



## Daily Report

Thursday, 30 January 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 30 January 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:39 P.M., 30 January 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Prosecutions: South West

**Richard Graham:**

[\[6660\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what comparative assessment he has made of (a) the number of cases the CPS agreed to pursue came to court and (b) the average waiting time for those cases to be heard when the CPS was (i) based in Gloucester and (ii) based in Bristol.

**Michael Ellis:**

The South West regional area of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) covers three police force areas: Avon & Somerset, Devon and Cornwall and Gloucestershire. The Area is based in Bristol, Exeter and Truro following the closure of the Gloucester office in April 2014. In 2013-14, prior to the closure of the Gloucester office, CPS South West prosecuted 11,826 cases where the CPS had authorised charge. In 2018-19 they prosecuted 9,279. This reduction is consistent with the falling caseload for the CPS nationally.

The CPS does not hold any records relating to the average waiting time at court. However, data is available showing the average time (in calendar days) from the date the decision to charge a suspect was made to the date the prosecution case was finalised. In 2013-14 this was 140.3 days for CPS South West and 139.2 days in 2018-19. For cases referred by Gloucestershire Police the average time taken between decision to charge and finalised prosecution has dropped from 176.5 days in 2013-14 to 142.5 days in 2018-19.

The average timeliness of a prosecution case is measured from the date charges are authorised by the CPS to finalisation. The average time includes the period between the date the CPS authorise the charge, to the date the suspect was charged by the police, to date of the first listed hearing and subsequent finalisation of the defendant's case. It is not possible to disaggregate the average timeliness between these stages. The data includes cases which are completed in magistrates' courts and, more serious and complex, cases which proceed to the Crown Court. The precise time to charge a defendant is a matter for the police and similarly the time to list a case in court is a matter for HM Courts and Tribunals Service. The length of time cases take in court depends on the nature and complexity of the matters in question and whether matters are admitted or contested by the defendant.

#### ■ Restraining Orders: Employment

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[1887\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what assessment he has made of the effect of restraining orders on the career prospects of defendants who have been acquitted.

**Michael Ellis:**

Restraining orders are civil orders under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, though they may be issued in criminal proceedings. The Attorney General's Office (AGO) has not made any assessment of the effect of restraining orders on the career prospects of defendants who have been acquitted. The AGO is not responsible for policy related to assessing the impact of restraining orders, nor is it responsible for the relevant legislation.

**BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**■ **Carbon Emissions****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[8443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate she has made of the rate of reduction in carbon dioxide emissions in each of the last five years.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory publishes assessments of annual greenhouse gas emissions. The table below shows the annual percentage change in the UK's emissions of carbon dioxide for the years 2014-2018. Data are not yet available for 2019 emissions.

YEAR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Change in UK carbon dioxide emissions from previous year</b>	-8.4%	-3.9%	-5.5%	-3.3%	-2.4%

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[8444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of progress on decarbonising energy for (a) heat and (b) transport.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

We have committed to publishing a heat policy roadmap in 2020. This will set out our plans to deliver the low carbon heat needed to meet our climate targets, and a programme of work to enable key strategic decisions in the first half of the 2020s on how we achieve mass transition to low carbon heating.

In the meantime, we continue to support low-carbon heating through the Renewable Heat Incentive and the Heat Networks Investment Programme, and we are developing policies to deliver low carbon heating in the 2020s and meet our climate

targets. A Future Homes Standard, introduced by 2025, will require new build homes to be future proofed with low carbon heating and world leading levels of energy efficiency. We are also committed to phasing out the installation of fossil fuel heating systems in off gas grid properties and accelerating the decarbonisation of our gas supplies by increasing the proportion of green gas in the grid. We will be consulting on these commitments in due course.

We are preparing an ambitious, cross-modal Transport Decarbonisation Plan to step up our efforts and deliver the carbon emission reductions needed for the sector to play its part in reaching net zero by 2050. On roads, delivering on our Manifesto commitment, we will soon consult on the earliest date we can phase out the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars.

## ■ Construction: Billing

**Alan Brown:**

[\[9082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans her Department has for eliminating the use of cash retentions in the construction industry; and if she will make a statement.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government is committed to improving payment practices; we fully understand the practice of cash retentions can create problems for contractors in the supply chain.

To date, we have undertaken extensive analysis of the responses to the 2018 consultation exercise alongside wider stakeholder discussions. This includes ministerial roundtables, which bring together representatives from the construction sector to consider cash retention issues and reach a consensus on policy options.

A range of views remain across the sector and its clients about the problems associated with the withholding of retentions, and how these might be addressed.

We will publish the response to the consultation on the practice of cash retention under construction contracts as soon as possible. The Government will continue to work with industry on these issues.

## ■ Electricity

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[7574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether she plans to provide further support for the development of flexible electricity markets.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Government is supporting the development of flexibility markets through the delivery of the actions in the Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan and continued innovation funding for flexibility market platforms.

The Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan set out a number of actions to ensure that markets fairly reward flexibility for the value it provides to the system. As part of this

plan, network operators are taking action to develop local flexibility markets and the Electricity System Operators work to reform the balancing services markets is opening up access to a wider range of flexible technologies. We are now considering the next phase of this work and will work closely with Ofgem and industry to develop this throughout 2020.

In 2019, we launched the “Flex” innovation competition, which will support the development and demonstration of innovative solutions to value and trade flexibility in the energy system. Details of winning projects will be formally announced in due course.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [7575]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress has been made against the Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan since 2018.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The July 2017 Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan set out 29 specific actions for BEIS, Ofgem and industry to deliver in order to remove barriers to smart technologies such as storage, enable smart homes and businesses, and to ensure markets reward the value that flexibility provides to the system. In October 2018 we published a Progress Update with nine new actions.

We have now implemented 18 of the original 29 actions, five of the nine new actions and, as per the original plan, we are committed to delivering the remainder by 2022.

