



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 28 January 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:31 P.M., 28 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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business: Leicestershire

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[6175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to support local businesses in (a) Hinckley and (b) Bosworth.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Government provides businesses in Hinckley and Bosworth with support through Leicester and Leicestershire's LEP Growth Hub.

We have made specific investments in Horiba MIRA to support the future automotive industry.

This has included £9.5m to establish the MIRA Technology Institute to develop state of the art training facilities to nurture automotive engineers of the future.

■ Carbon Capture and Storage: North Sea

Mr David Davis:

[\[6014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to encourage the use of sites under the North Sea for carbon sequestration.

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 Government is committed to deploying CCUS in the 2020s.

The Oil and Gas Authority issued its first CO₂ storage licence to Pale Blue Dot Energy (Acorn) Ltd (PBD) for the Acorn Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Project in 2018.

In order to support the development of potential CO₂ storage sites, the Government invested £2.5 million in the Energy Technologies Institute's (ETI) CO₂ Storage Appraisal Project which looked in detail at eight potential CO₂ storage sites[1]. The UK also has the world-leading CO₂-stored database[2] which is hosted and developed by the British Geological Survey and provides the data for over 500 potential offshore CO₂ storage sites around the UK.

We are working closely with North Sea countries through the North Sea Basin Taskforce to share best practice and cooperate on North Sea CO₂ storage. In October 2019, we cooperated with Norway and the Netherlands to achieve a provisional amendment to the London Protocol, allowing for the cross-border

transport of CO₂ for permanent storage, such as in the North Sea – a key breakthrough for UK projects and facilitating international CCUS deployment

[1] Energy Technologies Institute LLP, Strategic UK CCS Storage Appraisal, 2016

[2] CO2 Stored Database available at: <http://www.co2stored.co.uk/home/index>

■ Flexible Working

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [7265]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps her Department is taking to encourage employers to offer flexible working to their employees.

Kelly Tolhurst:

All employees with 26 weeks' continuous service with their employer have the right to request Flexible Working.

The Government wants to take this further and, subject to further consultation, we will look to introduce steps in an employment bill to make flexible working the default - unless employers have good reason not to.

The Government has also consulted on proposals for large employers (with over 250 employees) to publish their parental leave and pay and flexible working policies and to advertise jobs as open to flexible working. We are considering next steps.

■ Fracking

Alexander Stafford: [5564]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what methods of fossil fuel extraction are covered by the moratorium on fracking.

Alexander Stafford: [5565]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether (a) exploratory wells and (b) the process of acidisation are covered by the moratorium on fracking.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The moratorium applies to operations that require Hydraulic Fracturing Consent. The definition of associated hydraulic fracturing, used for the purposes of Hydraulic Fracturing Consent, is as set out under section 4A of the Petroleum Act 1998 (inserted by Section 50 of the Infrastructure Act 2015).

This definition was based on the approach taken by the European Commission, which defines high-volume hydraulic fracturing as involving the injection into a well of 1000m³ or more of water per fracturing stage or 10000m³ or more of water during the entire fracturing process.

Activities outside of this definition are not included in the moratorium.

Alexander Stafford: [5568]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to ensure any environmental damage caused by the development and exploitation of shale gas is mitigated.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We will not support shale gas exploration unless the science shows categorically that it can be done safely. On the basis of the current scientific evidence the Government has taken a presumption against issuing any further Hydraulic Fracturing Consents.

In the UK, we have been regulating gas and oil drilling, both onshore and offshore, for decades and maintain the very highest safety and environmental standards. Licensees are responsible for liabilities associated with environmental impacts of their operations throughout the duration of the licence.

Alexander Stafford: [5569]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of requiring shale gas companies to put aside a bond to pay for householders' property repairs, resultant from exploration and extraction.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

As part of the Oil and Gas Authority's (OGA) assessment of an application for hydraulic fracturing operations, the OGA requires the operator to have in place the necessary funds or an insurance policy (including third-party liability) that will cover unforeseen events.

■ Fuel Poverty: Greater Manchester

Afzal Khan: [7240]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households in (a) Greater Manchester and (b) the Manchester, Gorton constituency are currently living in fuel poverty.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Figures for Greater Manchester can be derived from table 4 of the Fuel Poverty sub-national tables using the 10 Metropolitan districts – Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Thameside, Trafford and Wigan – as listed by the ONS

(<https://geoportal.statistics.gov.uk/datasets/local-authority-district-to-county-april-2019-lookup-in-england>).

Individual constituency data can be found in table 5 of the Fuel Poverty sub-national tables at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-2019>.

■ National Federation of SubPostmasters: Expenditure

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[6029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much has been spent from the public purse on supporting the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters in the last 10 years.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Postmasters are the backbone of the Post Office network and it is clearly vital they have a body that represents their interests.

Since 2015 National Federation of Sub-Postmasters have been funded by a grant provided by Post Office. This equates to £1.5 million per annum for its annual operations and £1 million per annum for specific projects established to support postmasters. The annual grant is paid on a quarterly basis. Individual project grants will be paid in line with the requirements of the specific projects. Any grant funding to the NFSP is paid from POL's own commercial revenues.

Prior to the Grant Agreement in 2015, NFSP received an annual payment of £175k from the Post Office along with occasional payments for specific projects. The rest of NSFP's funding came from members' subscription payments.

■ Offshore Industry

Andrew Bowie:

[\[6177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress has been made on the oil and gas sector deal.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The UK's offshore oil and gas industry supports almost 300,000 jobs, of which four in ten are in Scotland. We believe that the North Sea oil and gas industry has a key role to play as we move to a Net Zero economy. We will support this transition with a transformational oil and gas Sector Deal. BEIS officials have already held preliminary discussions with industry to discuss how such a Sector Deal could enable the sector to play a leading role in the energy transition. Discussions will develop further over the next few months, as the process develops.

■ Post Office: Public Appointments

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[6028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, who the non-Executive Member on the board of Post Office Limited from her Department is.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[6031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the duties of the Government's non-executive representative on the board of Post Office Limited are; and whether she has any plans to review those duties.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Secretary of State delegates the role of Shareholder Representative on the Post Office Board to UK Government Investments (UKGI). Tom Cooper (Director, UKGI) is the current Shareholder Non-Executive Director on the Post Office Board.

UKGI, as the Shareholder Representative, oversees corporate governance, strategy, and the stewardship of the Post Office's financial and other resources on behalf of BEIS. As well as the seat on the Post Office Board, UKGI Shareholder NED also sits on the Audit and Risk Committee.

The shareholder team monitors financial and operational performance of the business against the long-term strategy, holding the business to account in delivering against its commercial and policy objectives. UKGI are also responsible for ensuring the business is provided with sufficient investment and subsidy funding to achieve its target of being commercially sustainable in the longer term, whilst meeting its social obligations, particularly around minimum network coverages requirements.

Finally, UKGI advises ministers on both commercial and policy issues, supporting them in Parliament and with the wider set of stakeholders who have an interest in Post Office matters.

There are no plans to review these duties.

Renewable Energy: Employment**Ben Lake:**[\[7238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the findings published by the ONS on 16 January 2020 that the number of (a) people employed in the low carbon and renewable energy economy and (b) businesses in that sector have declined since 2014; and what the implications of those findings are for her policy on the UK reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

It is misleading to compare estimates from the Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Economy Survey from 2014 with this year's survey because of changes in the sample methodology and size between 2014 and 2015.

There are now over 460,000 people working in low carbon businesses and their supply chains across the country, up from the revised 2017 estimate of 447,000. Turnover in the direct low carbon economy was estimated at £46.7 billion in 2018, up from £40.4 billion in 2015.

Renewable Energy: Manufacturing Industries**Ben Lake:**[\[7239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what her Department's policy is on encouraging the development of a domestic manufacturing base for renewable energy technologies.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

In the Clean Growth Strategy and Industrial Strategy, the Government set out its ambition to have a strong, industrialised UK supply chain, proving its capability and increasing its capacity in order to win export orders. Delivering economic benefit is a Government priority and we are working together with industry to deliver growth, build a thriving UK supply chain and seize commercial opportunities in the UK and abroad.

Through the measures set out in the Offshore Wind Sector Deal, the offshore wind sector will invest up to £250 million over 10 years into a new Offshore Wind Growth Partnership aimed at helping UK companies become more competitive and productive in the context of a growing global market.

The UK has a strong track record in the supply of offshore wind development services, engineering design, and the supply of inter array cables and offshore substations. Approximately 75% of the value of operations and maintenance contracts for UK offshore wind farms are won by UK businesses.

■ Self-employed: Free Movement of Labour

Caroline Lucas: [\[7184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral contribution of 21 October 2019 of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy at the third delegated legislation committee on the draft Freedom of Establishment and Free Movement of Services (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, whether self-employed (a) EU, (b) EEA, (c) Swiss and (d) Turkish citizens need to take steps prior to 31 December 2020 to comply with those regulations.

Caroline Lucas: [\[7185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to inform (a) EU, (b) EEA, (c) Swiss and (d) Turkish citizens of changes to the law on self-employment after the passing of the Freedom of Establishment and Free Movement of Services (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

Caroline Lucas: [\[7186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps her Department has taken to support self-employed (a) EU, (b) EEA, (c) Swiss and (d) Turkish citizens to (i) understand and (ii) comply with the Freedom of Establishment and Free Movement of Services (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 ahead of the 31 December 2020.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Self-employed EU, EEA EFTA, Swiss and Turkish nationals will not be required to take any actions to comply with the Freedom of Establishment and Free Movement of Services (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. UK law currently imposes no restrictions on the ability of these nationals to establish or run a business, or to provide services in the UK. The Regulations, which come into force at the end of the Implementation Period, will not change this.

■ UK Space Agency: Easington

Grahame Morris:

[7191]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to promote the UK Space Agency's SateLife Competition to young people living in Easington constituency.

Chris Skidmore:

The UK Space Agency's SatelLife competition is a national competition open to anyone aged between 11-22 who is resident in the UK. The UK Space Agency launched the competition on the 14th Jan 2020 on their [website](#), and gave interviews on national TV and radio channels (Radio 4, BBC5 live, BBC News Channel) also offering information to all local radio stations across the country (11 took up an interview offer from the UK Space Agency). The competition has also been promoted through multiple social media channels including including in the North East.

The North East has had three previous winners of the SatelLife competition, one every year:

- 2017 – Razzia Gafur, from Newcastle – Imaging in Space, using satellite data to support virtual reality activities.
- 2018 – Jasmine Hurley, Jack Whinnom, Megan Goss, Kieron Robson, and Matthew Jones from Bedlington, Northumberland – Displaced Person Aid. An idea that looks at people who are internally displaced and how satellites can help meet their needs rather than those who are refugees.
- 2019 – Race Spectator – Daniel Currie, from Middlesbrough – This app will allow supporters to track friends and family members competing in running races.

The UK Space Education and Resource Office, ESERO-UK which is co-funded by the European Space Agency, the UK Space Agency and the Science and Technology Facilities Council and provides resources to promote the teaching of STEM topics, has a regular e-mail shot that is sent to almost all schools across the UK – this will include the SatelLife competition.

Should the Honourable Member know of further opportunities to promote the SatelLife competition in Easington, the UK Space Agency, supported by my office, would be pleased to do so.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cybercrime

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[6027]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans his Department has to change the National Cyber Security Strategy after 2021.

Oliver Dowden:

The cyber security challenge will endure beyond 2021. We committed in our manifesto to invest more in cyber security, embrace new technologies and legislate to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online.

Work on our plans for cyber security after 2021 is in progress. This work includes reviewing progress on delivery, while recognising that cyber security operates in a dynamic environment which is constantly evolving and will continue to change up to – and beyond – 2021.

European Parliament Members: Scotland

Patrick Grady: [\[7282\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish a response to the Early Day Motion tabled by the hon. Member for Glasgow North on 23 January 2020 entitled Scotland's representation in the European Parliament.

Chloe Smith:

We have notified the Regional Returning Officer for Scotland of the MEP vacancy and asked them to take the necessary steps to fill the MEP seat in accordance with the European Parliamentary Elections Regulations 2004.

Local Government: Elections

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: [\[5482\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an estimate of the effect on the public purse of holding combined local elections every four years for local authorities, police and crime commissioners, regional mayors and the Greater London Authority.

Chloe Smith:

The Government has not made an assessment of the effect on the public purse of holding combined elections every four years. Not all local authorities hold their council elections on a four-year cycle and new elected positions can be created, as we have seen for local authority and combined authority mayors in recent years.

Combined polls will often result in lower overall costs to public funds both in respect of the Consolidated Fund and the relevant devolved administration or local authority sources. Combination has also been shown to increase turnout in instances where a poll that traditionally experiences low turnout is combined with a poll where turnout is higher.

DEFENCE**Armed Forces: Social Mobility**

Ian Lavery: [\[6682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of levels of social mobility in the armed forces.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence does not hold information on the socio-economic backgrounds of Armed Forces personnel which could inform an assessment of levels of social mobility. However, the Armed Forces are working in line with the Government's priority to build a fairer society, aiming to attract talent from the widest possible base from across the UK, regardless of socio-economic background, educational status or ethnicity. The skills, education, training and experience provided enable recruits to progress as far as their aptitude will take them, regardless of their background.

BAE Systems: East Riding**Mr David Davis:**[\[6017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he has taken to support employment at BAE Systems in Brough.

James Heappey:

While employment at Brough is a matter for BAE Systems, the Ministry of Defence remains engaged with the company to understand its plans for the site. Export growth is particularly important for sustaining jobs, which is why the Ministry of Defence continues to work closely with BAE Systems and other Government Departments in pursuit of various export opportunities.

Corruption**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[7289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what (a) policies and (b) training his Department requires of its subsidiary companies or NDPBs on (i) corruption and (ii) anti-bribery.

James Heappey:

Subsidiary companies and Non Departmental Public Bodies are required by the Department to have counter-fraud policies, including on both corruption and anti-bribery.

HMS Queen Elizabeth**Nia Griffith:**[\[7177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate he has made of the cost of the build and commission for the Queen Elizabeth aircraft carriers.

James Heappey:

The final cost of the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carrier programme is the subject of ongoing commercial negotiations with the Aircraft Carrier Alliance, and I am therefore withholding our current cost estimate as its disclosure at this time would be prejudicial to the commercial interests of the Ministry of Defence.

■ Ministry of Defence: Iron and Steel**Nick Smith:** [\[6637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of total cost of UK steel and steel products as a proportion of all steel procured by his Department in 2019.

James Heappey:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 21 January 2020 to Question 4322 to the hon. Member for Newport East (Ms Morden).

Attachments:

1. Ministry of Defence Iron and Steel [4322 - Ministry of Defence Iron and Steel.docx]

■ Ministry of Defence: Procurement**Ian Lavery:** [\[6683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the quality of service provided under contracts outsourced by his Department.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence routinely monitors the performance of all contractors, including those who provide outsourced services. Performance against contract targets is regularly scrutinised and officials take appropriate action when standards are not met.

■ University Royal Naval Units: Scotland**Andrew Bowie:** [\[6726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will review the decision to re-locate the East of Scotland Universities Royal Naval Unit from Aberdeen to Edinburgh.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

A review of all University Royal Naval Units (URNUs) is being conducted by the Royal Navy to consider how the organisations are governed and managed, while examining the objectives of the URNU and the way they deliver the maritime experience. Geographical footprint will be considered as part of this review.

■ Unmanned Air Vehicles**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[5345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 25 February 2019 to Question 223964, Unmanned Air Vehicles, what the cost was of repairing the Reaper drone after that incident; which organisation carried out those repairs; and whether that contract was subjected to an open procurement process.

James Heappey:

As the air vehicle was nearing the end of its viable flying life at the time of the incident, it was not considered value for money to repair the air vehicle. Therefore, no repair costs were incurred.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[5346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 25 February 2019 to Question 223964, Unmanned Air Vehicles, where that Reaper drone was operating over at the time of that incident.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[5347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 25 February 2019 to Question 223964, Unmanned Air Vehicles, where that Reaper drone was based at the time of that incident.

James Heappey:

Reaper was operating in support of Op SHADER at the time of the incident. I am withholding further details as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[5348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 25 February 2019 to Question 223964, Unmanned Air Vehicles, what the cost to the public purse was of the purchase of that Reaper drone.

James Heappey:

Reaper was procured as a Foreign Military Sale from the United States; the cost of the air vehicle was approximately \$5.9 million. Role equipment onboard and modifications cost around \$7.7 million, but the majority of these were not damaged and were able to be recovered and reused.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[5349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 25 February 2019 to Question 223964, Unmanned Air Vehicles, what the average lifespan is of a Reaper drone.

James Heappey:

The lifespan of a Reaper is 20,000 flying hours.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[5350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has to develop sovereign defence capability through unmanned aerial vehicles.

James Heappey:

We continue to encourage and contract for innovation in unmanned aircraft technology from Industry. A range of UK companies in the unmanned aircraft and drones fields, including small and medium-sized enterprises, have been contracted to support DSTL research, Rapid Capabilities Office development programmes, and sub-systems support to our larger Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems.

■ Veterans: DNA**Bob Stewart:**[\[6631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has (a) extracted DNA from the remains of unidentified British soldiers found on former battlefields and share (b) that DNA with ancestry companies to find matches with subscribers of those companies.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence has not extracted DNA from fallen soldiers to share with ancestry companies.

