in days between the date of the appointment date and either the referral request received date (reqdate) or the Did Not Attend date, if given. The waiting time is not calculated if reqdate is missing or invalid.

2 Attendances at outpatient clinics. Includes first attended and first telephone consultations, excludes did not attends and cancellations.

3. Treatment Speciality: A code that defines the specialty under which the consultant responsible for care of the patient is working, which may be different to the specialty under which the consultant is registered.

4. Assessing growth through time (Outpatients) HES figures are available from 2003-04 onwards. Changes to the figures over time need to be interpreted in the context of improvements in data quality and coverage (particularly in earlier years), improvements in coverage of independent sector activity (particularly from 2006-07) and changes in NHS practice. For example, changes in activity may be due to changes in the provision of care.

NHS Digital have advised that information on waiting times from assessment appointment is not held in the format requested as they are unable to identify in which appointment treatment started.

■ **Tranquillisers: Rehabilitation**

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[3212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure specialist withdrawal services are available to support patients dependent on prescribed benzodiazepine and z drug tranquillisers.

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[3214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking on the prescription of benzodiazepines and z drugs by doctors beyond the two to four week guidelines issued by the Committee on Safety in Medicines in 1988.

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[3215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the 2020 cross-government addiction strategy will include proposals on treatment for people who have become dependent on drugs prescribed by their doctor.

Jo Churchill:

In September 2019 Public Health England published an evidence review of medicines associated with dependence or withdrawal, including benzodiazepines and z drugs. The report is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prescribed-medicines-review-report>

Alongside ongoing improvements to medicines safety and the use of prescribed drugs, NHS England is reviewing the recommendations from this review and other evidence to develop a set of actions to reduce and treat prescription medicine dependency.

A national review of overprescribing in the National Health Service is being led by Chief Pharmaceutical Officer Dr Keith Ridge and will be published in 2020. This will focus on people who take multiple medicines to ensure patients are receiving the

most appropriate treatment for their needs. The review will consider how to improve management of non-reviewed repeat prescriptions including prescriptions beyond guidelines, and the role of digital technologies in reducing overprescribing.

The Government is committed to growing the workforce by 6,000 more doctors in general practice and 6,000 more primary care professionals, including pharmacists. This is on top of the additional 20,000 primary care professionals NHS England are providing funding towards recruiting. Community pharmacists have a key role in monitoring the care and treatment of patients, and would be in a position to review a patient's medication usage and prescriptions.

■ Urgent Treatment Centres

Philip Davies: [\[2446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which cities in England do not have an urgent treatment centre.

Edward Argar:

The cities of Gloucester, Lichfield, Hereford, Lancaster, Bradford, Salisbury, Winchester, Carlisle, Wells, Oxford, Ripon, Worcester do not have an urgent treatment centre (UTC).

Canterbury, Salford and Manchester do not currently have UTCs but plans are in place for delivery during 2020.

The cities of Chelmsford, Exeter, St Albans, Stoke-on-Trent and Sheffield are in health systems that are currently undergoing consultations about service reconfiguration and no decisions about UTC requirement have yet been made.

HOME OFFICE

■ British Nationality: Children

Afzal Khan: [\[3311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking in response to the High Court judgment in *Project for the Registration of British Citizens as Children and others v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2019] EWHC 3536 (Admin) of 19 December 2019.

Victoria Atkins:

While this court case remains active it would not be right to speculate on next steps and potential courses of action. We are, though, committed to considering this issue and the judgment carefully and plan to do so with the diligence that is deserved.

■ Immigration: Northern Ireland

Afzal Khan:

[\[3310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to protect the rights of families to reunite under the Dublin Regulation when the UK leaves the EU.

Victoria Atkins:

When the UK leaves the EU, the UK will immediately cease participating in the Dublin III Regulation. We will continue to be bound by Dublin during the implementation period and under the Immigration, Nationality and Asylum (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 there is a 'savings' provision, such that any Dublin family reunion cases, which have entered the system before the end of the implementation period, will continue to be processed.

The Government also remains committed to seeking an agreement with the EU for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the EU to join family members in the UK, and vice versa, where it is in their best interests. The Government's policy has not changed and protecting vulnerable children will remain our priority after we leave the EU. The new Clause 37 in the Withdrawal Agreement Bill reaffirms this commitment while clarifying the role of Parliament and Government in negotiations. Clause 37 places an obligation on the Government to lay a statement before Parliament on this matter.

The UK provides a safe and legal route to bring families of refugees together through its refugee family reunion policy. This allows a partner and children under 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join them here, if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country. This route will not be affected when we leave the EU.

Additionally, Appendix FM to the Immigration Rules provides for family members wishing to enter or remain in the UK on the basis of their relationship with a family member who is a British citizen or settled in the UK, and those who are post-flight family of a person granted protection in the UK.

■ Visas: Polo

Afzal Khan:

[\[1926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the merits of granting special visas to foreign polo team players.

Kevin Foster:

The Immigration Rules governing professional sportspeople and coaches ensure that UK sports can access top end talent whilst at the same time protecting opportunities for resident players.

Entry requirements are agreed with recognised governing bodies and are subject to regular review.

Afzal Khan: [\[2577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of special visas issued to foreign polo team players that have been utilised by low-skilled migrant workers.

Kevin Foster:

All entry requirements for sportspeople are agreed with the recognised Sport's Governing Body for each sport and are subject to regular review. The criterion for polo was recently approved in November 2019 and is published on the SGB's website. Home Office statistical data does not break down visas issued by particular sport.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ **Brexit: Festivals and Special Occasions**

Scott Benton: [\[3298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he is providing support to local authorities to mark the day on which the UK leaves the EU by (a) flying the Union flag from civic buildings and (b) holding civic events; and if he will make a statement.

Luke Hall:

Flags are a very British way of expressing joy and pride – they are emotive symbols which can boost local and national identities and strengthen community cohesion. There will be many who wish to mark our departure from the European Union on 31 January. The Government stands ready to work with local authorities and others up and down the country, to help them mark this important moment in our national history.

■ **Buildings: Fire Prevention**

Steve Reed: [\[3762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the letter from David Metcalfe and Dr Stephen Ledbetter of the Centre for Window and Cladding Technology (CWCT) to the Chair of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, dated 10 May 2018, whether officials in his Department were part of the group formed by CWCT to discuss fire performance of facades and combustible materials in 2014.

Esther McVey:

Officials from the Department regularly meet with trade bodies and other representative bodies in order to discuss the application of building regulations to assist them in developing advice for their members. An official attended part of the one meeting the Department was invited to by the CWCT in 2014.

■ Care Homes: Insulation

Steve Reed:

[\[3225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2020 to Question 1399, on Care Homes: Insulation, whether his Department is making an assessment of the potential merits of adding care homes with a top occupied storey below 18 metres to the list of buildings to which the ban on combustible building materials applies.

Esther McVey:

As stated in the explanatory memorandum, the Department intends to review the ban annually through monitoring arrangements and advice from bodies such as Building Regulations Advisory Committee for England. This will include considering the scope of the ban.

The Department is currently undertaking this review and will report shortly.

■ Flats: Fire Prevention

Steve Reed:

[\[3761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 January 2020 to Question 1749, on Flats: Fire Prevention, what information his Department holds on the (a) number and (b) proportion of privately owned apartment blocks where remedial fire safety works other than the remediation of aluminium composite material cladding are being undertaken as a result of safety checks following the Grenfell Tower fire.

Esther McVey:

The Department does not hold this data. Building safety is the responsibility of the building owner, and they must remedy any safety risks uncovered.

■ Grenfell Tower: Fires

Steve Reed:

[\[3228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether any (a) current and (b) former officials in his Department have been questioned under caution by the Metropolitan Police in connection with the Grenfell Tower fire.

Esther McVey:

It is a matter for the Metropolitan Police to disclose the names of the those they have questioned as part of their investigation into the Grenfell Tower fire.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

Matthew Pennycook:

[\[3274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the EWS1: External Wall Fire Review industry-wide valuation process on the ability of individuals to (a) buy and sell

homes and (b) re-mortgage in buildings above 18 metres with actual or potential combustible materials to external wall systems and balconies.

Esther McVey:

The EWS1 form, recently developed by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and published on 16 December, should enable industry to manage valuations for both the selling and re-mortgaging of properties in multi-occupancy buildings 18 metres and over. Government is aware that the form is now being used across industry as part of the valuation process.