## ■ Electricity: Costs

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [7576]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) most expensive and (b) cheapest form of electricity to produce is.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

We are currently undertaking a review of our evidence on levelised costs of electricity generation, which will be published in due course. BEIS’s most recent published assessment of electricity generation costs can be found in the generation costs report (2016)<sup>[1]</sup>.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/beis-electricity-generation-costs-november-2016>

## ■ Energy: Meters

**Ian Blackford:** [8336]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the timeframe is for the introduction of smart meters on Glenhinnisdal on the Isle of Skye.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Smart meters are operating on the Isle of Skye and smart metering communications services are being provided to the island.

The Data Communications Company (DCC), the organisation responsible for the national smart metering infrastructure, has contracts in place for the provision of communications coverage to at least 99.5% of premises in the North Region by the end of 2020. Glenhinnisdal does not currently receive network coverage for smart meters due to mountainous terrain affecting wireless coverage in the area. The DCC is required by licence conditions to seek to provide communications services to all premises where it is practicable and cost proportionate, and is also required to assess opportunities to increase the overall level of coverage.

## ■ Hydrogen

**Giles Watling:**

[\[7672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether her Department plans to establish a Hydrogen cluster by the end of the next Parliament.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Low carbon hydrogen could play a vital role in meeting the UK's 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.

Government is committed to exploring hydrogen's potential through up to £108 million in innovation funding and £100 million to deploy low carbon hydrogen production capacity. The Government has also committed to invest £800 million to build the first fully deployed CCUS cluster by the mid-2020s and £500 million to help energy-intensive industries move to low-carbon techniques, which could include the use of hydrogen.

Hydrogen is likely to play an important role in achieving the Industrial Clusters Mission, creating the world's first net zero industrial cluster by 2040 and at least one low carbon cluster by 2030. This is supported by up to £170 million from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to support the deployment of low carbon technologies and enabling infrastructure in one or more clusters.

## ■ Ofgem: Carbon Emissions

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[8251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to amend Ofgem's remit to incorporate the Government's Net Zero target.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Ofgem will have an important role in the transition to net zero and already has various powers and duties in relation to decarbonisation, including a duty to consider reductions in targeted greenhouse gas emissions. The regulator is planning to publish a decarbonisation "action plan" in February and we look forward to working closely with Ofgem to help them to implement the contents of the plan.

**Helen Hayes:**

**[8397]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans she has to amend Ofgem's remit to incorporate the Government's Net Zero target.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Ofgem will have an important role in the transition to net zero and already has various powers and duties in relation to decarbonisation, including a duty to consider reductions in targeted greenhouse gas emissions. The regulator is planning to publish a decarbonisation "action plan" in February and we look forward to working closely with Ofgem to help them to implement the contents of the plan.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Employment

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[8445]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of trends in the level of jobs in the low carbon and renewable economy.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

We want to deliver on our net zero commitment in a way that maximises the economic benefits of our transition to cleaner economic growth, creating green jobs and new business opportunities across the country. 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 and low carbon exports are worth billions of pounds each year. According to a recent estimate, the UK low-carbon economy could grow more than four times faster than the rest of the economy between 2015 and 2030 – delivering £170 billion of exports and supporting up to 2 million jobs.

## ■ Solar Power: Non-domestic Rates

**Helen Hayes:**

**[8398]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions her Department has had with the Treasury on the application of business rates to solar power.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

This Government will conduct a fundamental review of business rates.

Ministers and officials regularly discuss a range of issues and topics with counterparts across Government, including on the issue of business rates.

## ■ Trains

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[9016]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps her Department is taking to support the development of battery trains.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Through the Faraday Battery Challenge, run by Innovate UK and funded by the Department, we have facilitated work with a leading UK train manufacturer to develop battery technology for use on trains.

Harnessing technology to drive innovation is one of the aims of the Rail Sector Deal, launched by BEIS and the Department for Transport in December 2018. The Rail Sector Deal is a partnership between the Government and the rail industry to help address the Grand Challenges we face. This includes maximising the advantages for UK industry from the global shift to clean growth and positioning the UK as a world leader in shaping the future of mobility.

**CABINET OFFICE**■ **Boston Consulting Group****Dr Alan Whitehead:**[\[7579\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has employed Boston Consulting Group in relation to Government preparations for the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Boston Consulting Group is providing pro-bono strategic project support to the COP26 Unit.

■ **Buy British Campaign****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[8161\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the oral contribution of 22 January 2020 of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Official Report column 289, what legislative proposals on procurement he plans to bring forward to enable the Government to (a) buy British and (b) support UK firms.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Leaving the EU presents a golden opportunity to reform our procurement rules by creating a brand new, bespoke system which works for British businesses and citizens, and complies with our international obligations. We intend to publish our proposals later this year.

■ **Cabinet Office: Sustainable Development****Mrs Pauline Latham:**[\[6661\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he will take to ensure his Department meets the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Cabinet Office supports the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals across Government, and is responsible for reporting on Goal Five (Achieve gender

equality and empower all women and girls) and Goal Ten (Reduce inequality within and among countries), through the work of the Government Equalities Office.

Last year's [Single Departmental Plan](#) provided an update of these Goals, and highlighted the work the Cabinet Office has done to support Government work towards Goals Seven (Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy), Eight (Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all), Twelve (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns) and Seventeen (Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development).

## ■ Childbirth

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:** [8198]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many babies were born prematurely in each (a) nation and (b) region of the UK in each of the last five years.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

### Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ8198.pdf]

## ■ Civil Servants: Average Earnings

**Jon Trickett:** [7589]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the civil service median gross salary is by (a) region and (b) grade.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Cabinet Office publishes data on civil servants' median pay by region and grade. The relevant data, as of 31 March 2019, is available via the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-median-salaries-by-uk-region-and-grade>

## ■ Civil Servants: Scotland

**Andrew Bowie:** [7220]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans there are to increase the number of civil service (a) jobs and (b) offices located in Scotland.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Government is clear that the administration of government needs to be less London-centric.