■ Weapons**Patrick Grady:**[\[7287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the need for international action to prevent the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas is governed by International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The UK complies with all appropriate legal obligations and takes its adherence to IHL extremely seriously. The UK is at the forefront of international discussions on the subject and officials contributed extensively to the Vienna Conference on Protection of Civilians in Urban Warfare in October 2019, in which steps towards a political declaration were taken. The issue centres on balancing the need to protect civilians with the requirement for responsible states to be able to operate effectively in the pursuit of national security and defence interests. Further discussions will take place in Geneva in February 2020 and officials from Her Majesty's Government will continue to take a full and active role.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Betting: Internet****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[7230\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a £2 maximum stake on fixed odds betting games online.

Mr Richard Holden:[\[7231\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of a £2 maximum stake on fixed odds betting on (a) late-night roulette on television and (b) similar television gambling programmes.

Helen Whately:

The government has committed to a review of the Gambling Act 2005 to make sure it is fit for the digital age. Further details will be announced in due course.

All operators providing gambling facilities to customers in Great Britain must be licensed by the Gambling Commission and comply with licence conditions, which include requirements to protect vulnerable people from being harmed by gambling. Operators are required to use the data at their disposal to identify and intervene when a customer shows signs of being at risk of harm.

The Gambling Commission is currently gathering data on online play and what that means for stakes limits, including looking closely at the case for introducing further protections for consumers online as a means of further reducing the risk of harm. Any changes they introduce with regards to online gambling will apply to all forms of remote gambling, including television.

■ Culture: Urban Areas

Kevin Brennan:

[\[7127\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent representations his Department has received on establishing a UK town of culture competition.

Helen Whately:

The Department has received a number of representations, from across the country on the subject of establishing a UK Town of Culture.

These have reaffirmed the role that arts, culture and heritage can play in making towns attractive places to live, work and visit. The department is continuing to explore opportunities to support towns, and is engaging with towns in order to better understand their needs.

We already support towns in many ways including working closely with MHCLG to support the delivery of the Towns Fund and the delivery of the £95million High Streets Heritage Action Zone programme with Historic England. In addition, the £250m Cultural Investment Fund announced in October will benefit many towns through culture-led regeneration.

■ Digital Technology: Carbon Emissions

Chi Onwurah:

[\[7205\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to reduce the carbon footprint of the digital economy.

Matt Warman:

The Government is committed to keeping the UK at the forefront of global action to tackle climate change and protect the environment, and the UK is the first major economy to legislate for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

In October 2019 the Government established a new Cabinet Committee on Climate Change chaired by the Prime Minister to coordinate government action on climate change across all areas of the economy, including the digital economy. In November 2019, we also launched a Net Zero Review which will assess how the UK can maximise economic growth opportunities as it transforms to a green economy, and ensure a fair balance of contributions from all those that will benefit.

There are a number of digital technologies, such as the Internet of Things and AI, that have the potential to help the UK to achieve its environmental targets. DCMS are working closely with industry and the UK's scientific community to examine which technologies have the greatest potential, and how these technologies might be most effectively utilised to deliver a more sustainable digital and wider UK economy.

■ **Football: Betting**

Stephen Flynn: [\[5580\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of banning betting groups from sponsoring football clubs.

Stephen Flynn: [\[5581\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to review the relationship between gambling companies and English football.

Nigel Adams:

It is right that sporting organisations have the freedom to benefit commercially from their products and negotiate their own broadcasting and sponsorship deals.

But such organisations also have an important role to ensure the agreements they enter into are socially responsible and not detrimental to their fans. Gambling operators too are obliged to ensure that all their sponsorship and marketing activity is done responsibly and never targeted at children or vulnerable people.

The Government has committed to a further review of the Gambling Act to ensure it remains fit for the digital age. Further details will be announced in due course.

■ **Football: Gambling**

Stephen Flynn: [\[5579\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many fines the Gambling Commission has issued to gambling businesses that sponsor Premier League football clubs; and what the sum total was of those fines in each year for which figures are available.

Helen Whately:

The Gambling Commission has issued licences to 2,690 gambling operators. Government does not hold figures on how many of these operators have entered into commercial sponsorship agreements with Premier League football clubs but of the 20 football clubs who currently compete in that league, 10 have front of shirt sponsors who are gambling operators. None of the operators who are currently involved in shirt sponsorship arrangements with Premier League football clubs – either under their own brands or through ‘white label’ partnerships – have been fined by the Gambling Commission for breach of their Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice.

The Gambling Commission publishes details of regulatory action it has taken on its website, including a list of sanctions imposed upon operators which can be seen here <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/PDF/Regulatory-sanctions-register-operators.pdf>

■ Social Media: Children and Young People

Steve Reed:

[7210]

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the recommendations of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' report, Technology use and the mental health of children and young people, whether it is his Department's policy to give the independent regulator for online safety powers to compel social media companies to share anonymous data for research into the benefits and risks for children and young people.

Matt Warman:

The government is developing world-leading plans to make the UK a safer place to be online. This includes a duty of care on online companies, overseen by an independent regulator with tough enforcement powers, to hold them to account. The regulator will have the power to require transparency reports from companies outlining what they are doing to protect people online. These reports will be published so parents and children can make informed decisions about their internet use.

We will carefully consider the recent report from the Royal College of Psychiatrists, including its recommendations relating to access to anonymous data for research.

■ Video on Demand: Disability

Liz Twist:

[5502]

To ask the Minister of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to bring forward regulations under section 93 of the Digital Economy Act 2017 to impose requirements on providers of on-demand programme services for the purpose of ensuring that their services are accessible to people with disabilities affecting their sight or hearing or both.

Nigel Adams:

As part of a digitally inclusive society, television content should be accessible for all UK audiences. This is why, as part of the implementation process of the Digital Economy Act 2017, the Government asked Ofcom to provide recommendations on how legislation could make on demand services more accessible. Ofcom published its report in December 2018 and since then my Department has been working with Ofcom to develop the legislative framework for future requirements.

It is important to ensure that any legislation introduced is proportionate while making more content accessible to consumers. As a result, in November 2019 my officials wrote to Ofcom requesting that they complete a further targeted consultation to provide recommendations on specific aspects of the scheme.

Ofcom are now developing this second consultation which they intend to publish in early 2020 and will report back to DCMS later this year. After we have reviewed Ofcom's recommendations, we will then set out next steps.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices: Disability

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[7264]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to encourage more employers to offer apprenticeships to people with disabilities.

Michelle Donelan:

We are working to ensure that a Learning Difficulty or Disability (LDD) is not a barrier to people who want to realise the benefits that an apprenticeship offers or to employers who want to make a long-term investment in the skills they need to grow. We have seen increases in the proportion of apprenticeship starts by people declaring an LDD in recent years, rising to 12% of starts in 2018/19 from 11.2% in 2017/18 and 10.3% in 2016/17.

To ensure that employers are supported to create new apprenticeship opportunities, we provide targeted financial support directly to training providers to help remove barriers for people with a LDD. This includes paying £150 a month to providers for additional support. In specific circumstances, this amount can rise to a maximum of £19,000 per year where necessary. Providers and employers recruiting an apprentice aged 19 to 24 with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) receive an additional payment of £1000. We also pay 100% of the cost of training for small employers with fewer than 50 employees who take on apprentices who have an EHCP. Disabled apprentices may also receive help from Access to Work to pay for workplace adaptations, job coaches, transport, special equipment and other forms of support.

We are also prioritising sharing good practice. Our Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network has grown to 75 members and brings together employers committed to improving diversity in their apprenticeship programmes, including for those with disabilities:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/apprenticeship-diversity-champions-network>.

We have integrated the Department for Work and Pensions Disability Confident campaign into the apprenticeship recruitment service. Therefore, the Disability Confident logo is displayed on apprenticeship vacancies for registered employers.

■ Art and Design: GCE A-level**Kevin Brennan:**[\[7126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students were entered for A-level art and design in (a) England and (b) each Local Education Authority area in each year since 2010.

Nick Gibb:

The number of pupils entered for art and design A-Levels in England and each Local Education Authority area in each year since 2012 can be found in the table attached. The data for 2010-2012 is not currently available at a granular enough level to allow us to provide either local authority data, or local authority national aggregates, for these years.

The number of pupils entered for art and design A-Levels in England[1] has decreased over that time, but has been relatively stable over the past 3 years, with around 35,000 entries.

[1] England totals derived as per attached spreadsheet, for state funded schools only and the sum of local authority figures. Therefore, these may deviate from published, national figures.

Attachments:

1. 7126_table [7126_table_a_level_art_&_design_entries .pdf]

■ Art and Design: GCSE**Kevin Brennan:**[\[7125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils were entered for art and design GCSE in (a) England and (b) each Local Education Authority area in each year since 2010.

Nick Gibb:

The number of pupils entered for art and design GCSE in England and each Local Education Authority area in each year since 2010 can be found in the excel spreadsheet attached.

The number of pupils entered for art and design GCSEs in England¹ has fluctuated across the last 10 years, but the current year's figure of 155,731 pupils entered is the highest number of pupils entered since 2015, and the second highest of the last 10 years. In 2019, there has been a 10.6% increase in number of pupils entered for art and design GCSEs compared to 2018, and a 5.7% increase compared to 2010.

Any trends observed in the attached figures should be treated with caution and considered against changes in methodology over the ten year period, changes in cohort and more recently, changes in entry behaviour from schools following the introduction of 9-1 reformed GCSEs across all GCSE subjects, including art and design.

Attachments:

1. 7125_table [7125_table_GCSE_art_&_design_entries .pdf]

■ Children: Social Services

Steve Reed:

[7212]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has forecast the number of children in need requiring support from children's services in each of the next five years.

Michelle Donelan:

The Department for Education does not publish forecasts of future demand for children's social care. Comprehensive data on past trends in the numbers and characteristics of children in need are published at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-children-in-need#history>.

In preparation for the Spending Review, to help ensure decisions are based on the best available evidence, the government is working with the sector to develop a sharper and more granular picture of future demand for children's services

And, as set out in the Manifesto, the government is committed to undertaking a review of the care system that covers the key issues facing vulnerable children and young people.

Mr Richard Holden:

[7236]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the (a) value for money of the Pause programme (b) potential merits of introducing (i) that scheme and (ii) similar programmes nationwide.

Michelle Donelan:

Pause was successful in receiving funding through round 1 of the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme to pilot the programme in 7 sites, then in round 2 to scale and spread the programme to 9 new local authority areas.

Evaluation of round 1 of the programme was completed in 2017 and estimated that the yearly cost savings attributed to each child removal that had been avoided were £57,102. The report is published at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-care-pause-programme>.

Evaluation of round 2 ends in March 2020 and is due to be published in the summer. Studies of both rounds use a before and after impact evaluation design to understand women's outcomes at the start and throughout the programme. These findings will inform further decisions about continued scaling up of Pause both within the pilot local authorities and nationwide.

■ Children's Rights

Steve Reed:

[7211]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 22 January 2020 to Question 3230, on Children and Young People, what data his Department holds on the number of times the comprehensive children's rights training package has been undertaken.

Michelle Donelan:

630 civil servants completed this training package between its launch on 20 November 2018 and 31 December 2019.

■ Department for Education: Iron and Steel**Jessica Morden:**[\[5369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of steel procured by his Department was produced in the UK, in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

Based on data available, the Department estimates that the proportion of steel procured by the Department that has been produced in the UK is as follows:

- April 2017 to March 2018 – 45%
- April 2018 to March 2019 – 36%

The above data excludes the tonnage that may have been used for modular projects – which would be minimal given the small quantities of modular schools delivered to date.

Data collection on steel usage, source and type only commenced in 2017 as a result of Procurement Policy Note 15/16, issued by the Cabinet Office.

■ Pupil Exclusions**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[5332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps his Department has taken to support effective interventions to give pupils at risk of exclusion the best chance to remain in schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Government backs head teachers and teachers to create calm and safe schools by giving them the powers they need to enforce discipline. The Department is taking forward an ambitious programme of action on behaviour, exclusion and Alternative Provision which will respect head teachers' powers to use exclusion, enable schools to support children at risk of exclusion, and ensure that excluded children continue to receive support and a good education. This includes the launch of a £10 million 'behaviour hubs' programme this September. The programme will enable schools with exemplary positive behaviour cultures to work closely with schools that need to turn around their behaviour, alongside a central offer of support and a taskforce of advisers, to improve their culture and spread good practice across the country.

■ Sixth Form Education: Finance**Janet Daby:**[\[5550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for sixth form students.

Michelle Donelan:

The government's Spending Round in August 2019 identified the need to increase funding for 16 to 19 year olds' education to ensure that they fulfil their potential and develop the skills that the country needs. That is why we are investing an extra £400 million in 16 to 19 education in the financial year 2020-21.

We will increase the base rate of funding by 4.7%, from £4,000 to £4,188, for the academic year 2020/21. Over and above the base rate rise, this extra spending also includes new resources for high value and high cost courses, as well as funding to support those on level 3 programmes to continue to study English and maths where needed. This is the biggest injection of new money into 16 to 19 education in a single year since 2010, with funding increasing faster for 16 to 19 than in 5 to 16 schooling. We will of course continue to look at the needs of 16 to 19 education in future Spending Reviews.

■ Students: Grants**Caroline Lucas:**[\[5382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing non-repayable maintenance grant funding in (a) further and (b) higher education.

Chris Skidmore:

The independent panel's report on the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding was published in May 2019. The government is considering the recommendations made in the report, including those relating to maintenance support for higher education and further education students. The government will conclude the review alongside the next spending review.

■ Universities: Fire Regulations**Steve Reed:**[\[5444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many university vice-chancellors have replied to his letter of November 2019 on the issue of fire safety procedures and safeguards across university residential, teaching and research accommodation.

Steve Reed:[\[5445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that unsafe combustible cladding is removed from student accommodation.

Chris Skidmore:

We are pleased to see that the engagement with the letter of 18 November from my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education to all 138 higher education institutions has had a 100% response rate.

The safety of pupils, students and staff remains ministers' highest priority. Since the Grenfell fire, the department has worked closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, as part of the cross

government programme to remediate buildings with potentially dangerous cladding, including student accommodation. That approach will continue, and we welcome the package of measures to improve building safety standards announced on 20 January by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. We are already looking at ways to ensure the education estate complies fully with the updated advice to building owners, announced as part of that package, on actions they should take in relation to cladding.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Chemicals: EU Law

Mike Hill:

[\[6745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the number of jobs in the chemicals sector on Teesside of the UK diverging from REACH regulations.

Rebecca Pow:

When we leave the EU we will bring Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) into UK law, retaining what it sets out to achieve including a high level of protection of human health and the environment.

The nature of our future trading relationship with the EU is a matter to be settled during the next phase of negotiations.

The Government published “EU Exit: Long-term economic impacts” in November 2018. This paper provides estimates of the economic impact of a range of future trading relationships with the EU by sector. One of the drivers of this estimate of impact is the cost of potential regulatory divergence.

Mike Hill:

[\[6746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effect of the UK no longer complying with the REACH regulation on the (a) costs and (b) administrative requirements for the chemical industry to continue trading with other EU states.

Rebecca Pow:

When we leave the EU we will bring REACH into UK law, retaining what it sets out to achieve including a high level of protection of human health and the environment.

The nature of our future trading relationship with the EU is a matter to be settled during the next phase of negotiations.

The Government published “EU Exit: Long-term economic impacts” in November 2018. This paper provides estimates of the economic impact of a range of future trading relationships with the EU.

■ Clothing and Textiles: Recycling

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[7275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to (a) support a circular economy for clothing and textiles and (b) create the required infrastructure for fibre-to fibre recycling of garments.

Rebecca Pow:

In the Resources and Waste Strategy for England (2018), the Government committed to develop policy measures to support a circular economy for clothing and textiles. We are currently working with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and industry to develop an ambitious new phase of the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan. We are seeking enabling powers in the forthcoming Environment Bill to develop ecodesign and consumer information requirements subject to consultation to support durable, repairable, and recyclable textiles. We have also identified textiles as a priority area in which to consult on an Extended Producer Responsibility scheme. We are seeking to support closed loop recycling through the WRAP-administered Resource Action Fund. Our plans for shifting towards greater circularity in the textiles sector will be developed and enhanced in a new Waste Prevention Programme on which we will consult this year.

■ Countryside: Access

Michael Fabricant:

[\[6601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department plans to take in relation to proposal 16 of The Landscapes Review, published in September 2019 on expanding open access rights in national landscapes.

Michael Fabricant:

[\[6602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Landscapes Review, published in September 2019, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of open access on water in national landscapes.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government welcomes the Landscapes Review and is now carefully considering its proposals, including those concerning open access. The Government will set out its response in due course.

■ European Chemicals Agency

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[7150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what her policy is on the UK's future working relationship with the European Chemicals Agency after the UK leaves the EU.

Rebecca Pow:

After our exit from the EU on 31 January 2020, the UK will enter into an implementation period. During this period, the UK will remain within the EU

Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) regulatory framework including the European Chemical Agency (ECHA). The nature of our future relationship with the Agency will be determined by the outcome of our negotiations with the EU.