■ **High Rise Flats: Safety**

Steve Reed:

[\[3227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2020 to Question 117, on High Rise Flats: Safety, how many residents have used the online portal to report concerns on fire safety in their tower blocks in total.

Esther McVey:

The Department is unable to provide the specific information requested as it is not readily accessible.

■ **Housing: Construction**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[3672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to assist owners of new build properties with structural defects when insurance companies fail to accept liability.

Esther McVey:

The responsibility to set right any defects with the building work lies with the person who carried out the work. Warranties provide insurance against defects. It is the responsibility of the Financial Conduct Authority to regulate new build warranties and protect consumers.

To provide effective redress for owners of new build homes we will introduce legislation to require developers to belong to a New Homes Ombudsman.

■ **Knives: Crime**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[3291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on the effect of reductions in funding for local government on levels of knife crime.

Luke Hall:

My Department has ongoing discussions with the Home Office on multiple issues, including tackling crime. Tackling knife crime is a priority and the Government is determined to crack down on the scourge of violence devastating our communities.

The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed an increase of £2.9 billion in resources for local government this year. In addition, police funding is increasing by more than £1 billion this year, including council tax and additional funding through the Serious Violence Fund for forces worst affected by violent crime.

■ **Leasehold: Reform**

John Healey: [\[3141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, by what date the Government will publish a draft bill on leasehold reform.

Esther McVey:

The Government is committed to publishing a draft bill on leasehold reform and will inform Parliament of publication timings in due course.

■ **Local Government Finance**

Anne Marie Morris: [\[3219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timetable is for the Fair Funding Review of local government funding.

Anne Marie Morris: [\[3220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timetable is for his Department's consultation on Government proposals for a fairer distribution of funding for local government services.

Luke Hall:

The Government is committed to undertaking a review of the relative needs and resources of English local authorities. We are working closely with local government representatives and others to examine all elements of the review. We aim to share emerging results with the sector shortly, followed by a full consultation in the Spring. Our aim is to implement the review in 2021-22.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Pay**

Grahame Morris: [\[2503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, 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.

Jake Berry:

All of the Department's directly employed staff earn more than £10 per hour and therefore none would receive an increase in their salary in the circumstances outlined in the question.

■ Temporary Accommodation: Children

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [3292]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate he has made of the number of children in temporary accommodation.

Luke Hall:

The number of children in temporary accommodation at April-June 2019 is 127,370. This figure is taken from the quarterly statutory homelessness statistics and is available at the link below: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

In December 2019 we announced the allocation of £263 million in funding for 2020/21 to local authorities designed to support them to deliver services to tackle homelessness. The purpose of this funding is to give local authorities more control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who at risk of homelessness, including providing them with temporary accommodation.

■ Welfare Assistance Schemes

Mr Steve Reed: [2547]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to support local authorities increase their provision of local welfare assistance schemes.

Luke Hall:

Local welfare assistance funding is delivered through the local government finance settlement on a non ring-fenced basis which gives local authorities maximum flexibility to deliver services as they see fit according to local needs. We recognise the vital role local government plays in delivering a range of vital front line services and this is why they will receive an additional £2.9 billion next year, the largest increase in spending power in almost a decade.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Burma: Hospitals

Chris Law: [2564]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps he has taken to ensure that his Department's funding for Sittwe General Hospital, Rakhine State, Burma, is not being used to discriminate against Rohingya people.

Andrew Stephenson:

The UK supports improved health care for all communities in Rakhine through the multi-donor Access to Health Fund. We are clear that funding for Sittwe Hospital, provided as one part of this programme, must deliver improved access to healthcare for Rohingya people. We will not fund activities that further disadvantage this group.

Baroness Sugg raised the need for equal access to health treatment for all, when she met with the Rakhine State Health Director and the Union Minister of Health and Sport during her visit to Myanmar last autumn. This is in accordance with the Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations. The UK will continue to raise this issue in discussions.

■ **Department for International Development: Pay**

Grahame Morris:

[\[2498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, 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.

Andrew Stephenson:

All DFID staff are paid at an hourly rate above £10, and therefore would not require a salary increase in any of these scenarios.

Grahame Morris:

[\[2508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the increase in the National Living wage announced by the Government on 31 December 2019, what discussions he is having with private sector companies undertaking facility management work for his Department to ensure that the cost of wage increases for their employees are not passed on to his Department.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department for International Development has two headquarter buildings in the UK, one at 22 Whitehall and the other at Abercrombie House in East Kilbride.

Both HQ buildings share a contract for facilities management. The staff contracted under this agreement are paid London Living wage in Whitehall and National Living wage in Abercrombie House. DFID covers the additional costs associated with the Living wage increases. This is reviewed annually in line with the increments set out by the Living Wage Foundation.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[3863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department plans to publish the court-ordered independent review of the compliance of past licences issued to Saudi Arabia and its coalition allies.

Graham Stuart:

The Court of Appeal has not ordered an independent review of the compliance of past licences issued to Saudi Arabia and its Coalition allies.

■ Department for International Trade: Senior Civil Servants

Sarah Olney: [3276]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many official visits abroad have been made by the Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser in each of the last 12 months; to which countries those visits were; and which officials accompanied him on those visits.

Conor Burns:

The Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser has made one official visit abroad in the last year. He visited the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva, Switzerland on 7-8 October 2019 for World Cotton Day. He was accompanied by a Department for International Trade Private Secretary.

Information on senior official visits abroad is publicly available on gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dit-senior-officials-travel-and-hospitality-and-permanent-secretary-meetings>.

Sarah Olney: [3277]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many official meetings the Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser has attended with (a) senior UK civil servants and (b) politicians in each of the last 12 months; and what the job title was of each civil servant.

Conor Burns:

Over the last 12 months the Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser has held multiple meetings, almost all of which were attended by a member of the Senior Civil Service (SCS) other than himself.

The Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser meets with Department for International Trade ministers several times a week while parliament is sitting. He has also met with ministers from other government departments, special advisers and MPs.

Sarah Olney: [3278]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many official meetings she has had with the Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser in each of the last 12 months.

Conor Burns:

My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade meets frequently with the Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser and has had a number of formal meetings with him since her appointment on 24 July 2019.

■ Laser Guided Bombs: Export Controls

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [3862]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will list the current extant arms export licences for Paveway bombs issued to Raytheon UK, including the (a) end-user nations, (b) expiry date and (c) licence type.

Graham Stuart:

There are no extant licences issued to Raytheon UK for Paveway bombs.

■ Overseas Trade: Wales**Jonathan Edwards:** [3176]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has met representatives of the Welsh Government to discuss Welsh trade with India.

Graham Stuart:

The department recognises and promotes the great opportunities that India presents to Welsh exporters. To demonstrate this, last summer the department, together with the Welsh government, kicked off the successful India roadshow in Cardiff. This event provided support and advice to firms interested in exploring exporting and investment opportunities in India.

In September last year I met with the Noble Baroness Morgan of Ely, the Welsh Government Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language, to discuss how we might further develop our mutual work on trade promotion.

■ Raytheon: USA**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [3290]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2020 to Question 1036 on Raytheon: USA, whether any of those arms export licences were for munition components.

Graham Stuart:

Export licences issued to Raytheon since 20 June 2019 included munition components to the USA.

The Government publishes Official Statistics (on a quarterly and annual basis) about export licences on GOV.UK and the latest available data was published on 14 January 2020 covering the period 1 July – 30 September 2019.

These reports contain detailed information on export licences issued, refused or revoked, by destination, including the overall value, type (e.g. Military, Other) and a summary of the items covered by these licences. These can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data>.

■ Trade Agreements: Australasia**Ruth Jones:** [4490]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made with her (a) Australian and (b) New Zealand counterpart on trade deals after the UK leaves the EU.

Conor Burns:

The UK is committed to negotiating ambitious free trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand once we have left the European Union. My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade and the Trade Ministers of Australia and New Zealand are in regular contact and have a shared ambition to move quickly to

agree high-quality and comprehensive free trade agreements which set a high benchmark globally. The UK continues to engage with both countries in preparation for the launch of negotiations.

■ Trade Promotion: Wales

Jonathan Edwards: [\[3171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2020 to Question 1337 on Exports: Wales, what recent discussions she has had with the Welsh Government Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language on trade promotion.