The Cabinet Office has established the Places for Growth programme to drive the necessary planning and preparation within departments and arm's length bodies to relocate roles out of London into the nations and regions of the United Kingdom.

We want to ensure we are realising the potential of all four nations of the United Kingdom and delivering opportunity across the UK. This includes Scotland, which will benefit from the relocation of Civil Service roles, for example the new government hubs being created in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

## ■ Climate Change

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[7577\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will produce a report on progress made towards COP26.

**Jeremy Quin:**

COP26 is a priority for this Government. We have established a dedicated unit, in the Cabinet Office, to deliver the event and draw together all related UK policy.

The Unit is focused on operational delivery and developing policy goals.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[7578\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government is requesting that international governments submit their Nationally Determined Contributions ahead of COP26 in November.

**Jeremy Quin:**

At the UN Climate Action Summit in September the Prime Minister called on all countries to increase their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). As part of our incoming COP Presidency, we are encouraging all countries to submit increased NDCs ahead of COP26 which represent their highest possible ambition. The UK will play its part and come forward with an enhanced NDC well ahead of COP26.

## ■ Employment: Parents

**Angela Rayner:**

[\[8316\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of families with (a) three year old and (b) four year old children that have (i) all parents in work and (ii) one or more parents not in work.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

### **Attachments:**

1. UKSA Response [PQ8316.pdf]

## ■ Freedom of Information: Disclosure of Information

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[7588\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reasons the proportion of Freedom of Information requests granted in full across Government has decreased since 2005.

**Chloe Smith:**

All requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act are considered on a case-by-case basis, and exemptions are applied to withhold sensitive information where appropriate. The Government continues to lead the way on transparency, and routinely publishes data beyond its obligations under the FOI Act.

**■ Infant Mortality****Deidre Brock:**[\[3777\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the infant mortality rate has been in England in each year since 2010.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Response [PQ3777.pdf]

**■ Police and Crime Commissioners: Elections****Wayne David:**[\[8158\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to publicise the Police and Crime Commissioner elections on 7 May 2020.

**Chloe Smith:**

The statutory responsibility to raise awareness of the Police and Crime Commissioner elections rests with the Electoral Commission and the Returning Officers running the polls, although political parties and candidates also have a major - but non-statutory - role. It is expected that candidates seeking votes will undertake activity to set out their policies and encourage participation.

In parallel to this, poll cards provide electors with details of the Government run freephone telephone number and website to obtain information about candidates, which can be downloaded from the website. A paper booklet can also be requested and sent for free to an elector's home address. Booklets can be ordered in large print, braille and audio versions.

The Government supports these statutory activities by providing funding to Police Area Returning Officers (PAROs) to raise awareness. The Government also undertakes a range of promotional activities, including via social media and the provision of advertising material to PAROs.

**DEFENCE**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Kirsty Blackman:**[\[8320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the equity of paying the equivalent of (a) £6.28 an hour for a newly trained army reservist, or (b) £4.68 an hour for a new recruit to the army reserves.

**Kirsty Blackman:**[\[8321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of (a) army reserves rates of pay and (b) the method by which those rates are calculated from regular army pay scales.

**Johnny Mercer:**

I refer the hon. Member to my previous answer on 9 September 2019 to Questions 286771, 286772, 286773 and 286774.

**Attachments:**

1. 286771 - Reserve Forces Pay [286771 - Reserve Forces Pay.docx]

■ **Army: Deployment****Jeremy Hunt:**[\[8201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many British Army units are (a) deployed on operations throughout the world and (b) able to be deployed within 48 hours; and if he will make a statement.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

83 British Army units currently have personnel deployed on 32 operations around the world.

There are two units earmarked to deploy headquarters, lead sub-units and specialist capability overseas within 48 hours. In the same timeframe, three further units, as well as an additional 1,500 personnel from across the Army, are ready to support operations within the UK covering support to the Police and civil authorities, for example for flood relief.

■ **Army: Recruitment****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[8412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many soldiers who enlisted aged (a) under 18 and (b) 18 or over dropped out of the army before completing their phase two training in the (i) 2015-16, (ii) 2016-17 and (iii) 2017-18 financial years.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The requested information is provided below:

Untrained Regular Soldiers Outflow from 1st April 2015 to 1st April 2018 Split by Age on Enlistment

**NUMBER OF UNTRAINED REGULAR SOLDIERS OUTFLOW SPLIT BY AGE GROUP ON ENLISTMENT**

<b>Financial Year of Outflow</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Under 18</b>	<b>18 and above</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,650</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>3,860</b>
<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2,020</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>1,470</b>
<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>1,300</b>
<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>1,790</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>1,220</b>

Source: Defence Statistics (Army)

**Notes/Caveats:**

The figures are for the Regular Army, excluding Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service and Mobilised Reserves.

Untrained outflow refers to personnel who left the Regular Army before completing their trade training (phase 2).

Personnel outflow more than once in the last five financial years is counted as a separate outflow. Age on enlistment is similarly separately counted.

Age on enlistment is calculated using date of birth and entry date. There are known problems with the entry date information extracted from JPA which is supposed to reflect their 'current entry date' but if personnel have transferred to the Army from another Service, served under an alternative assignment type (e.g. reserve forces), are re-entrants or have transferred from Other Ranks to Officers, their entry date may correspond to any of these events.

The figures are for outflow of untrained Regular soldiers broken down by financial years. This table has been compiled based on the year of outflow rather than the year of inflow used as the base for previous publication.

For presentation purpose, figures have been rounded to 10; numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear to be the sum of their parts.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

**[8413]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applicants for enlistment into the Army were aged (a) under 18 and (b) 18 or over in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Data is not available prior to 2013-14 as it was not collated centrally and so is unreliable.

Applications received to join the British Army from 1 April 2013 – 30 March 2019 are in the table below.