■ **Flood Control: Bosworth**

Dr Luke Evans: [\[7241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to support local authorities in their (a) assessment and (b) future prevention of flooding issues in Bosworth constituency.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is investing £2.6 billion to better protect the country from flooding between 2015 and 2021. This will deliver over 1,000 flood defence schemes, which will better protect 300,000 homes by 2021.

Of the £2.6 billion Defra funding, approximately £650 million will be allocated to local authorities for their defence improvement projects.

Local authorities have access to a range of information provided by the Environment Agency on flood risk from all sources. The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government provides funding to local government to carry out functions including managing flood risk and coastal erosion, through the local government finance settlement.

■ **Flood Control: West Worcestershire**

Harriett Baldwin: [\[6675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with the Environment Agency on the (a) status and (b) future plans for flood alleviation schemes in Severn Stoke and Tenbury Wells in West Worcestershire.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) is continuing to work with partners and the local community to reduce the impacts of flooding in Severn Stoke and is reviewing all delivery options for a full flood defence scheme in Tenbury Wells, including engaging with Local Enterprise Partnerships, businesses and the local authority.

The Government is investing £2.6 billion between 2015 and 2021, delivering over 1,000 schemes to better protect 300,000 homes.

Funding decisions are made on the basis of a rigorous assessment of local needs and the value for money of proposed schemes. Funding for all projects is allocated according to the rules that govern Defra's existing six-year capital programme.

We will continue to work with the EA and HM Treasury to consider future investment needs and the Government's role in supporting the resilience of communities.

■ Horse Racing: Animal Welfare**Chris Evans:****[6091]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent representations officials in her Department have made to the British Horseracing Authority on banning the use of the whip in horseracing.

George Eustice:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Ealing Central and Acton, Dr Rupa Huq, on 20 January 2020 PQ 1916.

Defra officials are in regular dialogue with the British Horseracing Authority to discuss the safety and welfare of racehorses and will continue to work with the industry to safeguard horse welfare.

■ Playing Fields: Rubber**Sir Mike Penning:****[6037]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what research her Department has undertaken into the environmental effect of the spread of rubber granules from artificial grass playing fields.

Rebecca Pow:

Sport England is working with partners including the Sport and Play Construction Association (SAPCA), British Standards Institute (BSI), Institute of Groundsmanship and the NGBs to update guidance on artificial surfaces (Artificial Surfaces for Outdoor Sports) to include recommended measures to help minimise the environmental impact of rubber crumb microplastics. We expect the updated guidance to be published this year.

My department has not commissioned research into the environmental effect of the spread of rubber granules from artificial grass playing fields.

Sir Mike Penning:**[6038]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what alternatives are available to rubber granules used for stabilisation in artificial grass playing fields.

Rebecca Pow:

Rubber granules used as infill on artificial playing fields have been proved to be hard wearing and able to provide sports performance and athlete protection. Sport England isn't aware of any acceptable suitable alternative infill materials that can be used to replace the rubber crumb on existing pitches. This is because the alternatives, such as cork and coconut fibre do not equal performance qualities such as shock absorption and density.

Non-filled long-pile artificial grass surfaces have been developed and introduced to the market, but to date, none have been found to satisfy the sports performance and player welfare requirements of FIFA and World Rugby.

■ Tree Planting: East Sussex

Peter Kyle:

[\[7248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to increase the number of trees planted in (a) Hove and (b) Brighton and Hove.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is developing policies to increase tree planting at a national scale and does not target particular constituencies.

The Government is committed to increasing tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025. The challenges we face to achieve net zero require cross-party support, collaboration with stakeholders and collective vision to mitigate and adapt to climate change. To support this we have announced a new Nature for Climate fund, which will support tree planting in England - our plans for this will be announced at the budget.

The Government currently supports tree planting and woodland creation through a range of existing grant schemes. For example, the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, which plants trees in partnership with local authorities and community organisations. We are working hard to increase the uptake of existing schemes and strongly encourage eligible organisations to do so.

■ Veolia Environment: Conduct

Robert Halfon:

[\[7192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent representations she has received on the conduct of Veolia management in Harlow.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra has not received any representations on the conduct of Veolia management in Harlow.

■ Waste Management: Veolia Environment

Robert Halfon:

[\[7193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many local authorities hold contracts for waste management services with Veolia.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra does not retain a list of Veolia's contracts with local authorities.

All companies that collect waste for local authorities must be registered waste carriers with the Environment Agency and must take that waste to a permitted or registered exempt site. The Environment Agency will hold registration details for these carriers.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ Australasia and Canada: Foreign Relations****Paul Bristow:****[5572]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Australian, Canadian and New Zealand counterparts on a closer relationship with UK after the UK leaves the EU on 31 January 2020.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The UK was pleased to host Commonwealth partners, including Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, at the sixth Commonwealth Trade Ministers' Meeting in London last October. The meeting reaffirmed our shared commitment to deepening trade and investment ties across the Commonwealth and increased cooperation ahead of the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in June 2020.

Australia and New Zealand are close, historic partners. We will continue to deepen ties, including on tackling global challenges, strengthening people to people links and by working for even closer economic relationship through our plans for Free Trade Agreements following our exit from the EU. The relationship with Canada is invaluable to the UK. Our shared history and values make us natural partners

■ Cyprus: British Nationals Abroad**Sir Charles Walker:****[7153]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Cypriot counterpart on ensuring that UK nationals residing in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus will still be able to readily cross the Green Line to (a) use facilities on the Greek Cypriot side of the island of Cyprus and (b) access Larnaca airport for travel after the UK leaves the EU on 31 January 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

The Prime Minister has been consistently clear that safeguarding the rights of United Kingdom nationals living in the EU after Brexit is a priority. The Withdrawal Agreement has now received Royal Assent. Under the terms of this Agreement, United Kingdom nationals will be able to travel freely within the EU until the end of the transition period on 31 December. During this time there will be no change to the rules on travel to, from or within Cyprus for United Kingdom nationals, including motorists crossing the Green Line. On 16 January, I discussed arrangements beyond the end of 2020 with the Cypriot Minister of the Interior, building on discussions that the British High Commissioner in Cyprus has taken forward. On 24 January, the High Commissioner also wrote an open letter to the British community on the latest developments. We will keep United Kingdom nationals updated as we have more information.

■ Far East: Coronavirus

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[6024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the recent coronavirus outbreak in the Far East, what steps he is taking to help protect UK citizens travelling to or from that region from infection.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

[Holding answer 23 January 2020]: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office are advising against all travel to the Hubei Province region and we are working to make available an option for British nationals to leave the area. We continue to monitor developments closely and are in touch with the Chinese authorities.

We encourage all British nationals to monitor our China travel advice page.

■ Iran: Prisoners

Patrick Grady:

[\[6718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to the Government of Iran on the imprisonment of (a) Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani and (b) other Christian prisoners of conscience.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: We have repeatedly expressed our concerns to the Government of Iran at the ongoing incarceration, and the shocking sentencing of Christians for practicing their faith. We welcome the recent release of Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani following his unjust imprisonment, and urge the Iranian authorities to release anyone currently detained based upon their religion or belief.

While Christian minorities are formally protected in the constitution of Iran, the reality is that many non-Muslims face discrimination. We regularly call upon Iran to cease harassment of all religious minorities and to fulfil its international and domestic obligations to protect freedom of religion or belief. Defending persecuted Christians, and persecuted individuals of all faiths or beliefs, remains a priority for the British Government. We will continue to take action, both bilaterally and with the international community, to press Iran to improve its poor human rights record.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[5528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the statement of 18 Dec 2019 by the UK representative to the United Nations Security Council that any suggestion to annex parts of the of the Occupied Palestinian Territories could not pass unchallenged, what steps the Government will take (a) unilaterally, (b) in co-operation with other EU member states and (c) in co-operation with other members of the Security Council to deter any such annexation.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We have made clear our deep concern about the suggestion that any parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territories should be annexed, including during the UN Security Council Open Debate on the Middle East Peace Process on 21 January. Any declaration of a unilateral border change undermines the rules-based international order and the UN Charter. The UK calls on all parties to refrain from actions in contravention of international law that would imperil the viability of a two-state solution, based on the 1967 lines, and make it harder to achieve a just and lasting peace.

Anneliese Dodds:[\[5529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many instances of which the Government is aware have members of the Israeli (a) Government and (b) Knesset suggested that parts or all of the Occupied Palestinian Territories should be annexed by the Israeli Government, since January 2019.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The British Government does not hold this information. We have made clear our deep concern about the suggestion that any parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territories should be annexed. Such a move would be contrary to international law, damaging to peace efforts, and could not pass unchallenged.

■ Israel: West Bank**Anneliese Dodds:**[\[5527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the statement on 18 Dec 2019 of the UK representative to the United Nations Security Council on increased Israeli demolitions of Palestinian structures in the Occupied West Bank, what steps the Government will take (a) unilaterally and (b) in co-ordination with other EU member states to deter future demolitions of donor-funded structures in Area C by the Israeli authorities.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As we made clear in the UN Security Council, we are deeply concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities. Demolitions and evictions of Palestinians from their homes cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; call into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution; and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities, most recently on 17 December 2019, our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. The UK and international partners will continue to call for Israel to abandon demolition plans entirely, and instead provide a transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C. We support Bedouin communities and Palestinians facing demolition or eviction through our legal aid programme. The UK has also allocated £1.1 million to support essential infrastructure for vulnerable Palestinians in Area C.

■ Kenya: al Shabaab

Carla Lockhart:

[\[6147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle rising levels of al-Shabaab violence in North East Kenya.

Andrew Stephenson:

The UK and Kenya are close partners in the fight against global terrorism. To tackle the threat posed by Al Shabaab, the British Government provides the Kenyan authorities with a range of support. The British military is working with the Kenyan security forces to develop their counter terrorism capabilities. This includes partnering in the development of a counter-IED capability with a regional Centre of Excellence based in Nairobi. The UK is also engaging with regional partners to address the threat posed by Al Shabaab beyond North-East Kenya, including by providing pre-deployment training to troops deploying to the African Union Mission in Somalia. These efforts are complemented by UK-funded programmes addressing the root causes of radicalisation and violent extremism along Kenya's coast and the counties bordering Somalia.

We recognise Kenya's sacrifices leading the fight against Al Shabaab. Further strengthening our counterterrorism cooperation is a priority under the UK-Kenya Strategic Partnership agreed on by the Prime Minister and President Kenyatta in their meeting on 21 January.

■ Libya: Young People

Afzal Khan:

[\[6176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) humanitarian situation in Libya and (b) effect of the war in that country on the development of its young people.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

All parties to the conflict must respect the current ceasefire, ensure humanitarian access, and return to the UN-led political process. The Berlin Conference on 19 January, attended by the Prime Minister, showed wide international support for these aims.

The UK provided £1 million to the UN Flash Appeal in 2019. The UN released \$2 million from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in 2019 to provide life-saving assistance to civilians caught up in the fighting, including vulnerable migrants and refugees. The UK was the biggest donor to the CERF in 2018, providing £114.3 million.

■ Moustafa Kassem

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[5393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Egyptian counterpart on the detention and death of Moustafa Kassem in Egypt.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Our thoughts are with Mr Kassem's family. The US Government has taken particular interest in Mr Kassem's case, since he was an American citizen. We regularly raise prison conditions and other human rights issues with the Egyptian Government, as we did through our contribution to Egypt's Universal Periodic Review in November 2019.

■ Russia: Propaganda**Jim Shannon:**[\[5418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle Russian propaganda.

Christopher Pincher:

We continue to challenge Russia's malign activity and abuse of the international rules-based system and remain at the forefront of those opposing that abuse.

In response to the attack in Salisbury, together with our allies, we coordinated the largest ever collective expulsion of Russian intelligence officers, fundamentally degrading Russian intelligence capability for years to come. We also challenge Russia's actions in Ukraine, in Syria, the Western Balkans and in cyber space. The United Kingdom is committed to playing a leading role in continuing sanctions against Russia. Sanctions are one of a range of measures we have taken, in concert with others, to defend our security and enhance our capabilities against Russia's malign activity.

■ Yemen: Peace Negotiations**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[6618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the status of the peace process in Yemen.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: We have been at the forefront of international efforts to reach a political settlement to the conflict in Yemen. The UK has used its role as penholder at the UN Security Council to help push the Yemen peace process forward. In September 2019, the UK co-hosted a political event at the UN General Assembly where UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths briefed his plan to begin political consultations. We welcome the Saudi-brokered Riyadh Agreement and the de-escalation we have seen in the border area in recent months. We are concerned about recent heavy clashes in the Nohm region and fully support the UN Special Envoy's statement of 22 January calling on the parties to adhere to their commitments and avoid further escalation.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Laura Trott:**[\[900441\]](#)

What steps he is taking to improve the NHS capital estate.

Edward Argar:

In September 2019, my Rt. Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care unveiled the Health Infrastructure Plan: a long-term strategic investment programme in the future of our National Health Service.

This included the biggest hospital building programme in a generation: £2.8 billion funding for 40 new hospitals over the next ten years, with six in the first wave (HIP 1), on top of the 20 hospital upgrades announced by the Prime Minister in August 2019.

Cherilyn Mackrory:[\[900442\]](#)

What steps he is taking to increase the recruitment of dentists in rural areas.

Jo Churchill:

We do recognise the recruitment and retention of dentists, particularly in rural areas, is challenging.

I have met with the Chief Dental Officer this week and we are actively looking at how we can increase the number of dentists and improve services access and reach.

This includes our ambitions for the dental workforce in the interim NHS People Plan, which proposes more flexible innovative dental training pathways, and new skill-mix models to increase access to dentistry, particularly in rural areas.

If you want to meet with me please let my office know.

Tahir Ali:[\[900443\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of waiting times for cancer treatment.

Jo Churchill:

Cancer is a priority for the Government.

While survival rates are at a record high, we are committed to going further. We get there through earlier diagnosis, and raising awareness so that more patients are referred quicker for treatment if necessary.

Our dedicated National Health Service workforce diagnosed 31% more cancers, and ensured that 1.5 million more people with suspected cancer were seen by a specialist last year compared to 2010.

Andrew Selous:[\[900444\]](#)

What steps he is taking to help reduce the financial cost to the NHS of treating patients affected by high levels of air pollution.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The best way to reduce National Health Service costs and improve health is by tackling the sources of air pollution, so that less pollution is emitted in the first place. The actions set out in our Clean Air Strategy are targeted at a range of sources and pollutants and will result in the number of people who live in areas where particulate matter is above the World Health Organization's guidelines being halved by 2025.

Alexander Stafford:[\[900447\]](#)

What steps he is taking to improve access to mental health services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

No one should face a long wait to access mental health support.

We committed to investing an extra £2.3 billion a year in mental health services by 2023/24. This will give 380,000 more adults access to psychological therapies and 345,000 more children and young people greater support. We have introduced the first ever access and waiting time standards for mental health, and will be testing and rolling out comprehensive waiting time standards for adults and children.

Ben Everitt:[\[900449\]](#)

What steps he is taking to improve the NHS capital estate.

Edward Argar:

In September 2019, my Rt. Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care unveiled the Health Infrastructure Plan: a long-term strategic investment programme in the future of our National Health Service.

This included the biggest hospital building programme in a generation: £2.8 billion funding for 40 new hospitals over the next ten years, with six in the first wave (HIP 1), on top of the 20 hospital upgrades announced by the Prime Minister in August 2019.

Sir David Amess:[\[900450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care what steps he is taking to improve services provided by community pharmacists.

Jo Churchill:

Through our 'pharmacy first' approach, we want to unlock the potential of community pharmacy.

Our landmark five-year contractual framework sets out an expanded role for community pharmacy to help people stay well closer to home.

This winter, more than 114,000 people with minor illnesses or medication needs have received same-day consultations with their highly skilled local community pharmacist following a new referral service from NHS 111.

■ Abortion

Fiona Bruce:

[\[6067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to help reduce the number of women having more than one abortion.

Caroline Dinéage:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: We want to make sure that everyone – both men and women – can make responsible and informed sexual health decisions. Contraception is free for everyone on the National Health Service and with 15 different methods available, there is a method to suit all health and lifestyle needs. Before discharge from abortion services future contraception should be discussed with all women and contraceptive supplies offered.

■ Abortion: Gender Selection

Fiona Bruce:

[\[6069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure that gender-selective abortions are not carried out in UK.

Caroline Dinéage:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: Sex selection is not one of the lawful grounds for termination of pregnancy. It is illegal for a practitioner to carry out an abortion for that reason alone, unless the certifying practitioners consider that an abortion was justified in relation to at least one of the grounds in the Abortion Act 1967 such as a sex-linked inherited medical condition.

We have no evidence that sex related abortions are taking place in Great Britain. The latest analysis by the Department found that the United Kingdom gender ratio over the period 2013 to 2017 was 105.4 male to 100 female births, which is within the normal boundary. The Department continues to keep this under review.

■ Autism: Health Services

Judith Cummins:

[\[7258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for his Department to publish a response to its Review of the National Autism Strategy.

Caroline Dinéage:

We expect to publish the refreshed all age autism strategy this spring, informed by the key findings from our National Call for Evidence, which was launched on 14 March 2019 and closed on 16 May 2019.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Health Services

Ian Lavery:

[\[5425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the provision of healthcare to UK citizens living in other EU countries after the UK has left the EU.