Graham Stuart:

In September 2019, I met with the Noble Baroness Morgan of Ely, Welsh Government Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language, in Newport. We discussed working more closely on trade promotion and creating greater synergies across our sector teams. Accompanying Baroness Morgan, was Andrew Gwatkin, Director – International Relations and Trade for Welsh Government. Mr Gwatkin also attended the Executive Forum with the Department for International Trade's Directors General on 17 September 2019.

■ UK-Africa Investment Summit: Wales

Jonathan Edwards: [\[3175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2020 to Question 1337 on Exports: Wales, which Welsh companies will be represented at the UK-Africa Investment Summit; and what steps her Department has taken to advertise that Summit to Welsh businesses.

Graham Stuart:

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

The UK-Africa Investment summit will create new lasting partnerships that will deliver more investment and jobs. This will benefit people and businesses in Africa and across the whole of the UK. We have undertaken UK-wide promotion of the Summit and the Board of Trade has discussed ways to ensure all Devolved Nations are represented in longer term engagement with Africa.

JUSTICE

■ Courts: Administrative Delays

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[3716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many adjournments took place in (a) Crown courts and (b) Magistrates' courts in each month of 2019.

Chris Philp:

The number of adjourned cases in the magistrates' and Crown Court fluctuates from month to month and is dependent upon the volume and type of cases received and the plea entered.

The information requested about the number of cases which have been adjourned in (a) Crown courts and Magistrates' courts in each month of 2019 can be found in the table below

CASES ADJOURNED JANUARY TO SEPTEMBER 2019

	Magistrates	Crown
Jan-19	53,725	13,542
Feb-19	46,461	12,486
Mar-19	48,943	13,402
Apr-19	48,887	13,223
May-19	51,178	14,010
Jun-19	47,845	12,593
Jul-19	55,025	14,161
Aug-19	50,499	12,910
Sep-19	49,827	13,189

Cases can be adjourned for a number of reasons including when counsel request more time to prepare their case or when more information is required ahead of sentencing.

Notes: Data are taken from a live management information system and can change over time

Data are management information and are not subject to the same level of checks as official statistics

The data provided is the most recent available and for that reason might differ slightly from any previously published information

Magistrates: The data provided is a count of Criminal Cases Heard, rather than Defendants, where the following Libra Result Code Sets were present: ADJ, ADJAREM, ADJR, ADJSD, ADJYREM, RCB, REMITA, REMITY, RIC, ROC, ROREC, RUB, SUMRTH, SUMRTO

Therefore, the data supplied includes cases which were Adjourned, Remanded in Custody/On Bail or Remitted for a further hearing as well as cases originally listed

under the Single Justice Procedure which were subsequently adjourned for a Summons to be issued for a Court Hearing (SUMRTH & SUMRTO). The data is in line with PQ 4971 & 7111, although the data has been refreshed Crown: A hearing has been counted as adjourned where the data field IS_ADJOURNED has been marked 'Y'. If a case involves more than one defendant and only one has their case adjourned then it has been counted in the above figures. DATA in line with PQ 4971& 7111, although the data has been refreshed. For both the Magistrates' and Crown Court, if a case is adjourned in different months then each adjournment is counted once for each month.

■ Crown Courts: North West

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[3676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average time was for a Crown court case to be heard from offence to completion in (a) the North West, (b) Merseyside and (c) Wirral in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

Please find attached tables (annex A) providing:

Mean offence to completion (days) and median offence to completion (days) for Crown Court cases in (a) the North West and (b) Merseyside for the years 2010-2018 (data for 2010 does not include Q1 as this information is not available)

Please note: Merseyside includes only Liverpool Crown Court. As such, no further breakdown for part (c) Wirral is available.

Offence to completion covers the period of time between a criminal offence being committed, through victim reporting, police investigation, entry into the Magistrates' Courts, sending to, and then completion at Crown Court.

The majority of time between offence to completion for Crown Court Cases is spent prior to entering the court system (between offence committed and first listing at the Magistrates Court) and this can be impacted by the reporting of historical offences and an increasingly complex caseload.

Attachments:

1. Annex A [Copy of PQ 3676.xlsx]

■ Dangerous Driving: Sentencing

Chi Onwurah: [\[3197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average sentence given to drivers whose negligence led to the death of a child was in each of the last five years; and what the sentencing guidance is.

Chi Onwurah: [\[3198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children aged 16 or under have been killed by negligent drivers in each year for which figures are available.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on offenders sentenced to custody for causing death by driving offences up to December 2018, which is available in the Outcomes by Offence data tool at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/802314/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2018.xlsx.

Detailed information on victims may be held on court record but individual court records would need to be accessed to identify such cases, which would be of disproportionate cost.

The Sentencing Council have published sentencing guidelines on causing death by driving offences at: <https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/crown-court?s&collection=causing-death-by-driving>.

■ Fixed Penalties: Shoplifting**Alex Norris:****[3299]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of fixed penalty notices of under £100 were issued for shop theft offences in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Chris Philp:

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 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. Totals of all PNDs are displayed in row 51 of the same table, which allows a proportion to be identified.

■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service and Ministry of Justice: Consultants**Yasmin Qureshi:****[3717]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much was spent on consultancies by (a) HM Courts & Tribunals Service and (b) his Department in each month of 2019.

Chris Philp:

Please find below the total spend on consultancy for HMCTS and for MoJ in total for the period January 19 to November 19. Please note the spend is taken from our spend analysis tool and is an accurate figure of what has been invoiced and paid during the period. Invoice and payment data for December 19 is not yet available.

Consultants are engaged to deliver short-term on projects where specialist skills required are not available within the organisation. By making use of consultants, the

department can save on salary, national insurance and pension costs associated with permanently employing individuals whose skills may not be needed after a set period

	HMCTS ONLY	ALL MoJ (INC HMCTS)
Jan_19	£753,599.80	£826,620.80
Feb_19	£48,755.00	£731,940.55
Mar_19	£2,292,766.92	£2,482,758.97
Apr_19	£1,677,992.05	£2,079,137.53
May_19	£1,052,152.70	£1,551,874.13
Jun_19	£158,923.48	£326,955.16
Jul_19	£979,392.51	£1,150,230.51
Aug_19	£79,558.52	£338,141.85
Sep_19	£1,214,269.72	£1,413,668.13
Oct_19	£1,355,668.58	£1,883,496.23
Nov_19	£144,059.67	£1,016,306.27
Total	£9,757,138.95	£13,801,130.13

■ Judges

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[3721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many days judges sat in total in England in each month of 2019.

Chris Philp:

The official statistics for judge sitting days (tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 of the Civil Justice Statistics Quarterly, January to March 2019) were withdrawn on 5 September 2019, due to data discrepancies that were discovered after publication on 6 June 2019 and deemed potentially misleading to users. These discrepancies remain under investigation and, in line with the Code of Practice on Statistics, the Chief Statistician and Head of Profession decided to withdraw these tables until the investigations were complete. The revised figures will be published in due course, and will provide the total sitting days in Family, Civil and Crown courts.

■ Legal Aid Scheme: Romford**Andrew Rosindell:** [1304]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people (a) applied for and (b) were granted civil legal aid in family law cases in Romford constituency (i) 2015-16, (ii) 2016-17 and (iii) 2017-18.

Wendy Morton:

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) provides services on the basis of procurement areas not by constituencies, and we capture data on this basis. Attempting to prepare data by constituency area would be disproportionately costly. Therefore, we cannot provide the data to answer this PQ.

It may be useful to know that the LAA produces statistics that are updated quarterly and published on gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/legal-aid-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2019>

■ Legal Ombudsman: Bullying and Harassment**Richard Burgon:** [3256]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assurances his Department has received from the Office for Legal Complaints in relation to the Legal Ombudsman's (a) governance and management and (b) allegations of bullying and harassment.

Wendy Morton:

The Department seeks on-going assurance from the Office for Legal Complaints (OLC) as to the governance and management of the Legal Ombudsman (LeO) as part of its partnership arrangements. This includes reports from the OLC on any issues of concern; regular meetings between Executives at the OLC and Ministry of Justice officials and attendance at OLC's internal Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

■ Legal Profession: UK Relations with EU**Jo Stevens:** [3779]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the status of legal services in the future UK-EU relationship.

Jo Stevens: [3780]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the legal services sector on the future relationship between the UK and the EU in relation to legal services.