RECRUITING YEAR	UNDER18 APPLICATIONS	OVER18 APPLICATIONS
2013-14	14,910	74,666
2014-15	19,207	100,249
2015-16	17,876	96,678
2016-17	23,706	153,233
2017-18	21,288	114,381
2018-19	24,978	122,197

- This data has been provided from a single service source rather than official statistics produced by Defence Statistics. This is because Defence Statistics do not start to record an individual until they attend their first day of basic training.
- In order to generate the response, application data has been extracted at the earliest point an application is generated. This means that for the purpose of this question, if an individual generates multiple applications, they will be counted as multiple separate applications.

**Liz Saville Roberts:****[8414]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applicants to enlist in the army did not end up doing so; and for what reason, in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Data is not available prior to 2013-14 as it was not collated centrally and so is unreliable.

Number of Applicants that did not end up joining the British Army between 1 April 2013 and 30 March 2019 are in the table below

RECRUITING YEAR	TOTAL WITHDRAWN OR REJECTED IN PIPELINE	MAIN REASON FOR THE “WITHDRAWAL/REJECTION” IN PIPELINE
2013-14	58,419	Candidate Voluntarily disengaging from the process

RECRUITING YEAR	TOTAL WITHDRAWN OR REJECTED IN PIPELINE	MAIN REASON FOR THE "WITHDRAWAL/REJECTION" IN PIPELINE
2014-15	79,114	Candidate Voluntarily disengaging from the process
2015-16	77,055	Candidate Voluntarily disengaging from the process
2016-17	120,314	Candidate Voluntarily disengaging from the process
2017-18	80,357	Candidate Voluntarily disengaging from the process
2018-19	116,312	Candidate Voluntarily disengaging from the process

- This data has been provided from a single service source rather than official statistics produced by Defence Statistics. This is because Defence Statistics do not start to record individuals until they attend their first day of basic training.
- Applications include all streams, including Commonwealth, Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) and re-joiner.
- Rejections/withdrawals are from all streams, including Commonwealth, MPGS and re-joiners.
- In principle, a rejection arises when a candidate falls short of the required eligibility/assessment, whereas a withdrawal arises due to candidate choice.
- Of the reasons for a candidate to withdraw/be rejected, the candidate 'voluntarily disengaging from the process' was the most common factor.
- Candidates can voluntarily disengage from the process at any stage of the pipeline. There are circa 500 possible reasons candidates can provide for doing so.

## ■ Defence: Conferences

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[8159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 9 September 2019 to Question 286671 on Defence in UK Prosperity Review, what recent progress has been made on arranging an international conference on the economic value of defence.

**James Heappey:**

The Conference announced in the Written Ministerial Statement of 14 March 2019 (HCWS1411) will take place on 5 March. It will be held jointly with King's College London under the title "Assessing the Contribution of Defence to the UK Economy". It will bring together senior stakeholders from business, academia and Government to improve the understanding of how defence creates value across the UK and strengthens our ability to take account of this in future decisions.

**Defence: Procurement****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[7136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has plans in place for joint procurement between the UK and EU member states after the UK leaves the EU; and if he will make a statement.

**James Heappey:**

The UK regularly collaborates with international partners and will continue to explore the opportunity to work with partners in Europe and beyond on joint capability programmes.

**International Military Services: Finance****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[7288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 7 October 2019 to Question 292965, on International Military Services: Finance, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to make regular the transfer of taxpayer funds by Her Majesty's Treasury into court under the terms of the Ordnance Factories and Military Services Act 1984.

**James Heappey:**

The Department will always comply with any applicable substantive or procedural requirements of legislation.

**International Military Services: Legal Costs****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[8409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much IMS Ltd spent on legal costs in the 2018-19 financial year.

**James Heappey:**

International Military Services (IMS) Ltd has been a private limited company up until this Financial Year (2019-20) and was not required to lay its accounts before Parliament (as is the case with any other private limited company). IMS accounts are publicly available at Companies House. IMS operating costs are met from accumulated profit from business activities and investment interest.

**■ Iran: International Military Services**

**Tulip Siddiq:** [8399]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the instruction was given to IMS Ltd to settle its debt with Iran's MOSDAF agency.

**Tulip Siddiq:** [8400]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether IMS Ltd has discussed with the Iranian authorities whether its debt can be discharged by way of humanitarian supplies.

**Tulip Siddiq:** [8401]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether IMS Ltd has applied for a licence from the Chancellor of the Exchequer to pay its debt to Iran.

**James Heappey:**

Due to ongoing legal proceedings, it would not be appropriate to comment.

**Tulip Siddiq:** [8402]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 8 October 2019 to Question 292967, whether the dividend received by the then Secretary of State in 2010 from IMS Ltd was paid into the Consolidated Fund in line with the requirements of the Ordnance Factories and Military Services Act 1984 .

**James Heappey:**

Any dividends from investments are allocated in line with our normal financial and capability planning processes. The Department will always comply with any applicable substantive or procedural requirements of legislation.

**Tulip Siddiq:** [9098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the potential risk to UK citizens from the debt dispute between International Military Services Ltd and Iran's MODSAF is included in his Department's risk register.

**James Heappey:**

For reasons of National Security I cannot comment on the specific details of the Department's risk register.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Contracts**

**Ruth Jones:** [9143]

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

**James Heappey:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 28 January 2020 to Question 6683 to the hon. Member for Wansbeck (Mr Lavery).

**Attachments:**

1. 6683 - Ministry of Defence Procurement [6683 - Ministry of Defence Procurement.docx]

## ■ Royal Fleet Auxiliary: Procurement

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[8160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 22 January 2020 to Question 4716 on Royal Fleet Auxiliary: Procurement, for what reason disclosure of the cost to the public purse of a public procurement programme would prejudice commercial interests.

**James Heappey:**

Disclosure of the Fleet Solid Support Ship assessment phase funding provision, or of any breakdown of the allocation of that funding provision, would be prejudicial to the commercial interests of the Ministry of Defence in that it would provide to potential bidders in a future competition an insight into the likely available funding and its allocation.