Edward Argar:

Under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement we have reached with the European Union, there will be no changes to reciprocal healthcare access for pensioners, workers, students, tourists and other temporary visitors from the European Economic Area/Switzerland, the European Healthcare Insurance Card scheme, or planned treatment until 31 December 2020.

Longer term, we are discussing the future of reciprocal healthcare arrangements with the EU.

Regardless of any future healthcare arrangements, United Kingdom nationals that move to the EU and EU citizens that move to the UK before 31 December 2020, will continue to have life-long reciprocal healthcare rights provided they remain within scope of the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement.

■ Care Homes

Jo Stevens:

[\[6715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of trends in the number of people moved from home care into residential care since 2015.

Caroline Dinéage:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: The Department does not hold data on the number of clients moving between long term care settings therefore no assessment has been made.

■ Cervical Cancer: Research

Afzal Khan:

[\[5546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding he has allocated from the public purse to research on (a) cervical cancer and (b) cervical cancer screening in each of the last 12 months.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Department invests £1 billion per year in health research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

NIHR's cancer research expenditure has risen from £101 million in 2010/11 to £132 million in 2018/19. This constitutes the largest investment in a disease area.

As with other Government funders of health research, the NIHR does not allocate funding for specific disease areas. The level of research spend in a particular area, such as cervical cancer, is driven by factors including scientific potential and the number and scale of successful funding applications.

■ Cervical Cancer: Screening

Afzal Khan: [5543]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the uptake of cervical screenings by each classified ethnic group.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not held in the format requested.

The latest data on coverage in the cervical screening programme can be found at the following link.

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/cervical-screening-programme/cervical-screening-programme-coverage-statistics-management-information>

■ Clinical Audit

James Brokenshire: [7155]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what priorities he has set for the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCOPOP) for the delivery of clinical audits; and what oversight arrangements are in place to ensure those priorities are delivered effectively.

James Brokenshire: [7158]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what oversight arrangements are in place to ensure that the work of the Healthcare Quality Improvement Programme is delivered effectively.

James Brokenshire: [7159]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what level of funding has been allocated to the work of (a) the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme and (b) the Healthcare Quality Improvement Programme in (i) financial year 2019-20 and (ii) each of the previous three financial years.

James Brokenshire: [7160]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which clinical and health audits are carried out or maintained through (a) the Healthcare Quality Improvement Programme and (b) the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP) is made up of a number of funding streams comprising over 30 topics and aim to mirror the priority areas set out in the NHS Long Term Plan. The National Quality Board (NQB) established an NQB NCAPOP Partners Group, with representation from NHS England and NHS Improvement, the Care Quality Commission, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and Health Education England, amongst others, to ensure the NCAPOP portfolio continues to support the priorities of the wider National Health Service.

NCAPOP audits are commissioned by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) which manages the programme on behalf of NHS England and NHS Improvement. In addition, NHS England and NHS Improvement have contractual accountability meetings to review the Key Performance indicators associated with the NCAPOP contract.

The following expenditure was provided for NCAPOP in recent years:

- 2016/17; £16.9 million;
- 2017/18; £16.9 million;
- 2018/19; £15.8 million; and
- 2019/20; £15.6 million.

Clinical audits delivered under the NCAPOP portfolio can be found at the following link:

<https://www.hqip.org.uk/a-z-of-nca/#.XAIJvcK7KUK>

NCAPOP outcome review of delivered work can be found at the following link:

<https://www.hqip.org.uk/clinical-outcome-review-programmes/#.XiseTmC7JPY>

■ Dental Services: Children

Imran Hussain: [\[5449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children under ten years old had tooth extractions in Bradford in each year since 2010.

Jo Churchill:

The data is not held in the format requested.

■ Disability Aids

Catherine West: [\[6773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding is available for people who need access to augmentative and alternative communication devices.

Catherine West: [\[6776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have accessed augmentative and alternative communication devices funded from the public purse in each of the last five financial years.

Catherine West: [\[6779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance is given to GPs and CCGs on the availability of augmentative and alternative communication devices.

Caroline Dineneage:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: Information on the funding is available for people who need access to augmentative and alternative communication devices and estimated the number of people who have accessed

augmentative and alternative communication devices which have been funded publicly in each of the last five financial years is not held centrally.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is responsible for creating guidelines on identifying, treating and managing illnesses and reviewing new medical devices for adoption in the National Health Service. For example:

- NICE issued guidance in June 2018 on hearing loss in adults: assessment and management. This includes recommendations on when hearing aids should be offered, how they are to be prescribed and fitted, and other assistive listening devices such as TV amplifiers, personal loops, and doorbell sensors; and
- A guideline on cerebral palsy in under 25s: assessment and management published in January 2017 noted that at least one in 10 young people need augmentative and alternative communication, and one in 10 cannot use formal methods of augmentative and alternative communication because of cognitive and sensory impairments and communication difficulties.

■ Disability: Health Education

Afzal Khan:

[\[5532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to raise awareness hidden disabilities.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Government will publish a National Strategy for Disabled People in 2020 to ensure all disabled people can lead a life of opportunity and fully participate in society.

In addition, National Health Service trusts are taking actions to help improve awareness of hidden disabilities such as:

- Several trusts have signed up to the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard Scheme. Through the wearing of a sunflower lanyard, patients and the public can indicate that they have a hidden disability and that they may require additional assistance; and
- The Accessible Information Standard is a requirement for organisations that provide NHS care or publicly-funded adult social care. It ensures that people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss are provided with information they can easily read or understand, with support, so they can communicate effectively with services.

■ Doctors: Training

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[4720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the destination of doctors completing Foundation Training in each year since 2010; and whether his Department conducts an annual exit survey of doctors completing that training.

Edward Argar:

The UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO) runs a UK Foundation Year 2 (F2) Career Destinations Survey each year on behalf of the four health departments. It captures the self-reported career intentions of F2 doctors who have completed their foundation training across the United Kingdom.

The questions asked in the survey have evolved over time and since 2013 has collected data on reported career destinations, the proportion of doctors progressing into psychiatry and general practice specialty training, doctors who undertook Medical Royal College exams during F2, the numbers of specialty training and service posts being taken up outside the UK, the percentage of doctors leaving the UK, doctors intending to return within five years and doctors who intend to work less than full time.

The UK Foundation Programme Office reports for 2013-2018 are available online at the following link:

<https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/resources/reports/>

■ Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome: Health Education**Afzal Khan:****[5536]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to raise awareness of Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome.

Jo Churchill:

Steps to raise awareness of rare conditions such as Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome are being taken through the implementation of the of the UK Strategy for Rare Diseases, which is available at the following link:

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

The Department published an update to its implementation plan for achieving the commitments in the Strategy in England in February 2019 to coincide with Rare Disease Day, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-strategy-for-rare-diseases-2019-update-to-the-implementation-plan-for-england>

A second update to the implementation plan is due to be published in spring 2020.

■ Electronic Cigarettes: EU Law**Gareth Johnson:****[5401]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to amend the legislation on vaping implemented under the EU Tobacco Products Directive after the UK leaves the EU.

Jo Churchill:

The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 (TRPR) enabled us to introduce measures to regulate e-cigarettes to reduce the risk of harm to children and protect against any risk of renormalisation of tobacco use, provide assurance on relative safety for users, and provide legal certainty for

businesses. The Government has committed to review the TRPR by May 2021 to ensure they are fit for purpose.

■ Health Services: Foreign Nationals

Sarah Owen: [\[7243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to review the functioning of the NHS overseas visitors charging regime; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

The Department works with NHS Improvement and key stakeholders (including health professional bodies) to continuously review the National Health Service overseas visitors charging regime, to ensure it is fit for purpose and in line with current practice.

Sarah Owen: [\[7244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the financial income target is for the two-year Overseas Visitor Improvement Team.

Sarah Owen: [\[7245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on meeting the financial income target for the two-year Overseas Visitor Improvement Team.

Edward Argar:

The Overseas Visitor Improvement Team at NHS Improvement does not have a target; but continues to work to maximise the total income opportunity of correctly identifying and charging overseas visitors to ensure that the National Health Service is fairly funded for this activity.

NHS Improvement also looks to ensure accuracy and consistency of approach across the NHS Overseas Visitors Charging Regime.

■ Health Services: Shropshire

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[5370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what effect the delay of the Future Fit investment into Shropshire has had on staffing and retention at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[5371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what powers he has to ensure that (a) spending on and (b) improvements to Shropshire's health services under the Future Fit programme take place.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[5372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of amending the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to ensure that Shropshire is allocated funding from the Future Fit programme.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[5373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of nursing shifts at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital are being completed by agency nurses.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[5374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what effect the delay to Future Fit has had on recruitment at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

Edward Argar:

In March 2018 the Government backed the Future Fit proposals with £312 million. Release of this funding is subject to the usual business case approvals process, which includes approval by Departmental Ministers and HM Treasury.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has formal decision-making powers relating to service change under Regulation 23(9) of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny Regulations) 2013. Where a local authority has referred a reconfiguration to him, the Secretary of State may make a final decision on the proposals and give directions to NHS England and NHS Improvement. On 2 October 2019 the Secretary of State communicated his decision that the Future Fit proposals should proceed, whilst keeping the accident and emergency (A&E) at the Princess Royal Hospital open as an A&E Local. On 6 January 2020, he also directed NHS England to work with the clinical commissioning groups and Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH) to implement the A&E Local model.

The National Health Service has made recommendations on the legislation changes it would like to see and the Department is considering those proposals.

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust has faced staffing challenges in A&E departments and critical care services. Both this and an increase in attendances at the Emergency Department has resulted in doctors being on-call more frequently and working extra hours across two hospital sites. It has also been necessary to recruit temporary staff.

For the month of December 2019, 14.38% of nursing hours worked across both the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and Princess Royal Hospital, were staffed from agency.

The reconfiguration will address staffing challenges, by consolidating some emergency services onto one site and reducing duplication. The Future Fit proposals aim to deliver high quality, safe services for all patients for the long term. Achieving this will support the recruitment of the right level of highly skilled doctors, nurses and other healthcare staff.

■ Hypertension: Females

Jim Shannon:

[5416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with health bodies on treatment options for women with high blood pressure.

Jo Churchill:

No recent meetings on that specific topic have been held. NHS England and NHS Improvement are focusing on the prevention of cardiovascular disease (CVD) for both men and women, with a commitment to earlier detection and treatment of risk factors monitored by the introduction of a national CVD prevention audit. NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that treatment options for women with hypertension are generally the same as for men with the condition, apart from specific situations such as hypertension in pregnancy.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has guidelines on hypertension diagnosis and treatment, including in relation to women. NG136 (hypertension in adults: diagnosis and management, August 2019) covers the identification and treatment of primary hypertension in people aged 18 and over, and includes a specific recommendation for the offer of antihypertensive drug treatment to women of childbearing potential with diagnosed hypertension. NG136 aims to reduce the risk of cardiovascular problems by helping healthcare professionals to diagnose hypertension accurately and treat it effectively.

NG133 (hypertension in pregnancy: diagnosis and management, June 2019) covers the diagnosis and management of hypertension, including pre-eclampsia, during pregnancy, labour and birth, and includes advice for women with hypertension who wish to conceive and women who have had a pregnancy complicated by hypertension. NG133 aims to improve care during pregnancy, labour and birth for women and their babies.

The NHS Health Check helps eligible people aged 40-74 to reduce their future risk of having a heart attack or stroke and includes a test for blood pressure. Research shows that women are more likely to have an NHS Health Check, with over 3.4 million women having a check between April 2012 and March 2018.

■ NHS England: Directors

Jonathan Ashworth:

[4742]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the levels of (a) local, (b) regional and (c) other directors are structured in NHS England/NHS Improvement.

Edward Argar:

NHS England/NHS Improvement's structure can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/nhs-executive-group/>

Information about the regional and local teams can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/regional-area-teams/>

■ NHS: Agency Workers

Jeremy Hunt:

[6630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the NHS spent on (a) agency staff, (b) agency nurses and (c) locum doctors in each of the last five years.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: In 2018/19, trusts spent around £2.40 billion on agency staff – £200 million more than the £2.2 billion target, and about the same as the previous year. Since April 2017, agency costs have consistently been below 5% of overall pay costs and have now fallen to 4.4%. The continued reduction in the proportion of agency staff costs to total pay bill is a significant achievement in view of the record levels of demand and the extreme pressure on the acute sector.

The information requested is shown in the following table.

| - | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total agency spend | £3,189,590,000 | £3,631,790,000 | £2,934,819,560 | £2,406,798,108 | £2,399,645,137 |
| Staff group | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
| Medical-agency spend | - | - | £1,049,273,727 | £949,883,470 | £937,864,774 |
| Nursing-agency spend | - | - | £966,198,378 | £808,661,687 | £843,282,221 |

We do not hold staff group data for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

■ NHS: Buildings

Steve Reed:

[6116]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many buildings across the National Health Service estate currently have Aluminium Composite Material cladding.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: The safety of patients, visitors and staff has always been the top priority of the National Health Service. Across the National Health Service, there are nine buildings identified as having Aluminium Composite Material cladding. These include residential buildings

over two storeys and non-residential ones over 18 metres. This cladding is being remediated by the trusts that are responsible for the buildings.

■ NHS: Expenditure

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[4739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 4 February 2019 to Question 214552, how much NHS England and clinical commissioning groups have spent in aggregate on (a) primary medical services, (b) community health services, (c) continuing healthcare and (d) other main areas of healthcare in each year since 2015-16; and how much those organisations plan to spend in aggregate in each of those areas in 2019-20.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[4740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 4 February 2019 to Question 214552, how much NHS England and clinical commissioning groups have spent in aggregate on (a) mental health services and (b) acute health services, (c) social care services and (d) other main areas of spending in each year since 2015-16; and how much those organisations plan to spend in aggregate in each of those areas in 2019-20.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is attached.

Attachments:

1. pq4739 4740 table [pq4739 4740 table.docx]

■ NHS: Public Bodies

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[4741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many whole-time-equivalent employees including payroll and non-payroll staff there were in (a) NHS England, (b) Monitor and (c) the NHS Trust Development Authority in January (i) 2015, (ii) 2019 and (iii) 2020.

Edward Argar:

Figures are provided for January in each year:

NHS England

2015 – 6,033

2019 – 5,989

2020 – 5,585

NHS Trust Development Authority

2015 – 291

2019 – 1,241

2020 – 1,605

Monitor

2015 – 218

2019 – 333

2020 – 148

■ NHS: Staff

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[6606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the NHS People Plan.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: The National Health Service published the interim NHS People Plan on 3 June 2019. It sets out the long-term vision and immediate actions to meet the challenges of supply, reform, culture and leadership.

The final NHS People Plan will be published by the NHS in early 2020 and will set out a clear framework for collective action on workforce priorities, with a focus on growing and sustaining a well-skilled workforce across the whole NHS.

■ Nottingham City Hospital: Heating

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[7292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on eliminating the use of coal for heating at City Hospital, Nottingham; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

According to published data from the Estates Return Information Collection, Nottingham City Hospital consumed 30 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of coal in 2018-19. This is a reduction of 50% when compared to the corresponding figure for 2014-15 (60 million). Data is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/estates-returns-information-collection/england-2018-19>

The Government recognises the importance of reducing usage of non-renewable energy sources by public sector organisations, both in terms of meeting its commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and reducing levels of air pollution. The National Health Service is taking several actions to support this, including the phasing out of primary heating from coal and oil fuel in NHS sites. Investment requirements to further transform the NHS estate will be considered as part of the multi-year capital budget the Department will receive at the next capital review.

■ Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust: Repairs and Maintenance

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[6665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding is available to Nottingham University Hospitals Trust to tackle its maintenance backlog.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: Individual National Health Service organisations are responsible for maintaining their estates. NHS provider organisations invest more than £3 billion of capital annually. 2019-20 NHS planning guidance makes clear that providers should ensure capital investments are consistent with their clinical strategies and how they demonstrate the delivery of safe, productive services.

We recognise the challenge for providers in maintaining their existing estates and investing in new facilities. In August 2019, we announced £1.8 billion of additional funding, which included a £1 billion boost to NHS capital spending, allowing existing upgrade programmes to proceed and tackling the most urgent infrastructure projects.

■ Postnatal Depression: Prisoners**Jim Shannon:**[\[5421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what post-natal (a) depression and (b) trauma support is available for women in custody.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have developed a specific perinatal pathway across the entire estate, which will support women for twelve months pre and post-delivery providing specialist midwives within the secure environment, including mental health midwifery services and specialist substance misuse midwifery services. The expectation is that this pathway will begin to be fully rolled out across the estate from 2020 onwards.

All services across the secure estate are working to a trauma informed agenda. All service providers should be aware that any patient might have previous trauma that impacts on their presentation and experience of services. Care should be taken that potential trauma is taken account of in all interventions with an individual. Any intervention must be made in a way that prevents triggering or re-traumatising an individual during engagement.

■ Rare Diseases: Research**Afzal Khan:**[\[5535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to build on the UK Strategy for Rare Diseases to ensure the UK remains a world leader in research and innovation.