Jo Stevens: [3781]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to ensure that the UK remains a world leader in lawtech after the UK leaves the EU.

Chris Philp:

These questions have been passed to the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice as the Minister responsible for legal services.

Government has a shared vision for a broad, deep and flexible partnership with the EU, including ambitious arrangements for services and investment, outlined in the Political Declaration. The Ministry of Justice is working closely with the rest of government on planning for negotiations.

Ministers and officials have extensive, frequent and varied engagement with representatives from the legal services sector on a range of issues, including UK and EU relations and future trade. Part of this engagement includes sponsoring the Brexit Law Committee.

The UK is a magnet for talent and home to innovative and successful new companies, and the Government is committed to ensuring that UK legal services, courts, and English law remain world-leading, and a competitive choice for business. This includes supporting the growth of the UK lawtech sector. To this end the Ministry of Justice launched and sponsors the industry-led LawTech Delivery Panel, and recently awarded a £2m grant to Tech Nation to drive innovation in the legal sector and create an environment that allows the UK's lawtech sector to thrive.

■ Magistrates' Courts: North West

Ms Angela Eagle: [3673]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Magistrates' court hearings have been cancelled in (a) the North West, (b) Liverpool City Region and (c) Wirral in each year from 2010 to date.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is not available.

Information about cancelled hearings is not held in this form because there are many types of Magistrates' Court hearings and reasons why they may not proceed.

HMCTS does collect data about effective, cracked, ineffective and vacated trials, it is published here <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2019> and can be found in the 'Trial effectiveness at the criminal courts tool'.

■ Prison Officers: Labour Turnover

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [3316]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to increase the retention of prison officers.

Lucy Frazer:

We want prison officers to have a long and successful career in HM Prison and Probation Service.

There has been a specific focus on improving the induction processes while also providing care and support for new recruits and the offer of additional training. These interventions are intended to reduce staff turnover in the early stages of employment.

The Prison Officer Entry Level Training is being redeveloped into an apprenticeship that will launch in Summer 2020. The apprenticeship aims to improve retention and build a portfolio of experience through on-site training and reflective learning over a longer period.

In addition, there is work being undertaken directly with Governors to address local issues that will support experienced staff and new recruits to remain in the service.

Staff are provided with the appropriate equipment including: PAVA spray, rigid bar handcuffs, batons and training to enable them to maintain a safe and secure workplace. The aim is to create an environment which is rewarding to work in and promotes the values needed to rehabilitate offenders. We have also rolled out our key worker model, which assigns each prisoner a dedicated officer for support. This helps to build the critical prisoner and staff relationships aimed at improving safety.

For prisons where the local labour market makes it hard to recruit and retain staff, supplements to standard base pay are used together with a tailored approach to recruitment advertising in order to ensure that we are competitive in the local employment market

■ Prisons: Crimes of Violence

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[3315]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of violent crime in prisons.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government publishes quarterly statistics on violence in prison, and a more detailed annual breakdown, which are both available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics>.

The Government is taking unprecedented action to improve safety in prisons and reduce the level of crime in prisons. We are rolling out our key worker model to provide individual support to each prisoner from a dedicated officer. We have equipped officers with body-worn cameras and are rolling out PAVA incapacitant spray to help prevent serious harm to staff and prisoners when dealing with violent incidents. As part of our £2.75 billion plan to transform the prison estate, we are investing £100 million to bolster security and tackle the supply of illicit items which drive prison violence.

Up to £2.5 billion will be spent on creating 10,000 additional modern prison places to crack down on crime. Modern prisons provide better opportunities to reform criminals and cut the £18 billion cost of reoffending to society each year. Newer prisons are also more efficient to run and benefit the taxpayer in the longer term.

■ Prosecutions

Yasmin Qureshi: [3161]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Answer of 4 November 2019 to Question 7113 on Prosecutions, what proportion of trials were cracked on the first day of the trial in each month in (a) 2019, (b) 2018 and (c) 2010.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice publishes annual and quarterly data on cracked trials in England and Wales, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2019>.

In these statistics a cracked trial is defined as: “a trial which does not commence on the scheduled date and the trial is not rescheduled, as it is no longer required. Cracked trials are usually the result of an acceptable guilty plea being entered by the defendant on the day or the case ending as the prosecution decides not to proceed (offers no evidence) against the defendant.”

It is not possible to separately identify if the trial was cracked on the day of trial or at any prior point from the data centrally collated by the Ministry of Justice. As a result, identifying the proportion of trials that were ‘cracked on the first day of the trial’ would require a search of court records, which would be of disproportionate cost.

Yasmin Qureshi: [3718]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases were cracked in (a) Crown courts and (b) Magistrates' courts in each month of 2019.

Yasmin Qureshi: [3720]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases cracked on the day of the trial in (a) Crown courts and (b) Magistrates' courts in each month of 2019.

Chris Philp:

The information requested about how many cracked cases there have been in each month in 2019:

Please find attached tables providing:

- Number of cracked trials at the magistrates' court and Crown Court in England and Wales in each month in 2019.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF CRACKED TRIALS IN CRIMINAL COURTS, BY COURT TYPE AND MONTH, 2019
1,2,3,4

Court	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September
Magistrates' court	4,241	3,632	3,829	3,558	3,434	3,367	3,996	3,184	3,722
Crown Court	1890	2711	2971	5702	4668	3676	9677	608	2763

NOTES: (P) = PROVISIONALD.

- 1) The total number of cracked trials listed during the reporting period indicate
- 2) Cracked trial is a trial that does not go ahead on the day as an outcome is reached and so does not need to be re-scheduled. This occurs when an acceptable plea is offered by the defendant or the prosecution offers no evidence against the defendant.
- 3) Latest published data available to September 2019.

Source: Criminal Court Statistics (PQ 3718)

The Ministry of Justice publishes annual and quarterly data on cracked trials in England and Wales, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2019>.

In these statistics a cracked trial is defined as: “a trial which does not commence on the scheduled date and the trial is not rescheduled, as it is no longer required. Cracked trials are usually the result of an acceptable guilty plea being entered by the defendant on the day or the case ending as the prosecution decides not to proceed (offers no evidence) against the defendant.”

It is not possible to separately identify if the trial was cracked on the day of trial or at any prior point from the data centrally collated by the Ministry of Justice. As a result, identifying the proportion of trials that were ‘cracked on the first day of the trial’ would require a search of court records, which would be of disproportionate cost.

■ **Recorders: Working Hours**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[3722]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many recorder hours were (a) sat in each month of 2019 and (b) are expected to be sat in 2020.

Chris Philp:

We hold data in terms of ‘sitting days’ rather than hours.

(a) The official statistics for judge sitting days (tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 of the Civil Justice Statistics Quarterly, January to March 2019) were withdrawn on 5 September 2019, due to data discrepancies that were discovered after publication on 6 June 2019 and deemed potentially misleading to users. These discrepancies remain under investigation and, in line with the Code of Practice on Statistics, the Chief Statistician and Head of Profession decided to withdraw these tables until the investigations were complete. The revised figures will be published in due course, and will provide the total sitting days in Family, Civil and Crown courts.

(b) We have not been provided with sitting day allocations for financial year 2020/21, but expect that all Recorders will be offered sufficient days to maintain and build up their skills and experience.

■ Refuges: Domestic Abuse**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[3317]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues to help ensure that victims of domestic abuse have access to women's refuges.

Wendy Morton:

Domestic abuse is an abhorrent crime and we are determined to better protect and support the victims of abuse and their children and bring perpetrators to justice. As part of transforming the response to domestic abuse, we will make sure that councils across the country are legally required to provide life-saving support in safe housing, to survivors of domestic abuse and their children. We have committed to including this new duty in the Domestic Abuse Bill when it is re-introduced in Parliament.

I can confirm that the Justice Secretary is in regular contact with his Cabinet colleagues on domestic abuse, including the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government whose Department is responsible for the provision of funding for refuge spaces. Both myself and the Justice Secretary support their continued investment in increasing the number of bed spaces available to victims of domestic abuse, including a further £15m for refuges and safe accommodation projects for next year (20/21).

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals**Ms Angela Eagle:****[3674]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of appeals to the HM Courts & Tribunals Service in (a) Wallasey, (b) Wirral, (c) Merseyside and (d) the North West for (i) personal independent payment, (ii) employment and support allowance, (iii) income support, (iv) jobseeker's allowance and (v) tax credits were successful in the latest period for which figures are available.