## ■ Unmanned Air Vehicles

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[7166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the international legal framework is for the use of drones in conflict zones.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Remotely piloted aircraft may or may not carry arms, depending on their function. The use of force in armed conflict, regardless of the method of delivery, is governed by International Humanitarian Law (IHL). IHL regulates both the choice of weapons and the means and methods of warfare. Guidance to our armed forces on the interpretation and application of IHL is found in Joint Service Publication 383 The United Kingdom Manual of the Law of Armed Conflict; and Joint Doctrine Publication 0-30.2 Unmanned Aircraft Systems sets out UK Defence doctrine for the use of such systems, including the legal framework and moral and ethical issues.

## ■ Veterans: Northern Ireland

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[7223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many investigations of veterans in relation to the conflict in Northern Ireland have been found to be vexatious.

**Johnny Mercer:**

Questions about the administration of justice in Northern Ireland are for the relevant authorities. The Ministry of Defence remains committed to offering comprehensive legal and pastoral support for all veterans facing investigations as a result of their service on Operation Banner.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ BBC: Information Services**

**Jo Stevens:** [\[8340\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with representatives of the BBC on its decision to end BBC teletext pages 102 and 1610.

**Tracy Brabin:** [\[8480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the potential effect of the closure of the BBC Red Button Teletext service on the public's access to information.

**Nigel Adams:**

The BBC is operationally and editorially independent from the government; therefore, the government has no role in deciding whether BBC services, such as the BBC Red Button teletext service, should be continued.

It is the BBC's responsibility to assess the potential effect of the closure of the BBC Red Button service on the public's access to information. The Government welcomes the BBC's decision to pause the closure of the Red Button service, ahead of its review of the impact of the closure on the most vulnerable including the elderly, and deaf and blind licence fee payers.

**Jo Stevens:** [\[8341\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has undertaken an impact assessment on the effect on people who are both deaf and elderly of the decision by the BBC to end teletext pages 102 and 1610.

**Nigel Adams:**

The BBC is operationally and editorially independent from the government; therefore, the government has no role in deciding whether BBC services, such as the BBC Red Button teletext service, should be continued.

It is the BBC's responsibility to assess the potential effect of the closure of the BBC Red Button service on deaf and elderly people across the UK. The Government welcomes the BBC's decision to pause the closure of the Red Button service, ahead of its review of the impact of the closure on the most vulnerable including the elderly, and deaf and blind licence fee payers.

**■ Football: Homophobia**

**Catherine West:** [\[8417\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support his Department has provided to LGBT+ football fans in relation to tackling homophobia in that sport.

**Nigel Adams:**

Homophobia or any form of discrimination has no place in football or society, and we want sport to be at the forefront of promoting equality.

On 15 January, I met with the Football Association and discussed their progress on combatting discrimination in football, including their work improving reporting mechanisms at grassroots levels. Whilst progress has been made, there is still more to do and we will be calling in all the footballing authorities for a further update about their work on this important issue.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport supports the work of Sport England (our national sport council) with the national governing bodies of individual sports and sport organisations on anti-homophobia initiatives aimed at encouraging inclusion, for example Stonewall's Rainbow Laces Campaign. Government is determined to show support for LGBT+ equality and inclusivity in sport, on and off the pitch.

**■ Football: Living Wage****Catherine West:**[\[8416\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has had discussions with Premier League football teams on paying the living wage to their employees.

**Nigel Adams:**

The National Living Wage is the statutory minimum wage for those aged 25 and over, and the Government is committed to ensuring that everyone entitled to the National Living Wage receives it.

It is up to individual businesses to decide whether they would like to pay employees under the age of 25, the National Living Wage.

**■ Gambling: Advertising****Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**[\[6731\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the potential effect of targeted advertisements for online gambling sites on gambling addiction rates; and if he will take steps to ban such advertisements.

**Helen Whately:**

Ministers and officials of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport work closely with their counterparts in the Department for Health and Social Care on the issue of problem gambling. The Health Secretary has announced that a cross-government addiction strategy, which will include gambling, is to be published in 2020 and the two departments are collaborating on this.

Gambling operators who advertise to a UK audience have to comply with the advertising codes of practice issued by the Broadcast Committee of Advertising

Practice (BCAP) and the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP), which are enforced by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The codes apply across all advertising platforms, including broadcast, online and social media. A wide range of provisions in the codes are designed to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm. For example, gambling adverts must not target children or portray, condone or encourage gambling behaviour that is socially irresponsible.

Last year the government announced its intention to review how online advertising is regulated in the UK, looking at how well the current regime is equipped to tackle the challenges posed by developments in online advertising. The announcement can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/jeremy-wrights-statement-on-the-cairncross-review>. Further details of the review will be published shortly.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

**[6732]**

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the voluntary ban on gambling adverts during live, pre-watershed sport on TV that was introduced in 2019 on trends in the level of gambling addiction; and if she will make it her policy to encourage an extension of that ban to (a) family television shows and (b) on-demand services.

**Helen Whately:**

The Gambling Industry Code for Socially Responsible Advertising prohibits gambling advertising on television before 9pm, except in a limited number of circumstances, those being for bingo, lotteries, and until last year, sports betting around televised sport. In August 2019 the Industry group for Responsible Gambling extended its voluntary commitment to include advertising during sporting events. This includes a 'whistle-to-whistle' ban on all TV betting adverts during pre-watershed live sport, starting five minutes before the event begins, and ending five minutes after it finishes. This also applies to live streaming of events online. Additional measures include an end to betting adverts around highlight shows and re-runs, and an end to pre-watershed bookmaker sponsorship of sports programmes. The code also bans free sign-up offers being targeted at new customers before 9pm and requires all TV adverts to feature a responsible gambling message for the duration of the advert.

Gambling operators who advertise to a UK audience have to comply with the advertising codes of practice issued by the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP) and the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP), which are enforced by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The codes apply across all advertising platforms, including broadcast, online and social media. A wide range of provisions in the codes are designed to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm. For example, gambling adverts must not appear during programming commissioned for or principally directed at children, or during programmes likely to appeal directly to children. Gambling adverts also must not portray, condone or encourage gambling behaviour that is socially irresponsible. These rules also apply to on demand services.