Jo Churchill:

In October 2019 a survey targeting those living and working with rare diseases was launched by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation (Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford) to gather views about the major challenges faced by the rare disease community. The survey was open for six weeks and the responses will be used to feed in to the development of a framework to follow the UK Strategy for Rare Diseases after 2020.

The National Genomic Healthcare Strategy, due to be published in Spring 2020, will seek to create alignment between the United Kingdom's world

leading genomics assets and map out a clear direction of travel over the next five to 10 years that will enable the genomics community to drive forward innovation for the benefit of patients, including those with rare diseases.

■ **Royal Bournemouth Hospital: Accident and Emergency Departments**

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[7114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2020 to Question 944 on Royal Bournemouth Hospital: Accident and Emergency Departments, what the annual capacity of each hospital was in 2019.

Edward Argar:

We cannot provide the annual capacity in 2019 as there is no agreed current or historic physical capacity information for accident and emergency departments.

■ **Social Services: North West**

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[6608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of unmet demand for adult social care in each of the last 10 years in (a) the North West, (b) Liverpool city region, (c) Wirral and (d) Wallasey.

Caroline Dinenage:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: The Government has made no such assessment. It is the responsibility of local authorities to commission social care services to meet the needs of people in their areas.

The Government has enshrined in legislation, through the Care Act 2014, that local authorities have a statutory responsibility to meet the eligible needs of people in their area.

Social care is a key priority which is why the Government has given councils access to up to £1.5 billion more dedicated funding for social care next year.

■ **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**

Gareth Johnson: [\[5399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to represent the UK at the 9th Conference of the Parties to the World Health Organisation's Framework of Convention for Tobacco Control; and whether his Department plans to advocate within that forum for the UK position that vaping products are an effective smoking cessation tool.

Gareth Johnson: [\[5400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that in advance of the 9th Conference of the Parties to the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control the WHO and its Europe region endorse the UK position that vaping products are an effective smoking cessation option.

Jo Churchill:

Departmental officials will be attending the 9th World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Conference of the Parties (CoP) as is usual practice for such events. At the CoP, officials would expect to set out the United Kingdom Government's position on vaping.

HOME OFFICE**■ Asylum: Applications****Alex Norris:****[7250]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average wait time is for people awaiting an initial asylum decision; and what plans her Department has to reduce that time.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office does not publish data on the average time taken to make an initial decision on an asylum application.

However, the Home Office does publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision, by duration for more or less than 6 months. This data can be found at Asy_04, of the published Immigration Statistics September 2019:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2019/list-of-tables#asylum-and-resettlement>

The Home Office are committed to ensuring that asylum claims are considered without unnecessary delay, to ensure that individuals who need protection are granted asylum as soon as possible and can start to integrate and rebuild their lives, including those granted on appeal.

Whilst we take steps to increase capacity and focus on process improvements to deliver better quality decisions more efficiently, we have moved away from the 6-month service standard to concentrate on older claims, cases with acute vulnerability and those in receipt of the greatest level of support, including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). Additionally, we are prioritising cases where an individual has already received a decision, but a reconsideration is required. The intention is for this approach to bring balance back to the asylum system.

Alex Norris:**[7252]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of (a) the adequacy of Section 95 support for those awaiting an asylum decision and (b) the potential merits of restoring the right to work for applicants who have waited for six months or more for a decision on an asylum claim.

Victoria Atkins:

Asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute are provided with free accommodation and a cash allowance to cover their other essential living needs. The level of the allowance, currently set at £37.75 per week for each

person in the household, is reviewed regularly to ensure that it is adequate, taking account of various sources of information, including Office of National Statistics (ONS) data about spending by low income groups on food and other essential items. Fresh ONS data is expected to be published in the next few months and the allowances will be reviewed again at that point.

Asylum seekers can work in jobs on the Shortage Occupation List if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own.

■ Biometrics

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[5357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with Police and Crime Commissioner's on the future usage of facial recognition technology in law enforcement.

Kit Malthouse:

I have regular discussions with Police and Crime Commissioners about a range of issues. The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners is represented on the Law Enforcement Facial Images and New Biometrics Oversight and Advisory Board. The Board's terms of reference and minutes are published on GOV.UK

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[5358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what legislation is in place to regulate the use of facial recognition technology after the UK leaves the EU.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[5360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of whether legislation regulating the use of facial recognition technology is compatible with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Kit Malthouse:

The High Court found that there is a clear and sufficient legal framework for police use of live facial recognition (LFR) in England & Wales. This framework, which includes the common law powers available to a constable for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime, Part 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act and the Surveillance Camera Code, will not change as a result of the UK leaving the EU.

Private sector use of LFR is governed by the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation. These laws impose strict obligations on both controllers and processors who handle the images obtained via the use of live facial recognition technology.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[5359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department undertook an internal inquiry into the use of facial recognition technology by Argent LLP around King's Cross station.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office has not undertaken an inquiry into the use of LFR in the King's Cross area of central London. The Information Commissioner's Office, which is independent of government, is currently investigating this.

Police

Louise Haigh: [\[5476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what long-term priorities for operational focus and investment have been established between her Department and the National Police Chiefs' Council through the Policing Board.

Kit Malthouse:

The National Policing Board has been established to help ensure all parts of the policing system work together to establish a strategic vision and take an overview of strategic investment decisions in order to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public and make our streets safer. Investment in policing will allow forces to recruit 20,000 additional officers over the next three years; the National Policing Board will ensure we deliver on that commitment.

Alongside this we are in the process of finalising a series of desired crime outcomes which will be blended with local priorities set by Police and Crime Commissioner.

Police: Finance

Louise Haigh: [\[5477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to publish the provisional police funding settlement for 2020-21.

Kit Malthouse:

The 2020-21 final Police Funding Settlement was laid before the House on [Wednesday 22 January] and includes details of Police Grant levels for each force in England and Wales.

Windrush Generation: Compensation

Neil Coyle: [\[7217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications have been made to the Windrush Compensation Scheme to date.

Neil Coyle: [\[7218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applicants to the Windrush Compensation Scheme (a) have received compensation, (b) have had their application declined and (c) are still awaiting a decision.

Neil Coyle: [\[7219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of (a) the amount of compensation awarded under the Windrush Compensation Scheme to date and (b) the average amount of compensation awarded per application under that scheme.

Kevin Foster:

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

We do not intend to publish information on the time taken between a claim being submitted and a decision or a payment being made on that claim – all claims are different, and the time taken will depend on many factors, including its complexity. We also often resolve part of a claim ahead of the rest of it if that part can be resolved more quickly, thereby speeding up the provision of compensation.

Neil Coyle:**[7259]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to promote the Windrush Compensation Scheme to potential applicants.

Kevin Foster:

Evidence and feedback from stakeholders has found that face-to-face communication is the preferred way to engage with affected communities on this issue. We work with key partners, community groups (faith and non-faith) and local councils to identify opportunities to both deliver, and to promote engagement events for people who have been affected, through our own communication channels as well as their own. This includes publication of events on gov.uk, promotion through social media and where appropriate, press releases and local press advertisements. Communications toolkits have also been sent to over 70 stakeholders as well as local authorities. Over 30 local engagement events have taken place across the UK between April and December 2019 at which members of the Taskforce and the Compensation Scheme have been present to explain what help and support is available to those affected and how to make a compensation claim.

The Home Office has also worked with Member of Parliament to arrange events in their constituencies and would welcome further opportunities to do so.

Following extensive engagement with Home Office staff and the diversity network, a staff volunteer network was established in May 2018, which has become a significant channel for outreach into affected communities. This network now has around 130 staff volunteers who engage with their own communities to promote the scheme.

To further inform our activity, we have also set up a Windrush Stakeholder Advisory Group to bring together influential community leaders across the country and seek their advice on our communications and engagement strategy to promote the Windrush Compensation Scheme. The group was launched by the Home Secretary at a roundtable on 26 September 2019 and met again on 9 December 2019. The group will work collaboratively with the aim of having constructive dialogue and achieving tangible outcomes for the benefit of those affected.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Buildings: Fire Extinguishers****John Healey:**[\[5327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate has made of the (a) number of new buildings each year that will be required to fit sprinklers in the event that the height threshold for sprinklers is reduced to 11 metres and (b) cost to developers of that work.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 23 January 2020]: We estimate that reducing the sprinkler height threshold from 30 metres to 18 metres as a requirement in new build blocks of flats will mean 1,970 new builds fitting sprinkler systems over 10 years, with an annual cost of between £27 million to £38 million. Reducing the height threshold further to, for example, 11 metres would mean 15,940 new buildings fitting systems over 10 years, with an annual cost of between £136 million and £193 million. A full impact assessment will be published alongside any future announcements.

■ Buildings: Fire Prevention**Steve Reed:**[\[5441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an estimate of the amount spent by leaseholders in England on waking watches in buildings awaiting the completion of remedial fire safety works since the Grenfell Tower fire.

Esther McVey:

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

■ Buildings: Fires**Steve Reed:**[\[7209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 21 January 2020 to Question 1897 on Buildings: Fires, for what reasons the Government commissioned Building Research Establishment to produce the report on External Fire Spread.

Esther McVey:

This work was commissioned as part of an ongoing contract relating to the investigation of fires.

■ Buildings: Insulation**Steve Reed:**[\[4349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the letter of 10 May 2018 from David Metcalfe and Dr Stephen

Ledbetter of the Centre for Window and Cladding Technology to the Chair of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, whether following the referenced 2014 meeting to discuss fire performance of facades including the issue of combustible materials his Department agreed that the Building Research Establishment would draft a Frequently Asked Questions document that would confirm that the requirement for limited combustibility would be extended to cladding panels.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 21 January 2020]: The steps which the Department took in relation to the guidance in Approved Document B are matters for the public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire.

Hilary Benn:

[\[4709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the standard private sector ACM remediation contracts agreed with the responsible entity for each site includes clauses that (a) relate to comments on government policy and (b) seek recovery of monies from the leaseholders; and if he will place a copy the standard contract in the Library.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 22 January 2020]: There are no provisions within the private sector ACM remediation funding agreement which affect applicants' ability to comment on government policy. The private sector remediation fund will protect leaseholders from bearing the cost of remediation, and there are clauses within the funding agreement to ensure this.

John Healey:

[\[5329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his oral statement of 20 January 2020, how many additional buildings will be affected by the statement that ACM cladding with an unmodified polyethylene core should not be used on buildings at any height.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 23 January 2020]: This information in relation to residential buildings is not currently held by the Department.

Steve Reed:

[\[7213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 22 January 2020, to Question 4752, on Buildings Insulation, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that building owners rather than leaseholders are financially liable for the remediation of unsafe timber cladding.

Esther McVey:

Building safety is the responsibility of the building owner, and they must remedy any safety risks uncovered. Building owners should consider all routes to meet costs, protecting leaseholders where they can – for example through warranties and recovering costs from contractors for incorrect or poor work.

We are aware of the concerns of leaseholders about meeting the cost of remediation. We do not want the cost to be a barrier to remediation, so the

Department is considering options to support leaseholders with Her Majesty's Treasury.

■ Buildings: Safety

John Healey:

[\[5330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his oral statement of 20 January 2020 in relation to the commissioning of a matrix of risk that will (a) replace the existing system and (b) underpin future regulatory regimes, who he plans to commission to undertake that work; if he will publish the terms of reference for that work; and what the timeframe is for the (i) completion and (ii) publication of that work.

Esther McVey:

We are working closely with the Protection board and the Independent Expert Advisory Panel on this work. The Department has recently published a call for evidence asking for information on how to prioritise risk in existing buildings. Following from the call for evidence we will commission a comprehensive research program in March. The specification for this work will be published in accordance with standard procurement procedures.

■ High Rise Flats: Fire Regulations

Steve Reed:

[\[5439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2020 to Question 1018 on High Rise Flats: Fire Regulations, whether he is aware of any alternative measurements of the height of the Cube building in Bolton that caught fire in 2019.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 23 January 2020]: BRE Global Limited's measurements show that the height of the top occupied storey from ground level is 17.8 metres.

The height of the top occupied storey is measured in accordance with Diagram D6 of Approved Document B. This approach is also used in the ban of combustible materials in the external walls of buildings, the Independent Expert Advisory Panel's Advice Note and to assess the eligibility to the cladding remediation fund. We have also been informed by BRE that the distance between ground level and the underside of the roof is approximately 21 meters.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

Steve Reed:

[\[5443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the similarities between the cladding and insulation systems used on the Cube building in Bolton that caught fire in 2019 and on Lakanal House.

Esther McVey:

As part of the investigation, BRE will report known related incidents which have similarities to the fire in Bolton Cube building.

■ **Members: Correspondence****Steve Reed:**[\[7215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to respond to the letter of 20 December 2019 from the hon. Member for Croydon North in regard to the remediation of decorative wooden cladding on Radnor House.

Esther McVey:

A response was sent on 28 January.

■ **Right to Buy Scheme****Rachael Maskell:**[\[2659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much money local authorities have (a) retained and (b) returned to the Government in right to buy receipts in each year since 2012-13.

Esther McVey:

The following receipts arising from Right to Buy sales made in each of the following financial years are currently retained by English local authorities:

2012-2013: £236,920,130.34

2013-2014: £570,685,987.04

2014-2015: £721,393,565.02

2015-2016: £697,584,949.20

2016-2017: £871,903,613.22

2017-2018: £857,884,462.47

2018-2019: £721,239,679.49

The following receipts arising from Right to Buy sales made in each of the following financial years have been returned by English local authorities to the Government:

2012-2013: £130,617,318.95

2013-2014: £179,476,121.32

2014-2015: £211,246,008.53

2015-2016: £288,779,009.85

2016-2017: £269,938,950.09

2017-2018: £196,041,811.99

2018-2019: £184,405,064.41

All figures are provisional.

■ Social Rented Housing: Insulation

Caroline Lucas:

[\[4327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number of residential properties in England owned by social housing providers that (a) are less than 18 metres in height and (b) have combustible materials in their external walls.

Esther McVey:

This information is not held. Information on social sector buildings above 18 metres with ACM cladding is published in the monthly Building Safety Data Release.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Consultation Papers

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[7117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish the consultation paper on the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Jake Berry:

The Government recognises the importance of reassuring local areas on the future of local growth funding as we leave the European Union and of providing clarity on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The Government has been working closely with interested parties across the UK whilst developing the fund. Government officials have held 25 engagement events across the UK, attended by over five hundred representatives from a breadth of sectors, which has helped inform progress on policy design

We will come forward with further details in due course.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund: North West

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[7116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what proportion of the shared prosperity fund will be allocated to (a) the North West and (b) Wirral.

Jake Berry:

Following our departure from the European Union, the 2019 Conservative Manifesto has committed to creating a UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which binds together the whole of the United Kingdom, tackling inequality and deprivation in each of our four nations, and at a minimum match the size of European Structural Funds in each nation.

The Fund will invest in UK priorities and tackle inequalities between communities by raising productivity, especially in those parts of the UK whose economies are furthest behind.

However, the Government has been clear final decisions about the design of the Fund must take place after a cross-government Spending Review.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Gaza: Humanitarian Situation****Andy Slaughter:**[\[7154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment he has made of the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire. The UN reports that unemployment is at 45 percent, with youth unemployment at over 60 percent. Some 46 percent of the population live below the US\$5.50 poverty line and an estimated 60 percent of households are food insecure. The health service is severely overburdened and reliable access to clean water and electricity remains challenging.

DFID will provide £16m in humanitarian assistance to Gaza in 2019/20. This is supporting the health system, including improved trauma care, and contributing to emergency food aid for around 1.2 million vulnerable people. To help address the underlying causes of the humanitarian situation we are investing to build the capacity of Gaza's water and energy services and to address barriers to trade. Ultimately, Gaza's immense challenges can only be resolved with a political solution that delivers peace, stability and the easing of movement and access restrictions.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia****Caroline Lucas:**[\[5383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Answer of 29 October 2019 to Question 2947 on Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia, what her timescale is for completing the work re-taking decisions on whether to grant export licences for the sale or transfer of arms and military equipment to Saudi Arabia for possible use in the conflict in Yemen on the correct legal basis; and if she will make a statement.

Graham Stuart:

The Government continues to consider carefully the implications of the Court of Appeal Judgment for decision making and is progressing the work to enable the re-taking of decisions on the correct legal basis. No specific timetable has been set for this work to be concluded.

■ Trade Agreements: China**Shabana Mahmood:**[\[7604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has held discussions with her Chinese counterpart on alleged human rights violations against Uighur Muslims as part of negotiation on a trade deal with that country.

Conor Burns:

We remain committed to promoting human rights in Xinjiang, and the Government's continued multilateral and bilateral activity with China demonstrates this.

We are not currently negotiating a free trade agreement with China. China is an important trading partner for the UK.

■ Trade Agreements: Human Rights**Shabana Mahmood:**[\[7605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether a country's record on human rights is a criterion in discussions on potential trade deals to be secured after the UK leaves the EU.

Conor Burns:

The UK has long supported the promotion of our values globally and we remain committed to our international obligations. We are clear that more trade does not have to come at the expense of human rights.

Our experience is that political freedom and the rule of law are vital underpinnings for both prosperity and stability and that, by having strong economic relationships with partners, we are able to have open discussions on a range of difficult issues, including human rights.