Ms Angela Eagle:**[3675]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate she has made of waiting times for tribunal hearings for (a) personal independent payment, (b) employment and support allowance, (c) income support, (d) jobseeker's allowance and (e) tax credits in the North West.

Chris Philp:

Information about the outcomes, and waiting times, for appeals in the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) are published at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics

SSCS appeals are listed into the hearing venue nearest to the appellant's home address. The published data (which can be viewed at the link above) provide information about the outcomes and waiting times for (i) Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and (ii) Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) appeals for hearing venues covering (a) Wallasey (b) Wirral (c) Merseyside and (d) the North

West for the period July – September 2019, the latest period for which data are available.

The tables below contain the proportion of successful appeals for (iii) Income Support (IS), (iv) Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and (v) Tax Credits (TC) for Wallasey and Wirral, Merseyside and the North West; and the average time taken to administer those appeals in the North West for the same period.

PROPORTION ¹ OF APPEALS DECIDED IN FAVOUR OF THE APPELLANT BETWEEN JULY – SEPTEMBER 2019 (THE LATEST PERIOD FOR WHICH FIGURES ARE AVAILABLE)

	IS	JSA	TC ²
Wallasey and Wirral ³	~	~	~
Merseyside ⁴	~	~	~
North West ⁵	35%	29%	23%

AVERAGE TIME (IN WEEKS) TAKEN TO ADMINISTER APPEALS BETWEEN JULY – SEPTEMBER 2019 (THE LATEST PERIOD FOR WHICH FIGURES ARE AVAILABLE)

	IS	JSA	TC ²
North West ⁵	36	38	26

¹ Proportion of decisions in favour, based on the number of appeals found in favour of the appellant as a % of the cases cleared at tribunal hearing

² TC includes Working Family Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Working Tax Credit.

³ SSCS appeals for Wallasey and Wirral constituents are heard in the Birkenhead venue but this venue also hears appeals from other constituencies. It is not possible to provide constituency-specific data.

~ Equates to a value of five or fewer appeals received

⁴ Merseyside includes the SSCS venues Birkenhead, Liverpool and St Helens

⁵ North West includes the SSCS venues Barrow, Birkenhead, Blackburn, Blackpool, Bolton, Burnley, Carlisle, Chester, Lancaster, Liverpool, Manchester, Preston, Rochdale, St Helens, Stockport, Wigan, Workington

Although care is taken when processing and analysing the data, the details are subject to inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale case management system and are the best data that are available.

Waiting times are calculated from receipt of an appeal to its final disposal. An appeal is not necessarily disposed of at its first hearing. The final disposal decision on the appeal may be reached after an earlier hearing had been adjourned (which may be directed by the judge for a variety of reasons, such as to seek further evidence), or

after an earlier hearing date had been postponed (again, for a variety of reasons, often at the request of the appellant). An appeal may also have been decided at an earlier date by the First-tier Tribunal, only for the case to have gone on to the Upper Tribunal, to be returned once again to the First-tier, for its final disposal.

SCOTLAND

■ Scotland Office: Pay

Grahame Morris: [\[2501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, 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.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland does not employ staff directly. All staff that join do so on an assignment, loan or secondment from other government bodies; principally the Scottish Government and the Ministry of Justice, who remain the employers.

All staff are currently on hourly rates above £10.

Grahame Morris: [\[2511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, with reference to the increase in the National Living Wage announced by the Government on 31 December 2019, what discussions he is having with private sector companies undertaking facility management work for his Department to ensure that the cost of wage increases for their employees are not passed on to his Department.

Mr Alister Jack:

Facilities management services for the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland's London building are managed by the Government Property Agency. Our Office does have a contract with an external company to provide facilities management services in our Edinburgh building. There are no planned increases. This contract will expire in June 2020 when our Edinburgh operation moves to Queen Elizabeth House, the new UK Government Hub in Edinburgh.

Chris Stephens: [\[2630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, 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 Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland does not employ staff directly. All staff that join do so on an assignment, loan or secondment from other government

bodies; principally the Scottish Government and the Ministry of Justice, who remain the employers.

As such, 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, is a matter for the parent employers to consider.

■ **Scotland Office: Trade Unions**

Chris Stephens:

[\[2631\]](#)

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

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland does not employ staff directly. All staff that join do so on an assignment, loan or secondment from other government bodies; principally the Scottish Government and the Ministry of Justice, who remain the employers.

As such, it would be a matter for the employing departments to consider whether the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation has affected the right of recognised unions to bargaining information in relation to section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

TRANSPORT

■ **A68: North East**

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[1934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) plans are in place and (b) the timescale is for improvements to the A68 in County Durham, Teesside and Northumberland.

George Freeman:

The A68 is part of the Local Road Network and therefore it is for the relevant local highways authorities to plan and bring forward improvements for the route. The Government recognises the importance of local roads for businesses and communities. We are providing over £5.8 billion to local highways authorities outside London from 2015 to 2020, to help improve the condition of roads and reduce congestion.

■ **Borders Railway Line: Carlisle**

John Lamont:

[\[1917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to progress the feasibility study for the extension of the Borders Railway to Carlisle.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Scottish Government is building the evidence base through their Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) process, due to report in early 2021. DfT officials and Transport Scotland are discussing the scope of complementary DfT-funded feasibility work on the cross-border benefits and challenges of the options. This work will be commissioned and carried out during 2020 so as to inform and enhance the output of the STPR process.

■ Bus Services: Disability**Jamie Stone:**[\[3289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to increase the statutory minimum number of seats for disabled people required on public bus transport.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR) require vehicles subject to them to incorporate at least four priority seats for disabled passengers, as well as a designated wheelchair space. Such facilities are now provided on 98% of buses across Great Britain, and are helping to make journeys easier for millions of people.

However, we know that the needs of disabled people and the nature of public transport evolves over time. The previous Government committed in its Inclusive Transport Strategy to review the efficacy of PSVAR. Its timing is driven by the need to reflect on the effectiveness of the Regulations in facilitating access to coaches, the last of which only became subject to the Regulations on the 1st January 2020, and to be informed by a planned cross-modal review of the reference wheelchair standard, which is yet to begin. Amongst other issues it will consider the extent to which existing requirements on the provision of priority seating and wheelchair spaces are sufficient to meet current and future demand.

■ Department for Transport: Pay**Chris Stephens:**[\[2633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether her 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 Heaton-Harris:

The Department for Transport provides trade union representatives with reasonable facility time to undertake trade union duties, union learning representative duties and health and safety duties. This is in line with the departmental policy, the Civil Service Management Code, the Cabinet Office Framework on Trade Union Facility Time and our legislative obligations. These include a requirement to publish, as set out in the Trade Union Act (2016), information relating to facility time for relevant union officials, with facility time defined by that 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.

■ Department for Transport: Trade Unions

Chris Stephens:

[2632]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, 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.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The assessment of the Department for Transport is that the General Data Protection Regulation has not affected the rights of unions in the DfT in relation to bargaining information provided under section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

■ Electric Scooters

Royston Smith:

[2652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to ensure that roads are (a) accessible to and (b) safe for electric scooters.

George Freeman:

We are considering this closely and recognise that people want to take advantage of the opportunities personal vehicles, such as electric scooters can offer. The Department for Transport is committed to encouraging innovation in transport as well as improving road safety, but new modes of transport must be safe and secure by design.

The Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy, published on 19 March 2019 includes a Regulatory Review to address the challenges of ensuring our transport infrastructure and regulation are fit for the future.

The Strategy can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-mobility-urban-strategy

The Department will use the Regulatory Review to examine current legislation and determine from the evidence what is needed to make the necessary changes for a safe and healthy future. One strand of this will look at options for enabling micromobility devices, and a consultation will be issued in due course.

■ Electric Vehicles

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[3867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to encourage drivers to switch to electric vehicles.

George Freeman:

The Government's Road to Zero strategy published in July 2018 sets out a clear pathway to zero emissions. We are investing nearly £1.5bn between April 2015 and March 2021, with grants available for plug in cars, vans, lorries, buses, taxis and motorcycles, and schemes to support charge point infrastructure at homes and workplaces and on residential streets. To improve consumer attitudes towards electric vehicles, in collaboration with industry, Government also founded the Go Ultra Low communications campaign to promote the benefits of electric vehicles and enable consumers and businesses to make the switch. This adds up to one of the most comprehensive support packages in the world for the transition to zero emission vehicles.