We will continue to monitor issues around gambling advertising and consider any new evidence carefully, including the ASA's forthcoming report looking at children's exposure to age restricted advertising in 2019.

## ■ **Gambling: Regulation**

**Catherine West:**

[\[8415\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Department has made an assessment of the adequacy of the powers of the Gambling Regulator.

**Helen Whately:**

The Gambling Commission has broad and flexible powers to set licence conditions and take action where there is evidence of harm, including the power to suspend or revoke a licence, impose financial penalties or prosecute criminal offences.

The Government has committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 to make sure it is fit for the digital age. We will announce further details in due course.

## ■ **Internet: Safety**

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[6710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on progressing the Government's plans for the Online Harms Bill.

**Matt Warman:**

Ministers have regular meetings and discussions with their ministerial colleagues on a range of issues, including the proposed legislation on online safety. As the Prime Minister said in Prime Minister's Questions on the 15th January, it was discussed at Cabinet in January.

## ■ **Irish National Lottery**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[7140\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what representations his Department has received on missing scratch card prizes in the Irish National Lottery.

**Helen Whately:**

The National Lottery operates in the United Kingdom only. No representations have been made to DCMS on this matter, which is for the Irish Government.

## ■ **Lotteries**

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[7232\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to respond to the consultation on minimum ages for National Lottery

games; and whether he plans to include in that response proposals relating to (a) the People's Postcode Lottery and (b) other national lotteries.

**Helen Whately:**

DCMS held a consultation seeking views on the minimum age for playing National Lottery games only, from July to October 2019. The responses are currently being analysed and I will formally respond in due course.

■ **Museums and Galleries: Fees and Charges**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[7194\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of national museums charging for specific exhibitions.

**Helen Whately:**

It is government policy to maintain free entry to the permanent collections of the national museums. However, DCMS-sponsored museums are entitled to charge for temporary specific exhibitions. Such exhibitions, in addition to helping generate income, are a vital part of the museums' visitor offer. At any one time, the public will be able to enjoy a range of free and paid-for exhibitions.

■ **Music: Discrimination and Harassment**

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[6743\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the level of (a) harassment and (b) discrimination in the music sector.

**Nigel Adams:**

No such assessment has been undertaken. This government believes that harassment and discrimination are unacceptable - whether in the music industry or any other sector. Everyone has the right to feel safe at work and people can only thrive when they operate in a respectful and tolerant environment so that they can make the most of their talents.

We welcome the work undertaken by the Incorporated Society of Musicians, the Musicians Union and others within the sector to help address this issue through offering support, guidance and monitoring.

■ **National Lottery**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[7139\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will ensure that all recorded (a) breaches by and (b) fines levied on the National Lottery operator in the last 25 years are disclosed to the public.

**Helen Whately:**

The Gambling Commission is the independent regulator of the National Lottery. Information about breaches and fines levied during the current, third licence period (2009 - present day) is publicly available on the Gambling Commission's website at the following link: <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/news-action-and-statistics/Regulatory-action/National-Lottery-regulatory-action.aspx>

Corresponding information pertaining to the second licence period (2002-2009) was publicly available on the Gambling Commission's website and is now available on request. The Gambling Commission are currently looking at what information they hold regarding breaches during the first licence period 1994 to 2002.

**■ Sports: Females****Tracy Brabin:****[8421]**

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when her Department plans to respond to the consultation on including the women's equivalent to men's sporting events in Category A of the list of sporting and other events of national interest maintained under section 97(1) of the Broadcasting Act 1996.

**Nigel Adams:**

In July 2019 the government consulted on whether to add women's equivalents of men's events currently on the list to both group A and group B categories. The consultation closed on 11 December 2019. The government is now carefully considering the responses in detail and we will respond in due course.

**■ Television: Licensing****Jo Stevens:****[8342]**

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department will take to ensure that (a) deaf and (b) elderly BBC licence fee payers will be adequately provided for by the BBC.

**Nigel Adams:**

The BBC is editorially and operationally independent of the Government and the Government has no say on what programmes or services the BBC provides for deaf or elderly licence fee payers.

However, the Royal Charter requires the BBC to serve all audiences - including deaf and elderly licence fee payers - through the provision of impartial, high-quality and distinctive output and services which inform, educate and entertain.

With regard to elderly licence fee payers, the Government is disappointed with the BBC's decision to restrict the over 75 licence fee concession to only those in receipt of pension credit. We recognise the value of free TV licences for over-75s and believe they should be funded by the BBC.

For deaf licence fee payers, Ofcom is responsible for setting a Code on Television Access Services, which includes guidance which must be observed by the BBC in

relation to providing subtitles and signing on its television channels. The Code sets out 10-year statutory targets for the BBC in relation to subtitling (100%) and signing (5%). Ofcom is currently reviewing how the BBC should make its UK Public Services accessible.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Alternative Education: Scotland

**Seema Malhotra:** [8306]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Scottish Government on the effectiveness of nurture groups in Scotland.

**Nick Gibb:**

Ministers at the Department for Education have not discussed nurture groups with their counterparts in the Scottish Government.

I met with Nurture UK in January 2020 to discuss the use of nurture groups in schools and the evidence they have collected.

In 2018, the Department published updated Mental Health & Behaviour in Schools Guidance, which can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools-2>. The purpose of this guidance is to help schools to identify pupils whose behaviour may be a result of an underlying mental health difficulty, and to understand when and how to put in place support. It includes links to further sources of practice and advice, including Nurture UK. It is for schools to decide whether a nurture group might be of benefit, based on the evidence of impact and the needs of their pupils.

### ■ Breakfast Clubs: Schools

**Angela Rayner:** [8317]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2020 to Question 1022 on Breakfast Clubs: Schools, what the annual value was of the contract awarded to Family Action in March 2018.