■ UK Export Finance: Audit**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[7291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department most recently reviewed the adequacy of audit arrangements for recipients of UK export finance.

Conor Burns:

UK Export Finance (UKEF) is aware of its obligations to protect taxpayer money from involvement in corrupt activity, but UKEF is not an auditor. UKEF does require as part of its contractual rights, a right to inspect the records of any recipient of support. These rights of inspection would generally be exercised on a sampling basis, but also, if specific knowledge requires, they can be performed at any time.

JUSTICE**■ Crime: Victims****Jim Shannon:**[\[5420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if his Department will provide additional support for victims of crime post-appeal decision to ensure continuity of service from support workers and counsellors rather than being transferred over to NHS-based services.

Wendy Morton:

The Government is committed to ensuring better service integration between statutory services like the NHS and the third sector to provide joined-up care and support victims need to cope and recover. As part of our current review of the Victims' Code, we will ensure that support services are better tailored to meet the needs of victims. This includes raising awareness that victims can continue to access support services at the conclusion of their case and any appeals.

Family Courts: Security Staff**Jim Shannon:**[\[5422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the number of security staff at family courts.

Chris Philp:

HM Courts & Tribunals Service keeps the security arrangements at its court and tribunal buildings under close review and we are satisfied that appropriate provision is in place to ensure that all of our sites are safe for our users.

We have re-procured our security contract from April this year, which will enhance the day to day security provision at courts and tribunals. The new contract will allow for improved monitoring of security in our sites and will provide opportunities to enhance the training of security staff.

Legal Aid Scheme**Jim Shannon:**[\[5419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if his Department will include women unable to afford a divorce without access to legal aid as part of his Department's review of the financial eligibility thresholds for people seeking legal aid.

Wendy Morton:

The Legal Support Action Plan (published in February 2019) announced a review of the legal aid means tests for England and Wales, which is currently underway and expected to conclude in Summer 2020 with a public consultation on potential policy changes to follow.

The Means Test Review is considering the thresholds for legal aid entitlement and their interaction with the wider eligibility criteria and is assessing the effectiveness with which the civil and criminal means tests protect access to justice, particularly for those who are vulnerable, such as victims of domestic abuse.

Divorce proceedings are not usually in scope for legal aid, other than when there is evidence of domestic abuse or child abuse. The Means Test Review is not considering changes to what is in scope for legal aid, however some divorce cases may qualify for legal aid under the existing Exceptional Funding Scheme, where there is a breach (or a risk of breach) of the individual's human rights.

In addition, The Family Legal Team at Royal Courts of Justice Advice provide free and confidential legal advice to anyone in England and Wales who is not

able to afford a solicitor. Litigants who feel they cannot afford the tribunal fee for their divorce proceeding may apply to the Ministry of Justice fee remissions scheme: Help with Fees.

■ Parole

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[7110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners serving IPP sentences have been the subject of recall appeals which are still awaiting determination; and what is the longest period for which any appellant has been waiting.

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[7111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make it his policy to set a maximum period within which an oral hearing for an appeal against recall on an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence must be heard; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

There is no formal appeal mechanism for any offender following recall from licensed supervision in the community. Consequently, no recalled IPP prisoner is awaiting the outcome of an appeal against recall and the concept of a recalled prisoner awaiting the outcome of an appeal does not apply.

However, whilst there is no appeal mechanism, every recalled Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoners has a right to a review of his/her fresh period of detention on recall, and it falls to the independent Parole Board to undertake that review – that is, to assess when it is safe to re-release the recalled IPP prisoner into the community on licence. The Board is required to conduct post-recall reviews without undue delay, but there is no set maximum period within which a review must be completed.

Officials on behalf of the Secretary of State refer the cases of recalled offenders to the Parole Board within 28 days of their return to custody; it is for the independent Parole Board to determine how and when reviews will be conducted. The timing of a review will depend on the nature and circumstances of each case, having particular regard to what information is necessary to conduct the full risk assessment required to determine whether the offender is safe to be re-released. Recalled offenders have the right to submit representations to the Parole Board, against the decision to recall them, as part of the review process.

Public safety is the priority and the Parole Board may only direct release once it is satisfied that detaining the offender is no longer necessary for the protection of the public.

■ Prisoners: Disability and Older People

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[5486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he has taken to ensure that (a) elderly people and (b) elderly disabled people have access to high-quality social care in prisons in (i) Wales and (ii) England.

Lucy Frazer:

The Care Act 2014 and the equivalent Welsh legislation, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, clarified that local authorities in England and Wales are responsible for undertaking assessments and making arrangements to meet eligible needs for social care for those people residing in prisons, approved premises and bail accommodation within their geographical boundary. Under the legislation, the threshold for eligibility for care and support services in prisons in both England and Wales is the same as for people who are living in the community, and this applies whether or not they are disabled. Local authorities need to have processes in place to respond to referrals, undertake assessments and deliver care for those in prison settings. Prison custodial services, healthcare services and individuals with needs can all make a referral for assessment.

In September 2018, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and the Care Quality Commission carried out a joint thematic report on Social Care in Prisons in England and Wales. The review identified several examples of good practice but also wide variations in the provision of social care to prisoners across the prison estate. In response, HMPPS published an action plan in December 2018, setting out its response to the recommendations in the joint thematic report. A programme of work is underway to deliver this response. For example, memoranda of understanding have been put in place between many prisons and local authorities. Work is progressing towards establishing a national partnership social care board for prisons, which is expected to sit later this year.

■ Reoffenders**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[7112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to prevent such prisoners being released with a drug dependency being subject to immediate recall as a result of that drug dependency.

Lucy Frazer:

The decision to recall an offender from the community, whether that be from an indeterminate or a determinate licence, is based on a thorough assessment of risk in the round, and a relapse into substance misuse is not necessarily a justification for recalling the offender immediately. The Probation Service will take into account the individual circumstances of each case and will consider alternatives to recalling offenders from the community where appropriate, based on the level of risk the offender poses.

Those with drug dependency problems often have complex needs, particularly health needs that benefit best from cross-organisation co-operation. Health and justice partners are working closely to improve support and continuity of care when an offender leaves prison, and this is one of the three overarching objectives of the National Partnership Agreement between HM Prison and Probation Service, Ministry of Justice, Public Health England, NHS England and Department of Health and Social Care.

Protection of the public is our priority, and offenders will be recalled to prison if that is assessed as necessary to protect the public from further serious offending.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Devolution: Northern Ireland

Claire Hanna:

[\[6772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to paragraphs 13-15 of Annex A of the Government's document entitled, New Decade, New Approach, published on 9 January 2020, what the timeframe is for those commitments to be taken forward; and what legislative vehicle will be used to take those commitments forward.

Julian Smith:

The Home Office intends to change the UK's Immigration Rules so that family members of the people of Northern Ireland can apply for immigration status on broadly the same terms as family members of Irish citizens and will open the route as soon as delivery allows.

■ Nationality: Northern Ireland

Claire Hanna:

[\[6771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how a citizen of Northern Ireland can legally express their right under the Good Friday Agreement to identify as (a) Irish, (b) British and (c) both.

Julian Smith:

The Government remains firmly committed to upholding the Belfast Agreement and the rights it protects, including the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British or both, as they may so choose, and the right to hold both British and Irish citizenship. In line with this commitment, the people of Northern Ireland are legally able to hold Irish or British citizenship or both. Further, their right to identify as Irish, British or both is facilitated by the Common Travel Area arrangements, under which the people of Northern Ireland are not required to assert and choose a specific citizenship or identity in order to live, work, study and access public services and other entitlements in the UK.

SCOTLAND

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Scotland

Andrew Bowie:

[\[6724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on whether funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be available to local authorities in Scotland.

Mr Alister Jack:

Officials in my Department meet regularly with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to discuss how the UK Shared Prosperity Fund can be designed to support local communities in Scotland. We have also run 5 stakeholder engagement events in Scotland in order to aid policy development, in partnership with MHCLG. Attendees of these events included representatives from COSLA and individual Scottish Local Authorities, as key beneficiaries of EU Structural Funds.

TRANSPORT■ **A47: Dual Carriageways****Paul Bristow:**[\[5562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to fully dual the A47; and what progress he is making in implementing those plans.

George Freeman:

The second Road Investment Strategy will confirm the Government's plans for the strategic road network. We expect this to be published before the start of the second Road Period on 1 April 2020. The first Road Investment Strategy has already committed over £300 million of investment in the A47, including three dualling schemes. Highways England has been developing these schemes and they are currently scheduled for a phased start of works, with the first construction starting in 2021.

■ **Railways: EU Countries****Sir Mike Penning:**[\[6039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the number of sleeper train services between London St Pancras and European cities.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

International passenger rail services provide a number of benefits for passengers, businesses and the wider economy, including environmental benefits. The Government is committed to supporting the future growth and success of international traffic, including potential sleeper services.

Department for Transport officials have engaged with UK and European partners to encourage the future growth and success of international passenger services, providing connectivity between major European cities. The Department also stands ready to engage with any potential operators of new international services, including sleeper services.

TREASURY■ **Air Passenger Duty**

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[6762\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the environmental effect of the Government's decision to reduce airline duty across the aviation industry.

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.

■ **Beer: Excise Duties**

Giles Watling: [\[5549\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to differentiate the rate of duty on beer between supermarkets and pubs after the UK has left the EU.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Fiscal changes to alcohol, and tax rates are kept under review, and further announcements to duty changes will be made in due course.

To date, since 2010, government has scrapped the beer duty escalator, making the price of a typical pint 14p cheaper than it otherwise would have been. Pubs are also able to benefit from wider reforms including the Pubs Code and reductions to business rates.

■ **Economic Situation**

Jonathan Edwards: [\[5388\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect of the decision to spend official development assistance on a collaboration with the City of London on efforts to rebalance the UK economy, particularly in the field of international investment services.

John Glen:

The Government has recently announced a number of initiatives which will support billions of pounds of private sector investment in Africa – essential to delivering the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Initiatives announced include a collaboration with the City of London on a competition for fund managers to identify new investment products for Africa, making it easier and more appealing for global investors to put money into African projects at scale. This and other initiatives build on the City's role as a global hub for development finance, supporting jobs and growth abroad, as well as in the UK.

■ Electronic Publishing: VAT

Robert Halfon: [5407]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Upper Tribunal's ruling in *News Corp UK & Ireland Limited v Commissioners for HMRC* [2019] on VAT on digital publications; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Halfon: [5408]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential effect of reducing VAT on digital reading formats on the annual cost of low literacy rates; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Halfon: [5409]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the effect of charging VAT for e-books and audiobooks on (a) literacy rates and (b) the wellbeing of people with disabilities.

Jesse Norman:

The Government keeps all taxes under review, including VAT.

The impact on literacy and people with disabilities of any reduction of VAT on e-publications is likely to depend on commercial decisions about the extent to which any tax saving would lead to price reductions for consumers, and any associated behavioural changes.

Any amendments to the VAT regime as it applies to physical publications and e-publications must be carefully assessed against policy, economic and fiscal considerations. Any representations on this issue will be considered as part of the fiscal events process.

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

HMRC are carefully considering the Upper Tribunal's ruling.

■ Motorhomes: Excise Duties

Mr Richard Holden: [7226]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much revenue has been raised from Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) on sales of new motorhomes in each month since 1 September 2019; what the projected figure was for (a) each of those months and (b) 2019-20; and what adjustment has been made to the forecast for VED revenues for 2019-20 from the sales of new motorhomes in the light of sales since 1 September 2019.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Reliable estimates are not available for the Vehicle Excise Duty revenue made from motorhomes for any periods. In order to make an estimate this would only be available at disproportionate cost.

The latest VED forecast was published as part of Spring Statement 2019. No adjustment was made in this forecast due to the sales of new motorhomes from 1st September 2019. To see the VED forecast made at Spring Statement 2019, see page 76 of the latest OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook in the link below:

<https://obr.uk/download/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2019/>

Mr Richard Holden:

[7227]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations were made to his Department by the former hon. Member for North West Durham in advance of the application of the new rates of Vehicle Excise Duty on motorhomes on 1 September 2019.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The department has received a number of representations from both former and current members of Parliament on this issue and I am sensitive to their concerns. The Government is considering the impact of changes to Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) to motorhomes carefully.

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

■ Personal Income

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[5481]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of households with a single-earner income of over £50,000 in (a) North East Hampshire constituency and (b) the UK; and if he will make it his policy to support those households through the tax system.

Jesse Norman:

The number of households with a single-earner income of over £50,000 is based on Department for Work and Pensions analysis of Households Below Average Income (HBAI) data sourced from the 2017-18 Family Resources Survey (FRS).

The survey sample sizes are too small to produce robust estimates at local authority or constituency level. The Department for Work and Pensions estimate that in the UK in 2017-18 there were 2.7m households with one person earning over £50,000 per year from employment (either as an employee or self-employed). Of these, 700,000 households contained only one person in employment.

The Government has made substantial increases to the personal allowance and higher rate threshold in recent years. In April 2019, the Government increased the personal allowance to £12,500 and the higher rate threshold to £50,000. This ensured that nearly one million fewer people pay the higher rate of tax compared to 2015-16 and that a typical higher rate taxpayer pays over £1,800 less income tax than in 2010-11.

■ Rates and Rating

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown: [\[5321\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what formula is used by Valuation Office Agency assessors to determine rateable value.

Jesse Norman:

The Rateable Value (RV) of any non-domestic property represents the annual rent a property would achieve if let on the open market at a valuation date which is set in law. For the current RVs, effective from 1 April 2017, the set valuation date is 1 April 2015.

The VOA uses a hierarchy of internationally recognised valuation approaches for assessing RV:

- Rental comparison basis: analysis of rental evidence for similar properties to arrive at a rate for the property being valued. This is the most common method, used where a rental market exists and the nature of the property allows for comparison e.g. shops, offices and factories.
- Receipts & expenditure basis: used in the absence of good quality rental information to identify the economic surplus notionally available for rent/RV. Typical properties valued using this method include hotels, caravan parks and race courses.
- Contractor's basis: used when there are no reliable rents and the motive for occupation is not for profit e.g. hospitals, schools and prisons. The value of the land and replacement building costs (adjusted for age and obsolescence) are annualised to provide a notional rent/RV. The annualised rate is known as the 'decapitalisation' rate and is specified in legislation at each revaluation.

■ Television: Tax Allowances

Dame Margaret Hodge: [\[7092\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much High-end Television Tax Relief was claimed in each of the last ten years.

Dame Margaret Hodge: [\[7093\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many companies received High-end Television Tax Relief in each of the last ten years.

Dame Margaret Hodge: [\[7094\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what was the total amount of Film Tax Relief granted in each of the last ten years.

Dame Margaret Hodge: [\[7095\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what was the total amount of creative industry tax reliefs granted in each of the last ten years.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC publish annual statistics on the number and cost of claims for creative industry tax reliefs. The latest release can be found [here](#):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/creative-industries-statistics-august-2019>

Table 2.3 gives annual totals for High-end Television Tax Relief since it was introduced in 2013.

Table 1.3 gives annual totals for Film Tax Relief since 2007.

Totals for the other creative industry reliefs can be found in tables 3.3, 4.3, 5.3, 6.3, 7.2 and 8.2.

WALES

■ Wales Office: Social Media

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[7224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much his Department spent on social media advertising in each month since January 2019; and on which platforms that money was spent.

David T C Davies:

The department has not spent any money on social media advertising since January 2019.

■ Wales Office: Travel

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[7225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what the travel costs for his Department have been in each quarter since January 2018 by (a) mode of travel and (b) use by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials.

David T C Davies:

The travel costs for the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales (OSSW) in each quarter since January 2018 by (a) mode of travel (b) use by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials is shown in the table attached:

Attachments:

1. Table relating to PQ UIN 7225 [Table relating to PQ UIN 7225.docx]

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Gender Recognition Act 2004

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[7280\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether her Department plans to reform the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

Victoria Atkins:

Any changes to the Gender Recognition Act must be carefully considered. We are working with colleagues across Government to consider the appropriate next steps on reform. We will publish our response to the consultation once these have been agreed.

■ Government Departments: Terminal Illnesses

Jon Trickett:

[6604]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether the Government has plans to sign up for the Trades Union Congress's charter entitled, Dying to Work; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government supports the aim of enabling employees with terminal illnesses or life-threatening conditions to continue working for as long as possible. The Equality Act 2010 already provides protection for the workplace rights of people with terminal illnesses or life-threatening conditions. Cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis are specified disabilities in the Act. This means anyone with any of the above-listed chronic and/or life-limiting conditions is considered disabled and is protected from discriminatory treatment as a result of having that condition. The Act also provides that people with progressive conditions that have effects that increase in severity over time should be regarded as meeting the criteria for having a disability before it actually has that effect.

The Act places obligations on employers regarding disabled workers to ensure that workers who have chronic diseases or conditions (whether terminal or not), or debilitating illnesses, are fully protected from any unlawful behaviour by their employers. The Government also supports the Disability Confident employer scheme. More information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>

■ Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures: Children

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[6798]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will take steps with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a legal minimum age for cosmetic fillers.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is committed to improving the safety of cosmetic procedures.

The Department for Health and Social Care is currently working to review and improve industry standards of practice and provide clear information for consumers to make informed choices about cosmetic procedures.