The Government intends to consult on the earliest date when we can phase out the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars, while minimising the impact on drivers and businesses.

■ Heathrow Airport

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[1901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will amend the Airports National Policy Statement to include any change in the evidence base that supports expansion at Heathrow Airport.

Paul Maynard:

The Airports National Policy Statement was designated, following a vote in the House of Commons, in accordance with the Planning Act 2008 (the Act). The Act recognises that once a national policy statement has been designated, there may be a change in circumstances on the basis of which the policy was decided.

Section 6 of the Act imposes a duty on the Secretary of State to review each national policy statement whenever they think it appropriate to do so. Under the Act, in considering whether or not to review a national policy statement the Secretary of State must consider: 1) whether there has been a 'significant change' in any circumstances on the basis of which any of the policy set out in the national policy statement was decided; 2) whether this change was not anticipated; and, 3) whether the policy would have been materially different if that change had been anticipated ("section 6 considerations"). After review, a Secretary of State must either: 1) amend, 2) withdraw, or 3) leave the national policy statement as it is.

Ultimately, the decision on when, if ever, to review is a matter of judgement for the Secretary of State, who will consider any changes in the evidence base as part of the section 6 considerations.

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[1906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to assess the effect of the three year delay to Heathrow's third runway on the economic benefits of that scheme.

Paul Maynard:

The Airports National Policy Statement sets out that there is a need to increase airport capacity in the South East of England by 2030 by constructing one new runway and that this need is best met by the Northwest Runway scheme at Heathrow Airport.

Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) have confirmed that they intend to submit an application for development consent in 2020 which, if approved by the Secretary of State, following a report from the Planning Inspectorate, would allow for the construction and the opening of a third runway between early 2028 and late 2029.

Given that the delivery of any major infrastructure scheme is subject to uncertainty, prior to the designation of the Airports National Policy Statement, the Department for Transport undertook scenario and sensitivity testing which included an assessment of the impacts of a two-year delay on the delivery of the three schemes shortlisted by the Airports Commission, this was from 2025 in the case of Gatwick Airport and 2026 in the case of the two Heathrow schemes. The case for the Northwest Runway was not materially changed by such a delay. Furthermore, such a delay would serve to similarly reduce the schemes' disbenefits, partially offsetting the reduction in direct economic benefits.

■ Heathrow Airport: Noise

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[1902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise's report entitled Review of the Survey of Noise Attitudes 2014, published in 2019, if he will make an assessment of the potential effects on levels of aircraft noise of a third runway at Heathrow.

Paul Maynard:

Expansion at Heathrow is conditional on the implementation of a robust set of noise mitigations. These requirements are set out in the Airports National Policy Statement, which was designated following a vote in the House of Commons and include: minimising noise impacts so they are no greater than 2013 levels, a noise envelope, more predictable periods of respite and an expected ban of 6.5 hours on scheduled night flights.

It is now for an applicant for development consent to demonstrate to the Planning Inspectorate, with input from statutory consultees, that it can meet these requirements through a detailed assessment of all environmental impacts of their scheme, including demonstrating that noise mitigation measures will be effective.

The government continues to keep evidence on noise impacts under review through its expert group, the Interdepartmental Group on Costs and Benefits of Noise (IGCB(N)), and will consider carefully any recommendations from this process.

■ Heathrow Airport: Transport

Ruth Cadbury: [\[1903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the total cost of the (a) road and (b) rail improvements required as a result of the expansion of Heathrow Airport.

Paul Maynard:

The Airports National Policy Statement sets out that it is for an applicant to demonstrate how it will improve surface access and mitigate the impacts of expansion at Heathrow. The expansion of Heathrow Airport will be fully funded and delivered by the private sector.

The proposed western rail link and southern access schemes to Heathrow are separate projects, which are subject to their own business cases. Where there are significant non-airport public user benefits from changes and enhancements to the infrastructure and services, the Government has made clear it would consider making a funding contribution to reflect these.

■ London, Tilbury and Southend Railway Line

Sir David Amess: [\[3129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of ticketing infrastructure on the Essex Thameside trainline.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Trenitalia c2c have been implementing new ticket retailing infrastructure since summer 2019, upgrading ticket office machines and ticket vending machines across the route. Officials are aware that a number of technical issues have been experienced and, as a consequence, Trenitalia c2c are providing regular updates to the Department on the measures being taken to rectify and improve the technology.

■ Railway Stations: Access

James Cartlidge: [\[3858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to announce additional access for all funding for railway station accessibility; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

We have announced the funding currently available for the 2019-2024 rail Control Period. In addition to the 73 Access for All stations announced last year, we will shortly be announcing additional projects selected to benefit from £20m of Mid-Tier funding. Future funding decisions will be made at a later time. However, I would like

to assure you that I am committed to improving access at all stations, and will continue to seek further opportunities, and funding, to make more improvements.

■ **Railways: Staff**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[3265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of ensuring that all railway staff have access to travel facilities; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Any extension of rights to travel facilities to all railway staff would be a matter for employers and employees. An assessment of this nature has not been undertaken by the Secretary of State.

■ **Shipping: Minimum Wage**

Cat Smith:

[\[2568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to extend the application and enforcement of the National Minimum Wage Act 1998 for seafarers.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

An Order in Council making the legislative changes is expected to be laid in draft before Parliament next month. This will be subject to the affirmative process and debates will be scheduled as the parliamentary timetable permits before final approval is sought from the Privy Council.

Mike Hill:

[\[3297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the timeframe is for his Department to bring forward legislative proposals to extend the application of the National Minimum Wage Act 1998 to seafarers.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

An Order in Council making the legislative changes is expected to be laid in draft before Parliament next month. This will be subject to the affirmative process and debates will be scheduled as the parliamentary timetable permits before final approval is sought from the Privy Council.

■ **South Fylde Rail Line**

Scott Benton:

[\[2600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations he has received from Blackpool Council on the economic benefits of increasing rail services into Blackpool South through the introduction of a passing loop on the South Fylde Rail line.

Scott Benton: [\[2601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential economic benefit to Blackpool of increased rail services into that resort through the creation of a passing loop on the South Fylde Rail line.

Scott Benton: [\[2602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential increase in rail passengers travelling from (a) Blackpool South, (b) Blackpool Pleasure Beach and (c) Squires Gate station in the event of the creation of a passing loop on the South Fylde Rail line.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Chief Executive of Blackpool Council made some representations to the Secretary of State for Transport for a passing loop and additional rail services over to the South Fylde line. I am also aware that my hon Friend, the Member for Blackpool North and Cleveleys Paul Maynard has advocated further expansion of Blackpool's light rail system over this line, supported by a study carried out for the Council.

I understand that as part of their Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) business case work Lancashire County Council commissioned a study to assess potential conventional rail improvements over the South Fylde line. However, this scheme was not included in the final TCF bid and no decision has been taken by the Council regarding next steps.

I encourage local authorities and stakeholders in Blackpool and Lancashire to work together to agree a preferred way forward.

TREASURY

■ Air Passenger Duty: Carbon Emissions

Steve Reed: [\[3226\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of reducing Air Passenger Duty on domestic flights on the UK's carbon emissions.

Mr Simon Clarke:

As announced on 14 January, HM Treasury is undertaking a review of Air Passenger Duty to ensure regional connectivity is strengthened while meeting the UK's climate change commitments to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

The government takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously and uses a range of levers at its disposal, including spending, taxation and regulatory policy, to meet its climate and environmental objectives.

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties

Mr Toby Perkins:

[\[3730\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to encourage consumers to drink lower ABV beverages; and whether he plans to change the rates of taxation on alcohol.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Fiscal changes to alcohol, and tax rates are kept under review and the impact of a change to duty is considered at each fiscal event.

■ Customs Declaration Services Programme

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[3680\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether all traders were transferred to the Customs Declaration Service by 1 January 2020; and whether that service is fully operational.

Jesse Norman:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given on 9 September 2019 (UIN 286140). The migration of traders to the Customs Declaration Service (CDS) is planned to be completed by late 2020. CDS can accept all types of import and export declarations and the final elements of IT functionality will be delivered by the end of March. HMRC are dual running the CHIEF system alongside CDS until all trader migration is completed.