**Michelle Donelan:**

In March 2018, a contract was awarded to Family Action who are working in partnership with Magic Breakfast to deliver the National School Breakfast Programme. The initial value of this contract, broken down by financial year, was as follows: 2017-18: £0.3 million, 2018-19: £9.6 million and 2019-20: £13.9 million. Further information can be found on the Contracts Finder website, which is accessible from here:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/a43bea33-79c5-4c77-8c23-d0dc127f1410?p=@QxUIRRPT0=NjJNT08=UF>.

In October 2019, this contract was extended by a further year. Up to £11.8 million additional funding will be invested in the financial year 2020-21. This will kick-start or

improve breakfast clubs, making them sustainable in the long run. In total, the department has made over £35 million available to this programme between 2018 and 2021.

### ■ Children: Daycare

**Angela Rayner:**

[8319]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the £1 billion additional funding allocated to (a) wraparound and (b) holiday childcare will result in an increase in the number of children eligible for free childcare.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department wants to give parents the freedom, support and choice to look after their children in the way that works best for them. That is why from 2021 the Department will be investing £1 billion to help create more high-quality wraparound and holiday childcare places. We will announce further details on this new investment in due course.

### ■ Children: Poverty

**Steve Reed:**

[8312]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the relationship between child poverty and demand on children's services.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The Children in Need review: final data and analysis, published in June 2019, found a moderate correlation between Looked After Children rates in 2018 and the percentage of children in low-income families in 2016. This is available in figure 5d, p.11 & 12 from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/809108/CIN\\_review\\_final\\_analysis\\_publication.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/809108/CIN_review_final_analysis_publication.pdf).

Comprehensive data on 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 demand for children's services.

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.

### ■ Erasmus+ Programme

**Layla Moran:**

[8452]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answers of 21 January 2020 to Questions 4479, 4480 and 4481 on the Erasmus+ Programme, what assessment he

has made of the implications for his policies of the proposed Erasmus regulation for 2021-27 as adopted by the European Parliament on 28 March 2019, text number P8\_TA(2019)0324.

**Layla Moran:**

**[8453]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department have attended (i) trilogues, (ii) meetings of the Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member States to the EU and (iii) other relevant meetings to determine the response of the Council of Ministers to the proposed Erasmus regulation for 2021-27 adopted by the European Parliament on 28 March 2019; and what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the position taken by the Council to date.

**Chris Skidmore:**

Ministers and officials do not attend trilogues as these are held between the Presidency, the Commission and the representatives from the European Parliament's CULT committee.

As stated in my answer of 21 January 2020 to Questions 4479, 4480 and 4481, the proposed regulations for the next 2021-27 Erasmus+ programme are still being discussed in the EU and have yet to be finalised.

The government highly values international exchange and cooperation in education and training and, as noted in the Political Declaration, the UK is open to participation in certain EU programmes, such as the next Erasmus+ programme (2021-27), if it is in our interest to do so. Future participation in EU programmes will be a subject of our negotiations on the future UK-EU relationship.

## ■ Food Poverty: Academic Year

**Grahame Morris:**

**[8228]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the reasons for holiday hunger that resulted in the piloting of funding for free holiday activities and meals for disadvantaged families.

**Michelle Donelan:**

In January 2018, following the All-Party Parliamentary Group report "Hungry Holidays" and the subsequent Private Members' Bill introduced by Frank Field, we announced a programme of research and pilots to explore ways of supporting disadvantaged families during school holidays.

The department awarded £2 million of funding to 7 organisations to deliver free healthy food and activities to children and families in some of the most disadvantaged areas in the country during the 2018 summer holidays. The organisations informed us that with this money they were able to support around 280 clubs and reach around 18,000 children.

In summer 2019, we invested £9 million in 11 local authority areas reaching around 50,000 children and we will announce the winners of the summer 2020 bidding round in due course.

We have commissioned an independent evaluation of the programme which will be published in 2020.

## ■ Further Education: Finance

**Angela Rayner:**

**[8315]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the base rate of funding was for 16-19 year olds in 2013, in 2019-20 prices.

**Michelle Donelan:**

In 2013/14, the base rate of funding for 16-19 education was £4,000. Using the most recent GDP deflators to calculate the value of this rate at 2019-20 prices produces a figure of £4,435.

We are investing an extra £400 million in 16 to 19 education in 2020-21 to ensure we are building the skills that our country needs. 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 education than in 5 to 16 schooling. This includes a 4.7% increase in the base rate to £4,188. With other funding announced, such as an additional £120 million of funding for high cost and high value subjects and £35 million to support students with Maths and English GCSE retakes, this represents an increase of around 7% in overall 16 to 19 funding.

Funding for future years beyond 2020-21 will be considered as part of the next Spending Review.

## ■ National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**

**[8132]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many student places the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure has; and how many students have (a) enrolled on, (b) completed and (c) failed to finish or continue their course.

**Michelle Donelan:**

There are 1200 learner places available at the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure each year. Since it opened in September 2017, there have been 504 enrolments. 99 students have completed their courses and 92 learners withdrew.

## ■ Pupil Exclusions

**Seema Malhotra:**

**[8303]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to reduce the number of permanent school exclusions.

**Seema Malhotra:****[8304]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on researching the link between the level of permanent school exclusions and youth crime.

**Seema Malhotra:****[8305]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase the proportion of students in pupil referral units achieving grade 5 or above in GCSE English and Maths.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government is taking forward an ambitious programme of action on behaviour, exclusion and alternative provision (AP). This 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.

Engagement in full-time, high-quality education is a protective factor against children's risk of involvement in serious violence. Research has shown that excluded children have a higher risk of being both a victim and perpetrator of crime. However, we must be careful not to draw a simple causal link. The surrounding issues and causes of serious violence are complicated. The Department is working with the education and care sectors, the Home Office and other Government Departments to help make our streets safer by supporting children and young people who are at risk of being caught up in serious violence.