This work includes an assessment of the health risks and psychological impact of current access arrangements to injectable cosmetic procedures by children and young people.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Disability

Caroline Lucas:

[5381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will set out a timeline for (a) consulting on and (b) publishing a national strategy for disabled people.

Justin Tomlinson:

I can confirm that the Government will publish a National Strategy for Disabled People in 2020 focusing on removing barriers to ensure disabled people can lead a life of opportunity and fully participate in British society.

The lived experience of disabled people will be at the heart of the strategy, which will support disabled people in all aspects and phases of their lives, including housing, education, transport and jobs.

Catherine West:[\[7221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to (a) support and (b) facilitate the establishment of disabled rights support groups.

Justin Tomlinson:

The National Strategy for Disabled People will focus on removing barriers to ensure disabled people are able to achieve their potential, can lead a life of opportunity and fully participate in British society. Working across Government, with disability organisations and charities, the strategy will be developed with the lived experience of disabled people at its heart and will focus on the issues that affect disabled people the most, including housing, education, transport and jobs.

Through the Regional Stakeholder Network we are establishing a channel for disabled people and disability organisations from across England to engage with Government and share their views on policies and services. This will facilitate ongoing regular discussions both during the development of the National Strategy for Disabled People and beyond.

■ Employment: Disability**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[7261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to help women with disabilities into work.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Government is committed to reducing the disability employment gap and seeing a million more disabled people, regardless of gender, in work between 2017 and 2027.

The Work and Health Programme is designed to help people, particularly people with disabilities, who need extra tailored support to find employment. The latest statistics for programme were published in November 2019, covering the period up to August 2019, and show that 29,300 women have started on the programme since it began to roll out across the country.

The latest Access to Work statistics, published in August 2019 and covering the period up to March 2019, show that a record 22,030 women received support through the scheme.

In December 2019 we launched the Intensive Personalised Employment Support Programme. This is a new, voluntary, contracted employment

provision designed to help disabled people, regardless of gender, who have complex needs or barriers and who want to work.

According to a report published in December 2019 by the Office for national Statistics, in 2019, the disability employment gap was 31.7 percentage points for men and 25.0 percentage points for women. The employment rate has risen more rapidly for disabled women between 2013 and 2019, increasing by 10.5 percentage points, compared with a 9.0 percentage point increase for disabled men.

The full report may be viewed here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/bulletins/disabilityandemploymentuk/2019#sex>

■ Food Poverty: Newcastle upon Tyne

Chi Onwurah: **[6678]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he plans to take to tackle food poverty in Newcastle upon Tyne constituency.

Lilian Greenwood: **[7197]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she plans to take to tackle food poverty in Nottingham South constituency.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: The government is committed to delivering a sustainable long-term solution to poverty in all its forms and in all parts of the UK by building a strong economy and ensuring that the benefit system works with the tax system and the labour market to support employment and higher pay.

The evidence shows that full time work substantially reduces the risk of being in poverty. Universal Credit is designed to help people move into work faster, stay in work longer and spend more time looking to increase their earnings, provides more financial help with childcare costs and removes the 16-hour 'cliff edge' for those who are working. To help families keep more of what they earn we have delivered another rise in the National Living Wage, increasing a full-time worker's annual pay by over £2,750 since its introduction, and by nearly £3,700 with the recently announced rise from this April, with our tax changes making basic rate tax payers over £1,200 better off from April 2019, compared with 2010.

In order to develop a better understanding of the drivers of food insecurity and identify which groups are most at risk we have introduced a new set of food security questions in the Family Resources Survey questionnaire from April 2019 onwards. This will enable us in the future to monitor the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity across the UK and for specific groups.

■ Occupational Pensions: West Lancashire

Rosie Cooper:

[5365]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people in West Lancashire constituency have (a) opted out after being auto-enrolled into a workplace pension and (b) saved more than the auto-enrolment minimum contribution.

Guy Opperman:

Automatic enrolment has achieved a quiet revolution through getting employees into the habit of pension saving. It has reversed the decline in workplace pension participation seen in the decade prior to its introduction. Since automatic enrolment started in 2012 participation rates have been transformed with 87% of eligible employees saving into a workplace pension in 2018, up from 55% in 2012.

The Department does not hold data for individual constituencies in relation to opt outs or the number of individuals who have saved above the automatic enrolment minimum contribution level. However, we do know that overall around 9% of automatically enrolled workers have chosen to opt out which is significantly below original estimates; and our latest evaluation report shows that, in April 2017, approximately 5.9 million eligible employees were already meeting the April 2019 minimum contribution rates.

I am providing the following information about the impact of automatic enrolment in your constituency, as of December 2019:

In the West Lancashire constituency, since 2012, approximately 16,000 eligible jobholders have been automatically enrolled and 1,710 employers have met their duties.

Automatic Enrolment Evaluation Report 2018, available via the following weblink:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764964/Automatic_Enrolment_Evaluation_Report_2018.pdf.

The Pensions Regulator's data on Automatic enrolment declaration of compliance by constituency, available via the following weblink:

<https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/document-library/research-and-analysis/data-requests>

■ Poverty: Children

Afzal Khan:

[6749]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many children lived in (a) poverty and (b) extreme poverty in Greater Manchester in each of the last 10 years.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: National Statistics on the number of children in low income households are published annually in the "Households Below Average Income" publication. Statistics for the number of children in

low income households are not available at combined Local Authority level in this publication because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates at this geography. Statistics for the North West region can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201718>, “children-hbai-timeseries-1994-95-2017-18-tables” in tables 4.17ts (for relative low income, before and after housing costs) and 4.23ts (for absolute low income, before and after housing costs).

Afzal Khan:

[6750]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of children in Manchester, Gorton constituency that are living in (a) poverty and (b) absolute poverty have (i) one household member in full-time employment, (ii) two household members in full-time employment, (iii) one household member in part-time employment, (iv) two household members in part-time employment and (v) no household members in employment in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: National Statistics on the percentage of children in low income are published annually in the “Households Below Average Income” publication. Statistics for the percentage of children in low income households is not available at constituency level in this publication because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates at this geography. Statistics for the North West region can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201718>, “children-hbai-timeseries-1994-95-2017-18-tables” in tables 4.16ts and 4.17ts (for relative low income, before and after housing costs) and 4.22ts and 4.23ts (for absolute low income, before and after housing costs). The statistics are only available for all children and cannot be broken down into the categories requested because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates.

Hywel Williams:

[7120]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the two-child limit on child poverty in (a) each Welsh local authority and (b) each Welsh parliamentary constituency.

Will Quince:

National Statistics on the percentage of children in low income households are published annually in the “Households Below Average Income” publication and the latest year for which information is available is 2017/18. As the two-child limit policy was introduced in April 2017 there is insufficient data to assess any impacts of the policy on low income. Also estimates for the percentage of children in low income households are not available at local authority or parliamentary constituency level in this publication because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates at this geography. For these two reasons it is not possible to evaluate the impacts of specific policies on poverty for these areas.

Data relating to the operation of the policy in Wales can be found in the latest annual statistics release which was published on 31 July 2019 and covers the period up to 2 April 2019. This data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-tax-credit-and-universal-credit-claimants-statistics-related-to-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-2-children-april-2019>

We have committed to further annual releases.

Lilian Greenwood:

[7195]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many children lived in (a) poverty and (b) extreme poverty in Nottingham in each of the last 10 years.

Will Quince:

National Statistics on the number of children in low income households are published annually in the "Households Below Average Income" publication. Statistics for the number of children in low income households is not available at combined Local Authority level in this publication because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates at this geography. Statistics for the East Midlands region can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201718>, "children-hbai-timeseries-1994-95-2017-18-tables" in tables 4.17ts (for relative low income, before and after housing costs) and 4.23ts (for absolute low income, before and after housing costs).

Lilian Greenwood:

[7196]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of children in Nottingham South constituency living in (a) poverty and (b) absolute poverty have (i) one household member in full-time employment, (ii) two household members in full-time employment, (iii) one household member in part-time employment, (iv) two household members in part-time employment and (v) no household members in employment in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Will Quince:

National Statistics on the number and percentage of children in low income are published annually in the "Households Below Average Income" publication. Statistics for the percentage of children in low income households is not available at constituency level in this publication because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates at this geography. Statistics for the East Midlands region can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201718>, "children-hbai-timeseries-1994-95-2017-18-tables" in tables 4.16ts and 4.17ts (for relative low income, before and after housing costs) and 4.22ts and 4.23ts (for absolute low income, before and after housing costs).

The statistics are only available for all children and cannot be broken down into the categories requested because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates.

■ Sick Pay: Public Consultation

Marion Fellows:

[\[7281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to publish the outcome of its consultation on statutory sick pay which closed on 7 October 2019.

Justin Tomlinson:

We plan to publish the response to the consultation '*Health is everyone's business: proposals to reduce ill health-related job loss*' later this year. The consultation set out proposals to encourage all employers to take positive action to support employees who are managing health conditions in work, and to manage sickness absence more effectively.

Background

The consultation closed in October 2019. We have received a good response from a range of stakeholders and we are currently reviewing the detailed responses to inform decisions on next steps.

The consultation included proposals across four major policy areas:

1. Amend the legal framework to encourage early action to support individuals when they are absent from work and to facilitate more conversations to agree effective workplace modifications;
2. Reform of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) so that it is better enforced, more flexible, and support the lowest paid employees;
3. Measures to improve availability of high-quality, cost-effective occupational health (OH) services for employers; and
4. Advice and support from government for employers to understand and act on their responsibilities

The following special point should be noted:

The precise publication date has to be discussed and agreed with No.10.

■ Social Security Benefits

Hywel Williams:

[\[7121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the two-child limit on BAME communities.

Hywel Williams:

[\[7122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to undertake an impact assessment of the two-child limit on faith groups in Wales.

Will Quince:

The Government's view is that providing support for a maximum of two children or qualifying young persons in Universal Credit and Child Tax Credits, ensures fairness between claimants on the one hand and, on the other, those taxpayers who support themselves solely through work.

We recognise that some claimants are not able to make the same choices about the number of children in their family, which is why exceptions have been put in place to protect certain groups. On migration to Universal Credit, families' existing entitlement will be protected.

The Department has published an Impact Assessment which noted ethnic minority households may be more affected by the policy. This is because on average, they are more likely to have larger families and be in receipt of Child Tax Credits and Universal Credit. However, the Department does not collect sufficiently robust data on our claimants' ethnic or religious backgrounds to facilitate a more detailed assessment of the policy's impact on specific ethnic or religious groups.

The Government has assessed the impact of the policy from an equality and human rights perspective, meeting our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, and ensuring compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the rights of children.

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Marion Fellows:

[\[7257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many audited Independent Assessment Service health assessment reports were graded as (a) acceptable, (b) unacceptable, (c) acceptable with amendments required and (d) acceptable with feedback in each month in (i) 2018 and (ii) 2019.

Justin Tomlinson:

Please find the figures requested in the tables below. The numbers are unpublished and rounded to the nearest 10.

The first table displays total figures for Lots 1 and 3 for 2018.

The second table displays total figures for Lots 1 and 3 for 2019.

ROUNDED

| Total(Lot 1&3) | Jan-18 | Feb-18 | Mar-18 | Apr-18 | May-18 | Jun-18 | Jul-18 | Aug-18 | Sep-18 | Oct-18 | Nov-18 | Dec-18 |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Acceptable | 610 | 630 | 680 | 620 | 610 | 630 | 650 | 630 | 630 | 640 | 600 | 590 |
| Acceptable with Feedback | 190 | 160 | 160 | 150 | 180 | 170 | 160 | 170 | 150 | 140 | 160 | 220 |
| Acceptable with Amendment | 130 | 130 | 100 | 150 | 130 | 130 | 120 | 140 | 160 | 170 | 190 | 150 |
| Unacceptable | 60 | 50 | 40 | 70 | 70 | 60 | 40 | 30 | 40 | 30 | 30 | 20 |
| Total 2018 | 980 | 980 | 980 | 980 | 990 | 980 | 980 | 970 | 970 | 980 | 980 | 980 |

Rounded

ROUNDED

| | Jan- 2019 | Feb- 19 | Mar- 19 | Apr- 19 | May- 19 | Jun- 19 | Jul- 19 | Aug- 19 | Sep- 19 | Oct- 19 | Nov- 19 | Dec- 19 |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Acceptable | 640 | 630 | 630 | 640 | 670 | 620 | 610 | 610 | 560 | 640 | 650 | 670 |
| Acceptable with Feedback | 180 | 180 | 150 | 160 | 150 | 170 | 150 | 170 | 170 | 150 | 140 | 140 |
| Acceptable with Amendment | 130 | 140 | 160 | 160 | 130 | 140 | 190 | 150 | 200 | 150 | 150 | 140 |
| Unacceptable | 30 | 30 | 40 | 20 | 30 | 50 | 40 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 40 | 30 |
| Total 2019 | 980 | 980 | 980 | 980 | 980 | 980 | 980 | 980 | 980 | 980 | 980 | 980 |

■ Social Security Benefits: North West

Ms Angela Eagle:

[6610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of trends in the level of administrative errors made processing applications during the roll-out of (a) universal credit and (b) personal independence payment in (i) the North West, (b) Wirral and (c) Wallasey.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 27 January 2020]: National statistics are published yearly which provide an estimate of the value of benefit overpayments that result from fraud, claimant error and official error (administrative errors). I have copied below a link to the latest publication.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/801594/fraud-and-error-stats-release-2018-2019-estimates.pdf

Each application made to UC or PIP is judged on its own merit, taking into account the information provided by the claimant, and robust Quality Assurance Processes are in place to minimise administrative errors. When a claimant disagrees with the decision made there is a well-established process in place for this to be looked at again, when more information may be provided by the claimant.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Females

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[7268]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to offer additional support to women born in the 1950s who have had to stay in the workforce longer as a result of the increase in their pension age.

Guy Opperman:

The number of older people in employment is at near-record high. There are now 10.6 million workers aged 50 and over, compared to 9.1 million five years ago. Employment level for women aged 50 and over is currently 5 million.

To support women to remain and return to the labour market, the Government has removed the Default Retirement Age, meaning that most people can choose when to retire and extended the right to flexible working beyond carers, to all employees with 26 weeks' continuous service with their employer.

In February 2017, the Government published our Fuller Working Lives strategy which set out the role employers, individuals and government can play in supporting older workers.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587654/fuller-working-lives-a-partnership-approach.pdf

Additionally, we appointed a Business Champion for Older Workers to engage and influence employers on a practical and strategic level, promoting the benefits of an older workforce.

Through the National Retraining Partnership, a partnership between Government, the Confederation of British Industry and the Trades Union Congress, Government is developing the National Retraining Scheme. The National Retraining Scheme will help prepare adults for future changes to the economy, including those brought about by automation, to help them retrain into better jobs.

In February last year, DWP launched our online mid-life MOT page which encourages more active planning in the key areas of work, wellbeing and finances. <https://www.yourpension.gov.uk/mid-life-mot/>

To support employers, Business in The Community have created MOT toolkits to support businesses. <https://age.bitc.org.uk/tools-impact-stories/toolkits>

For people who simply can't work, our welfare system will continue to provide a strong safety net, as it does for people of all ages now. We will spend £55 billion [£55.4bn] this year (2019/20) on benefits to support disabled people and people with health conditions. This is around 2.5% of GDP, and over 6% of government spending. As a share of GDP, the UK's public spending is second highest in the G7, bar Germany [OECD 2015 data].

Stephanie Peacock:**[7277]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of women affected by changes to the state pension age, in (a) Barnsley East constituency, (b) Yorkshire and Humber and (c) the UK in each year until 2029-30.

Guy Opperman:

The Labour Government 1997-2010, the Coalition 2010-2015 and the Conservative Government of 1992-1997 have taken a similar approach to raising State Pension age. As you are aware, from the 1940s until April 2010, the State Pension age was 60 for women and 65 for men. The decision to

equalise the State Pension age for men and women dates back to 1995 and addresses a longstanding inequality between men and women's State Pension age. Without equalisation, women who reach the age of 60 in 2019 would be expected to spend over 40 per cent of their adult lives in receipt of State Pension, on average. Changes to the State Pension age put right a long lasting inequality which was based on an outdated rationale that women were dependent on their husband's incomes.

Further changes were recommended by the Pensions Commission in 2005 as it became clear that things were changing, for example, life expectancy was increasing and a State Pension age fixed at age 65 was not sustainable or fair between generations. It recommended that in the future State Pension age should increase in line with life expectancy and also recommended the introduction of a State Pension age timetable that reflected this.

The 2010 to 2015 Government made the decision to bring in changes to the State Pension age, following extensive debates in both Houses of Parliament. The 2011 Pensions Act accelerated the equalisation of women's State Pension age by 18 months and brought forward the increase in men and women's State Pension age to 66 by five and a half years, relative to the previous timetables.

Women born between 6 April 1950 and 5 April 1953 were affected by State Pension age equalisation under the Pensions Act 1995. The Pensions Act 2011 accelerated the equalisation of State Pension age, and included transitional arrangements limiting State Pension age delays, affecting women born between 6 April 1953 and 5 December 1953. It also brought forward the increase in State Pension age from 65 to 66 which affected women born between 6 December 1953 and 5 April 1960.