■ Electronic Publishing: VAT

Helen Hayes:

[\[3854\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a zero-rate of VAT for e-publications.

Jesse Norman:

The Government keeps all taxes under review, including VAT.

Over the past year the Government has engaged with industry on this issue. It will continue to consider the benefits and risks associated with extending the zero rate of VAT to e-publications, for digital businesses, high street retailers, consumers and taxpayers.

■ European Investment Bank

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[1262\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the potential cost of contingent liabilities faced by the UK in relation to the operations of the European Investment Bank.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Under the terms of the withdrawal agreement, the UK will maintain a declining c. €40bn financial commitment to the EIB in respect of the existing book of EIB operations approved up to exit. The UK's liability for callable capital to the EIB is recorded in the consolidated fund of accounts.

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818268/CF_Annual_Accounts_2018-19_FINAL_TYPESET_150719_covers_final.pdf)

This liability is reported to Parliament in the accounts as having a remote probability of crystallising. The arrangement would only be called upon in very exceptional circumstances and on equal terms as other Member States. The Bank has never made a call on the callable capital since it was established. The UK will not provide backing to any new EIB operations approved following exit.

■ Forests: North of England**Dan Jarvis:****[R] [3217]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to allocate funding to the Northern Forest initiative in the forthcoming Budget.

Mr Simon Clarke:

In 2018 the Government announced £5.7 million over four years to support the development of the Northern Forest. This investment is funding the planting of at least 1.8 million new trees across the Northern Forest by 2022.

The Government has set out its ambition to increase tree planting to 75,000 acres each year across the UK by the end of this Parliament.

■ Northern Rock**Seema Malhotra:****[3221]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make publish unredacted (a) marketing documents and (b) information memoranda provided by (i) HM Treasury, (ii) UK Asset Resolution and (iii) NRAM Ltd to potential bidders for portfolios of former Northern Rock mortgages.

John Glen:

The details of these transactions are commercially sensitive and are, or have been, subject to non-disclosure agreements. Publishing these documents would damage the government's reputation as a seller of assets, which would impair our ability to undertake future asset sales.

Seema Malhotra:**[3222]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish unredacted data on (a) the interest revenue produced by the former Northern Rock mortgage book in public ownership, (b) the overall revenue produced by that book including revenue from redemptions, (c) the level of arrears at (i) one month or more and (ii) three months or

more as a percentage of the overall balance of that book and (d) the average loan-to-value ratio of that book at (A) monthly and (B) quarterly intervals from the date Northern Rock was nationalised.

John Glen:

NRAM publishes detailed information on its asset portfolios and revenue in its annual report and accounts – these reports are available at <https://www.ukar.co.uk/nram/nram-financial-results/2019>.

UKAR regularly publishes a corporate factsheet on its overall portfolio and financial position – the latest edition of this update is available on UKAR's website at <https://www.ukar.co.uk/~media/Files/U/Ukar-V3/documents/ukar-factsheet-05-06-2019.pdf>

■ **Post Offices: ICT**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[3685\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the settlement award of £57.75 million with sub-postmasters announced on 11 December 2019 will be subject to VAT.

Jesse Norman:

Payments resulting from legal settlements are normally VAT free as they are not made in return for goods or services.

Due to HMRC's statutory responsibilities I am unable to comment on the tax affairs of individuals or identifiable groups of individuals.

■ **Unpaid Work**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[3809\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy for HMRC to record the number of complaints it receives on unpaid work trials.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC take seriously and investigate all complaints from workers referred by the Acas helpline, or received via the online complaints form.

Complaint-led National Minimum Wage (NMW) cases often involve a range of different NMW breaches. It is only possible to determine the full extent of any underpayments, and the underlying reasons for these breaches, at the conclusion of an investigation.

In conjunction with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, HMRC publish information on completed investigations in an annual compliance and enforcement report. The latest report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-living-wage-and-national-minimum-wage-government-evidence-on-compliance-and-enforcement-2018>

WALES**■ Wales Office: Pay**

Grahame Morris: [\[2510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, with reference to the increase in the National Living Wage announced by the Government on 31 December 2019, what discussions he is having with private sector companies undertaking facility management work for his Department to ensure that the cost of wage increases for their employees are not passed on to his Department.

David T C Davies:

Facility management services provided to the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales are undertaken by outsourced providers under Ministry of Justice contracts.

The Ministry of Justice requires all of its suppliers to comply with the legal minimum standards of pay as set out in the Government's National Living Wage legislation.

Changes to the National Living Wage are covered by contractual change provisions within MoJ's Facility Management (FM) contracts. As a result, the MoJ discuss with each of their FM service providers the potential impact of any such changes in order to assess the financial impact, taking into account the overall contractual terms and conditions.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Access to Work Programme**

Marion Fellows: [\[3802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the (a) average and (b) median waiting times were for decisions on applications for people who have applied for support from her Department's Access to Work scheme in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested about average and median waiting times for decisions on applications for people who have applied for support from Access to Work is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Marion Fellows: [\[3803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to increase participation in the Access to Work programme.

Justin Tomlinson:

We continue to raise awareness of Access to Work through a targeted marketing approach, focusing on previously underrepresented groups such as young people, people with mental health conditions and people with learning disabilities.

The 2018/19 Access to Work statistics illustrate the success of the scheme, with over 36,000 people receiving tailored and flexible support - up 7% on 2017/18 and currently the highest ever number - including record numbers of young people, people with learning disabilities and people with mental health conditions.

■ Access to Work Programme: Scotland

Marion Fellows:

[3800]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will take steps to ensure that Scotland is allocated a proportionate share of the Access to Work budget.

Justin Tomlinson:

We continue to raise awareness of Access to Work throughout the country, including Scotland, using a targeted marketing approach; focusing on previously underrepresented groups such as young people, people with mental health conditions and people with learning disabilities.

Access to Work funding is not allocated on a regional basis. The scheme is available for anyone aged 16 or over who lives in England, Scotland or Wales and who has a disability or health condition (physical or mental) that makes it hard for them to do parts of their job or get to and from work. The number of people in Scotland receiving support through Access to Work follows trends in the growth of the service overall, and has been increasing year-on-year since 2015/16.

Further statistical information on Access to Work can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/access-to-work-statistics>

■ Bereavement Support Payment

Dan Jarvis:

[3748]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to make unmarried persons eligible for the bereavement support payment.

Will Quince:

The legislation covering bereavement support payment confines eligibility to those who are married or in a civil partnership. We currently have no plans to change the eligibility criteria for bereavement support payment.

■ Children: Maintenance

Marion Fellows:

[3797]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Child Maintenance Service's powers to disqualify non-compliant parents from (a) holding and (b) obtaining a (i) passport and (ii) driving licence in (A) enforcing collections and (B) reducing historically owed maintenance.

Mims Davies:

I can confirm that information related to this query is in the process of being collated by officials, but unfortunately is not yet in a suitable state for release. I will write to the Hon. Member with the information when it becomes available.

■ Employment and Support Allowance**Marion Fellows:**[\[3794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what savings have accrued to the public purse under the £30 reduction for claimants of employment and support allowance in the work-related activity group in each month since that reduction was implemented.

Justin Tomlinson:

There are no savings from the removal of the Employment and Support Allowance Work Related Activity Component for new claims from April 2017.

This change enabled the Department to recycle money into providing practical support that will make a significant difference to the life chances of those in the Work-Related Activity Group. We have invested £330m over 4 years with £100m available in 2020/21 and will support those with limited capability for work to move towards and into suitable employment.

■ Homelessness: Young People**Caroline Lucas:**[\[2473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to include people aged under 25 in the shared accommodation rate exemption for homeless people; and if he will make a statement.

Will Quince:

There is an exemption from the shared accommodation rate for those aged 25-34 who have previously spent 3 months (which doesn't have to be continuous) in a homeless hostel/hostels specialising in rehabilitation and resettlement. There are no current plans to make legislative changes to extend this exemption to those under the age of 25.

For individuals who may require more support and whose circumstances may make it difficult for them to share accommodation, Discretionary Housing Payments are available.

Dr Rupa Huq:[\[3266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing secondary legislation to include people aged under 25 in the shared accommodation rate exemption for homeless people.

Will Quince:

There is an exemption from the shared accommodation rate for those aged 25-34 who have previously spent 3 months (which doesn't have to be continuous) in a homeless hostel/hostels specialising in rehabilitation and resettlement. There are no

current plans to make legislative changes to extend this exemption to those under the age of 25 but as with all our policies, this will continue to be kept under review.

For individuals who may require more support and whose circumstances may make it difficult for them to share accommodation, Discretionary Housing Payments are available.

Kate Osamor:

[\[3273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to exempt under-25s from the shared accommodation rate local housing allowance provided to homeless people who have stayed in a hostel for three or more months.

Will Quince:

There is an exemption from the shared accommodation rate for those aged 25-34 who have previously spent 3 months, which doesn't have to be continuous, in a homeless hostel/hostels specialising in rehabilitation and resettlement. There are no current plans to extend this exemption to those under the age of 25.

For individuals who may require more support and whose circumstances may make it difficult for them to share accommodation, Discretionary Housing Payments are available.

■ Housing Benefit: Care Leavers

David Linden:

[\[3309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will take steps to exempt all care leavers from the shared accommodation rate for housing benefit; and if he will make a statement.

Will Quince:

Care leavers up to the age of 22 are exempt from the Local Housing Allowance shared accommodation rate in the Private Rented Sector. There are no current plans to extend this exemption to all care leavers.

For individuals who may require more support and whose circumstances may make it difficult for them to share accommodation, Discretionary Housing Payments are available.

■ Local Housing Allowance

John Healey:

[\[3142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will maintain targeted affordability funding for local housing allowance from April 2020.

Will Quince:

The written ministerial statement laid on Monday announced that the freeze to local housing allowance (LHA) will end and rates will increase by 1.7% from April 2020. Targeted Affordability Funding (TAF) was introduced in recognition that the impact of the freeze may have different effects across the country. As the freeze has ended,

there will be no TAF. For individuals who may require more support, Discretionary Housing Payments are available.

■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses

Jamie Stone: [\[3283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department has made on the review of the benefits system for people nearing the end of their life.

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.

Jamie Stone: [\[3284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has plans to bring forward legislative proposals to (a) expedite access to benefits by terminally ill people and (b) ensure the sensitive handling of that process for those people.

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.

■ UN Convention On the Rights of Persons With Disabilities

Marion Fellows: [\[3243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will put into statute the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Justin Tomlinson:

The UK became a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2009. As a signatory to the convention, the UK remains committed to the progressive realisation of the rights for disabled people that it sets out. The Equality Act 2010 enshrines the rights of people in England, Scotland and Wales with any of nine protected characteristics to live free from discrimination, harassment or

victimisation and have equal opportunities in domestic law. It systematically ensures consideration of the rights of disabled people by public authorities, at both national and local levels, through the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

■ Universal Credit

Dan Jarvis: [3218]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to allow postgraduate university students to claim universal credit.

Will Quince:

Most full time students in education, including those undertaking postgraduate studies, do not qualify for Universal Credit.

Students are able to access funding to support their education courses through various loans and grants, which are the responsibility of the Department for Education. It is important that Universal Credit does not duplicate this support, which is designed for their needs unlike the social security system.

Exceptions are made where students have additional needs that are not met through the student support system. These provisions already allow a person undertaking a full-time postgraduate course of study to have entitlement to Universal Credit if they satisfy one of the exceptions or, where the course is not full-time, it is considered to be compatible with any work related requirements placed upon them.

Chris Stephens: [R] [3829]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of new claims for universal credit were paid in full and on time by (a) child element, (b) limited capability for work element, (c) childcare element and (d) housing element in the most recent 12 months for which figures are available.

Will Quince:

Our latest data shows the proportion of new Universal Credit claims paid in full on time was 88.4%. In many cases where full payment is not made on time, it is due to unresolved issues such as: claimants not accepting their Claimant Commitment or passing identity checks, or having outstanding verification issues, such as housing costs and self-employed earnings.

The latest available information on payments made in full and on time to Universal Credit claimants is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Universal Credit: Romford

Andrew Rosindell: [\[3699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households are claiming universal credit in Romford constituency.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit is now the main system of working age welfare support across the country. It is available in every Jobcentre, with a caseload of over 2.7 million claimants, growing every month, now able to access the additional support and flexibilities it offers.

The latest available information on the number of households on Universal Credit in the parliamentary constituency of Romford is published online and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Universal Credit: Torfaen

Nick Thomas-Symonds: [\[3253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people living in Torfaen constituency claim universal credit.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit is now the main system of working age welfare support across the country. It is available in every Jobcentre, with a caseload of over 2.7 million claimants, growing every month, now able to access the additional support and flexibilities it offers.

The latest available information on the number of people on Universal Credit for the parliamentary constituency of Torfaen is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Nissan: Import Duties

Chi Onwurah:

[\[3200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if she will publish the guarantees offered to Nissan with respect to tariffs upon the UK's exit from the EU.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 20 January 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Political Declaration establishes the parameters for an ambitious and flexible partnership across trade and economic cooperation through a Free Trade Agreement with the EU. A key objective is to ensure that there are no tariffs, fees or quantitative restrictions across sectors, with modern and accompanying Rules of Origin, and ambitious customs arrangements.

We have not offered guarantees to Nissan specifically with respect to tariffs.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Care Homes: Learning Disability

Catherine West:

[\[432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) unexpected deaths and (b) serious injuries have occurred in residential care homes among people with learning difficulties in each year since 2010.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 9 January 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Caroline Dinenage:

The following table shows Unexpected Death and Serious Injury Notifications raised against 'Residential social care home' locations with a Service User Band of 'Learning disabilities or autistic spectrum disorder', from 1 April 2010, provided by the Care Quality Commission:

Raised Year	NUMBER OF NOTIFICATIONS	
	16-1 Unexpected Death	18-2a,b Serious Injury
2010	260	558
2011	1,201	2,656

	NUMBER OF NOTIFICATIONS	
2012	1,248	3,112
2013	936	3,077
2014	948	3,215
2015	1,067	3,866
2016	1,221	4,236
2017	1,081	4,573
2018	1,153	4,513
2019	959	4,812
2020	12	48
Grand Total	10,086	34,666

Notes:

1. The data does not indicate whether a notification relates directly to someone with a learning disability or autism, only that the location has the Service User Band of 'Learning disabilities or autistic spectrum disorder'. A location may have more than one Service User Band.
2. 'Residential social care home' locations are defined as locations with a Primary Inspection Category of 'Residential social care', or with an Organisation Type of 'Social Care Organisation' and any of the Service Types 'Care home services with nursing', 'Care home services without nursing' or 'Specialist college services'
3. This data is at location level only.
4. The data for 2010 reflects both an incomplete year of reporting, i.e. from 1 April 2010, and from a starting point of data from the National Health Service providers alone, before social care and independent healthcare providers across the United Kingdom England were included.
5. Data for 2020 is up to and including 7 January.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Homelessness: Young People

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[3266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing secondary legislation to include people aged under 25 in the shared accommodation rate exemption for homeless people.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 20 January 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Will Quince:

There is an exemption from the shared accommodation rate for those aged 25-34 who have previously spent 3 months, (which doesn't have to be continuous), in a homeless hostel/hostels specialising in rehabilitation and resettlement. There are no current plans to make legislative changes to extend this exemption to those under the age of 25 but as with all our policies, this will continue to be kept under review.

For individuals who may require more support and whose circumstances may make it difficult for them to share accommodation, Discretionary Housing Payments are available.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

PRIME MINISTER

■ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):

[\[HCWS44\]](#)

The United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is as follows:

Sir Roger Gale MP (Leader)

FULL REPRESENTATIVES

Hannah Bardell MP
 Stella Creasy MP
 Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP
 Earl of Dundee
 Baroness Eccles of Moulton
 Dame Cheryl Gillan MP
 John Howell MP
 Sir Edward Leigh MP
 Kerry McCarthy MP
 Baroness Massey of Darwen
 Ian Murray MP
 Lord Prescott
 Virendra Sharma MP

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Lord Anderson of Swansea
 Tonia Antoniazzi MP
 Lord Balfe
 Lord Blencathra
 Sir Christopher Chope MP
 Steve Double MP
 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
 Conor McGinn MP
 Lord Russell of Liverpool
 Tommy Sheppard MP
 Lord Touhig
 Martin Vickers MP