The Department for Work and Pensions only holds estimates at a Great Britain level. The latest estimates are that 4.84 million women in Great Britain are affected by the changes to the state pension age between 2010/11 and 2029/30 (rounded to the nearest 10,000). The figures are based on DWP calculations using the 2018-based ONS population projections. These estimates are the numbers reaching State Pension age, and are not necessarily the same as the number of new claims for State Pension.

A detailed breakdown of the overall 4.84 million figure is provided per tax year in the Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Number of women in Great Britain affected by SPA reforms between 2010/11 and 2029/30, Source: DWP calculations using ONS population projections, Rounded to the nearest 1,000

| TAX YEAR | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| No of women | 179,000 | 170,000 | 178,000 | 166,000 | 176,000 | 169,000 | 93,000 | 89,000 | 81,000 | 179,000 |

| TAX YEAR | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 | 2028/29 | 2029/30 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| No of women | 253,000 | 349,000 | 362,000 | 377,000 | 383,000 | 389,000 | 204,000 | 201,000 | 415,000 | 427,000 |

Information on the numbers affected by UK, constituent country, parliamentary constituency or local authority is not held by the Department for Work and Pensions. However, recent population projections for the UK can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/tablea11principalprojectionuksummary>

Population by local area and higher local authorities can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>

Population projections by regional area can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/regionsinenglandtable1>

■ Universal Credit

Chris Stephens: [R] [5463]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of children living in households where claimants have had deductions made to their monthly universal credit payments in the latest period for which figures are available.

Will Quince:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Chris Stephens: [R] [5465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the value of deductions to universal credit payments under each reason for deduction in the latest period for which figures are available.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 23 January 2020]: The Department's deductions policy strikes a fair balance between a claimant's need to meet their obligations and their ability to ensure they can meet their day-to-day needs. From October 2019, Universal Credit deductions have been reduced to 30% of a claimant's standard allowance down from 40% to better achieve these objectives.

In the latest period for which figures are available (August 2019), £1.3 billion of Universal Credit was paid, of which £94 million (7%) was deducted. The table below provides a breakdown of the deductions by reason.

| DEDUCTION REASON | VALUE OF DEDUCTIONS (£) |
|--|-------------------------|
| UC advance repayments | 50,252,000 |
| Tax Credit overpayments | 14,295,000 |
| DWP overpayments | 8,042,000 |
| Social fund loans | 5,466,000 |
| Arrears of rent and/or service charges | 5,001,000 |
| Fines | 4,931,000 |
| HB overpayments | 1,771,000 |
| Arrears of Community Charge or Council Tax | 1,285,000 |
| UC Recoverable Hardship payments | 843,000 |
| DWP Fraud overpayments | 742,000 |
| Fuel and Water Ongoing consumption | 615,000 |
| Child maintenance | 527,000 |
| Arrears of water charges | 273,000 |
| HB and DWP Civil Penalties | 121,000 |
| HB Fraud overpayments | 113,000 |
| HB and DWP Administrative Penalties | 76,000 |
| Arrears of fuel (electric and gas) | 67,000 |
| Arrears of Eligible loans | 51,000 |
| Arrears of Integration loans | 44,000 |
| Tax Credit Fraud overpayments | 1,000 |
| Mortgage interest | less than 500 |

Notes:

1. Values of deductions in the table are rounded to the nearest thousand. The total value of all deductions and the amount of universal credit paid is rounded to the nearest £1,000,000.
2. Deductions include advance repayments, third party deductions and all other deductions, but exclude sanctions and fraud penalties which are reductions of benefit rather than deductions.
3. Amount of Universal Credit paid reflects the amount of money paid to claimants and their landlords as part of their award, including the amount

which they would have been entitled to had it not been deducted. It does not include other payments such as advances and hardship payments.

4. Figures are provisional and are subject to retrospective change as later data becomes available.

Neil Gray: [6133]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of cases where claimants have been assessed as having no entitlement to the housing element of universal credit because they moved from rented accommodation to accommodation where no rent is payable during their assessment period in the latest period for which figures are available.

Neil Gray: [6134]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of calculating entitlement to the housing element of universal credit on the basis of a claimant's circumstances at the end of their monthly assessment period on claimants whose circumstances have changed within that month.

Neil Gray: [6135]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to award the housing element of universal credit to claimants who have moved accommodation within their assessment period, to cover any cost of rent due before their move.

Will Quince:

The Universal Credit award is calculated to reflect the claimant's circumstances at the end of their assessment period. To do this, we treat all changes as applying from the beginning of the assessment period in which they take place (if reported in the assessment period within which they occurred). The award for that month is therefore wholly at the new rate. This reflects the claimant's circumstances at the point of payment, and will better anticipate their needs over the forthcoming month.

This principle applies to all elements of Universal Credit. For example, if a new child is born part way through an assessment period, we apply the change to the whole month, not from the date the child was born.

Claimants can easily notify the Department of any changes that might incur within an assessment period using their online account, telephone and speak to their Work Coach face to face in a Jobcentre.

Additionally, existing Universal Credit claimants who have told the Department about a change in their circumstances, which means more Universal Credit is owed, may also apply for an advance payment. There are also discretionary housing payments in place to support those who require support meeting their rent costs.

Statistics on the housing element of Universal Credit are published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Tommy Sheppard:

[7237]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the financial effect on mixed-aged couples where the older member of the couple reaches pension age and the couple are unable to claim pension credit or pension age housing benefit and must instead claim universal credit.

Guy Opperman:

In 2012 both houses of Parliament debated at length and then agreed changes to the welfare policies. This resulted in the Welfare Reform Act of 2012.

Under provisions in the Welfare Reform Act 2012, Parliament decided that pension-age income-related benefits would no longer be available to couples before both partners have reached State Pension age. These changes took effect from 15 May 2019.

The average weekly reduction in the amount of income related benefit received amongst the estimated number of couples who would have been entitled to Pension Credit and/or pension age Housing Benefit without the policy change is estimated to be approximately £70 per week (to the nearest £10) in 2019/20.

The estimated average weekly notional reduction is calculated by taking the estimated annual expenditure savings from the policy change and dividing by the estimated number of mixed age couples who would have been entitled to Pension Credit and/or pension age Housing Benefit without the policy change.

No mixed age couples who were receiving Pension Credit and/or pension age Housing Benefit immediately before the implementation date of 15 May 2019, would see a reduction in the amount of benefit they receive as a result of the policy change (unless their entitlement to both those benefits subsequently ends).

An annual notional reduction would depend on the length of time in a year that an individual couple would have claimed Pension Credit and/or pension age Housing Benefit, as well as any difference in a couple's level of support on Universal Credit compared to pensioner income-related benefits, both of which will reflect individual circumstantial changes and behavioural choices.

■ **Work and Health Programme: Epilepsy**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[7162]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with a main condition of epilepsy have found a long-term job through the Work and Health Programme in each of the last five years.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information is unavailable because medical condition is only recorded for a limited number of people who participate and also there is no measure for long term job outcomes for participants on the Work and Health Programme.

Job outcomes are defined as when a participant is classed as achieving a job outcome when they have reached a specified level of earnings once in employment, or reach six months of being in self-employment.

The available statistics on participants of the Work and Health Programme, which began in November 2017, are published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/work-and-health-programme-statistics>

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ UK telecommunications

Minister for Digital and Broadband (Matt Warman):

[HCWS70]

UK TELECOMMUNICATIONS

My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Baroness Morgan of Cotes, has made the following Statement.

The Telecoms Supply Chain Review - laid before Parliament in July 2019 - underlined the range and nature of the risks facing our critical digital infrastructure.

The Review addressed three questions:

- How should telecoms operators be incentivised to improve security standards and practices in 5G and full fibre networks?
- How should the security challenges posed by high risk vendors be addressed?
- How can sustainable diversity in the telecoms supply chain be created?

The Government is establishing one of the strongest regimes for telecoms security in the world. This will raise security standards across the UK's telecoms operators and the vendors that supply them. At the heart of the new regime, will be the National Cyber Security Centre's Telecoms Security Requirements guidance. This will raise the height of the security bar and set out tough new standards to be met in the design and operation of the UK's telecoms networks.

The Government intends to legislate, at the earliest opportunity, to introduce a new comprehensive telecoms security regime - to be overseen by the communications sector regulator, Ofcom, and Government.

The Review also underlined the need for the UK to improve diversity in the supply of equipment to telecoms networks.

The Government is developing an ambitious strategy to help diversify the supply chain. This will entail the deployment of all the tools at the Government's disposal. The strategy has three main strands:

- Attracting established vendors who are not currently present in the UK;
- Supporting the emergence of new, disruptive entrants to the supply chain; and
- Promoting the adoption of open, interoperable standards that will reduce barriers to entry.

The UK's telecoms operators are leading the world in the adoption of new, innovative approaches to expand the supply chain. The Government will work with industry and like-minded countries to achieve these goals.

The third area covered by the Review was how to treat those vendors which pose greater security and resilience risks to UK telecoms.

The Government has now completed its consideration of all the information and analysis on this subject, and is publishing the final conclusions of the Telecoms Supply Chain Review in relation to high risk vendors.

In order to assess a vendor as high risk, the Review recommends a set of objective factors are taken into account. These include:

- the strategic position or scale of the vendor in the UK network;
- the strategic position or scale of the vendor in other telecoms networks, particularly if the vendor is new to the UK market;
- the quality and transparency of the vendor's engineering practices and cyber security controls;
- the vendor's resilience both in technical terms and in relation to the continuity of supply to UK operators;
- the vendor's domestic security laws in the jurisdiction where the vendor is based and the risk of external direction that conflicts with UK law;
- the relationship between the vendor and the vendor's domestic state apparatus; and
- the availability of offensive cyber capability by that domestic state apparatus, or associated actors, that might be used to target UK interests.
- To ensure the security of 5G and full fibre networks, it is both necessary and proportionate to place tight restrictions on the presence of any vendors that are identified as higher risk.
- For 5G and full fibre networks, the Review concluded that, based on the current position of the UK market, high risk vendors should be:
 - Excluded from all safety related and safety critical networks in Critical National Infrastructure;
 - Excluded from security critical network functions;
 - Limited to a minority presence in other network functions to a cap of up to 35%; and
 - Subjected to tight restrictions, including exclusions from sensitive geographic locations.

These new controls will also be contingent on an NCSC-approved risk mitigation strategy for any operator using such a vendor.

Over time, our intention is for the market share of high risk vendors to reduce as market diversification takes place.

The Government intends to bring forward legislation, at the earliest opportunity, to limit and control the presence of high risk vendors in UK networks, and to be able to respond appropriately as technology changes.

Nothing in the Review's conclusions affects this country's ability to share highly sensitive intelligence data over highly secure networks, both within the U.K. and with our partners, including the Five Eyes.

GCHQ have categorically confirmed that how the UK constructs its 5G and full fibre public telecoms networks has nothing to do with how the Government shares classified data.

In response to the Review, the Government has asked the National Cyber Security Centre to produce guidance for industry in relation to high risk vendors. The guidance sets out how NCSC will determine whether a vendor is high risk, the precise restrictions it advises should be applied to high risk vendors in the UK's 5G and full fibre networks, and what mitigation measures operators should take if using high risk vendors.

The NCSC has published that guidance on their website at: www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/ncsc-advice-on-the-use-of-equipment-from-high-risk-vendors-in-uk-telecoms-networks, as well as a summary of the security analysis conducted for the Telecoms Supply Chain Review at: www.ncsc.gov.uk/report/summary-of-NCSC-security-analysis-for-the-UK-telecoms-sector. The DCMS press release accompanying this Written Ministerial Statement can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-plans-to-safeguard-countrys-telecoms-network-and-pave-way-for-fast-reliable-and-secure-connectivity>.

Copies of these documents have been placed in the House of Commons library.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Foreign Affairs Council – 20 January 2020

Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Christopher Pincher): [\[HCWS68\]](#)

The High Representative of the European Union (EU) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRVP), Josep Borrell, chaired the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) in Brussels on 20 January. The United Kingdom's Permanent Representative to the EU (Sir Tim Barrow) represented the United Kingdom.

Current Affairs

The HRVP and Foreign Ministers had an exchange of views on a number of pressing issues.

The German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas briefed on the outcome of the 19 January Berlin conference on Libya. Ministers discussed EU engagement towards a political solution, in particular in helping to implement the agreed ceasefire and enforce the UN arms embargo.

HRVP Borrell discussed the situation in Bolivia and set out EU support towards the general election on 3 May 2020. He also touched on Venezuela and concern about recent escalations following the events in the National Assembly.

The HRVP debriefed on his recent trip to New Delhi, India, where he participated in the Raisina Dialogue and he discussed preparations for the upcoming 15th EU-India Summit, scheduled for 13 March.

Cyprus raised Turkey's hydrocarbon exploration activity in the Eastern Mediterranean, following Turkey's announcement on 18 January that it would engage in further drilling.

Sahel

Following France's and the G5 Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) Leaders' summit that took place in Pau on 13 January, Ministers exchanged views on the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel and the role the EU could play as an important partner and donor in the region. They expressed support for renewing the existing Sahel Strategy to try to increase the impact of EU's security, stability and development engagement. Ministers emphasised the importance of an integrated approach between the different actors involved and resources deployed. Ministers also welcomed the planned EU-G5 Sahel summit in March, noting it would be an opportunity to identify joint priorities and ensure G5 ownership.

Climate Diplomacy

The Council adopted conclusions on climate diplomacy and agreed to focus diplomatic outreach to third-countries to encourage key partners and emitters to implement concrete actions and achieve the best results ahead of COP26. There was support for a proposal that all new EU international agreements, including all trade agreements, contain a clause to hold partners to ambitious climate standards.

The United Kingdom underlined that success in Glasgow would rely on concerted diplomatic efforts and the importance of ensuring tangible outcomes when updating Nationally Defined Contributions (NDCs).

Middle East Peace Process and the wider region

Over lunch, Foreign Ministers discussed the Middle East Peace Process and restated their national positions on the recognition of Palestine. The United Kingdom underlined the importance of firmly rejecting illegal annexation but made clear that our position on recognition was unchanged and reiterated our commitment to a two-state solution.

Ministers touched on the future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the importance of continuing efforts to de-escalate tensions in the region. The United Kingdom, France and Germany underlined the importance of the E3's work to find a diplomatic path through the JCPOA's Dispute Resolution Mechanism to bring Iran back into compliance and preserve the deal.

Council Conclusions

The Council agreed a number of further measures:

- The Council approved the Terms of Reference for the EU-Ecuador Dialogue on Human Rights. Since 2014, the EU and Ecuador meet at least once a year to review the state of their relationship and discuss issues of common interest.
- The Council adopted conclusions on the continued presence of Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina to support authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment for its citizens.
- The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and the Republic

of Kazakhstan (12409/16). The decision will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union in accordance with Article 17 (1)(a) of the Council's Rules of Procedure.

- The Council appointed 120 members and 114 alternate members to the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) for its new five-year term running from 26 January 2020 to 25 January 2025 (14986/19).
- Regarding public access to documents, the European Council approved on 15 January 2020 the reply to confirmatory application No 39/c/01/19 (doc. EUCO 35/19). On 20 January 2020, the Council adopted by written procedure the reply to confirmatory application No 38/c/01/19 (doc. 14533/19).

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Rough Sleeping Initiative allocation of additional funding for 2020/21

Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick):

[\[HCWS69\]](#)

Today, I am announcing provisional allocations of up to £112 million for a third year of Rough Sleeping Initiative and Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding. This funding covers around 270 local authorities in England, including those that were part of joint funding proposals and represents an uplift of £26 million on last year's Rough Sleeping Initiative and Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding.

We announced the Rough Sleeping Initiative in March 2018 to make an immediate impact on rough sleeping. Our [impact evaluation](#) of the initiative (published September 2019) demonstrated that it drove the first national reduction in rough sleeping in almost a decade. The analysis demonstrated a 32% net reduction in the number of rough sleepers, compared to what the level would have been had the initiative not been in place.

To build on the Rough Sleeping Initiative, we launched the Rapid Rehousing Pathway. This approach includes funding for Somewhere Safe to Stay hubs, which provide warm and dry shelter, rapid assessment, and support to people who are already, or at risk of, sleeping rough; specialist Navigators, who act as a single point of contact to support people from the streets into settled accommodation; the establishment of Local Lettings Agencies to source, identify, or provide homes and advice for rough sleepers or those at risk; and funding for Supported Lettings initiatives, which will provide flexible support to help individuals sustain their tenancies.

For the next financial year we have combined the Rough Sleeping Initiative and Rapid Rehousing Pathway to form one consolidated funding pot for 2020/21, to simplify the process for local authorities. We have drawn on learnings from both programmes to optimise the effectiveness of next year's funding, which was open to all local authorities in England. Since October 2019 our expert adviser teams have worked intensively with local authorities to coproduce plans to further reduce rough sleeping.

A full list of the areas funded is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-initiative-2020-to-2021-funding-allocations>

With the funding I have announced today, local areas will be able to enhance services that connect people with the right support and sustainable housing to move them swiftly away from the street and facilitate their recovery. This important work is part of delivering on the commitment made in the government manifesto to end rough sleeping by the end of this parliament.