The Department recognises that timely access to full-time, high-quality AP plays a critical role in improving outcomes for excluded pupils who may have vulnerabilities that make them at risk of involvement in crime. We will expand AP and improve the quality of the sector so that pupils in AP receive the right support and an education on par with that received by their mainstream peers. Further information on the timeframes for this work will be provided in due course.

## ■ Schools: Industry

**Seema Malhotra:****[8307]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to encourage industry to engage with local schools on increasing (a) employment and (b) apprenticeship opportunities.

**Michelle Donelan:**

As part of our careers strategy setting out our aim to develop a world-class careers system, the Careers and Enterprise Company is taking forward work in this area.

It has developed the Enterprise Advisers Network, resulting in schools, colleges and businesses working together on a national scale. Over 150 businesses are engaged as cornerstone employers and more than 2,500 business people are working with schools and colleges as Enterprise Advisers to improve careers provision. This has

led to at least 2 million young people regularly meeting employers and learning about the world of work.

It is establishing 40 Careers Hubs around the country, which are groups of 20 or more secondary schools and colleges located in the same geographic area, working together, and with partners in the business, public, education and voluntary sectors to ensure careers outcomes are improved for all young people and providing young people aged 11-18 with employer encounters.

In addition, schools must open their doors to providers of technical education and apprenticeships to give all young people a better understanding of the qualifications, courses and subjects available. This is enshrined in law, requiring all maintained schools and academies to publish a policy statement setting out how they will do this.

We also offer a free service to schools through the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) project to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and support to enable them to promote apprenticeships to their students. As part of the ASK project, we work with employers to offer Apprenticeship Live broadcasts that schools can stream directly into the classroom. Employers can use these to showcase their apprenticeship programmes and they give students and teachers the opportunity to speak to employers and their apprentices directly. In 2018/19 we delivered over 40 live broadcasts covering a variety of sectors, reaching over 130,000 students and 1,965 teachers.

## ■ Social Services: Finance

**Angela Rayner:**

**[8318]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how the £1 billion in additional funding allocated to children's and adult social care will be divided between (a) children's and (b) adult social care in each local authority in England.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The additional £1 billion grant for adults and children's social care, and the continuing £410 million social care grant, can be used flexibly by local authorities to deliver both adults and children's social care based on local priorities.

Local councils understand the needs of their communities' best and it is important that they have the freedom and flexibility to manage those needs.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Agriculture: Migrant Workers

**Daniel Zeichner:**

**[8335]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many non-UK EU nationals worked in the agricultural sector in each of the last three years, by county.

**George Eustice:**

The information requested at this level of detail is not held by Defra. However, we can provide information taken from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Population Survey which shows the number of EU/European Economic Area (EEA) nationals working permanently in the agricultural sector for the whole of the UK. These figures will not include seasonal workers living in communal or temporary accommodation.

The ONS Annual Population Survey showed that the number of EEA nationals working permanently in UK agriculture in each of the last three years was approximately 33,000 in 2017, 19,000 in 2018 and 18,000 in 2019.

**■ Beef: Imports****Ben Lake:**[\[8436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to protect the UK's beef from imports from countries with lower regulatory standards.

**George Eustice:**

Any future trade agreements must work for consumers, farmers, and businesses. Leaving the EU presents fantastic new trading opportunities for British food, which is world renowned for its quality and high standards on safety, animal welfare and environmental protection. UK success in the global marketplace depends on us continuing to maintain this reputation, competing at the top of the value chain. We are clear that in all of our trade negotiations, we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards.

With regard to beef specifically, current EU regulations which prohibit the use of artificial growth hormones in both domestic production and imported products have been transposed into law across the UK.

**■ Beef: Sub-Saharan Africa****Ben Lake:**[\[8435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for the UK's net imports of carbon dioxide per head of the potential increase in imported beef from sub-Saharan Africa.

**George Eustice:**

Defra has published experimental statistics which estimate imported greenhouse gas emissions compared with emissions from domestic production.

Emissions from beef cattle are predominantly methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) from enteric fermentation. Methane emissions from beef cattle depend on species, pasture types, feed type, and animal weight amongst other factors. This data is not routinely published for sub-Saharan African countries making it difficult to carry out an explicit assessment for this region.

The Government is clear that increased trade should not come at the expense of the environment and we will develop a trading framework that supports foreign and domestic policy, sustainability, environmental and development goals.

■ **Dogs: Meat**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[7133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with (a) her global counterparts and (b) animal rights groups on cruelty in the global dog meat trade.

**George Eustice:**

The Government shares the public's high regard for animal welfare, including the welfare of dogs and we are committed to making the UK a world leader in protection of animals as we leave the EU. The Government has made wide ranging commitments on animal welfare.

Whilst the Government has not held any direct discussions with other governments or animal welfare organisations since the General Election specifically about the dog meat trade, we will continue to influence good animal welfare standards on the international stage through membership of such organisations as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

■ **Fishing Catches: Computer Software**

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[7675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on how many fishing vessels the catch recording app was live tested during fishing trips, prior to the fish being landed, before the Government (a) determined whether that app met the service standards set by the Government Digital Services and (b) introduced the fishing vessel licence condition.

**George Eustice:**

The app was tested with seven vessels during the development phase in early September 2019. This was followed by a soft-launch testing exercise with 17 further vessels which successfully completed more than 100 fishing trips.

The development phase met the service standards set by the Government Digital Services.

To date all over 5.9 metre vessels have been invited to join the catch recording service, over 1000 have accepted and almost 4000 catch records have been submitted.

## ■ Food: Exports

**Hywel Williams:**

**[8155]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the (a) tonnage and (b) value was of exports of (i) beef, (ii) sheep meat, (iii) pork, (iv) dairy and (v) poultry products to each destination country in each of the last three years.

**George Eustice:**

According to Defra analysis of HM Revenue & Customs overseas trade statistics, UK exports in the last three years were as follows:

Beef & veal and beef products:

	2016	2017	2018
Tonnes	120,000	110,000	120,000
Value	£393m	£440m	£474m

The Irish Republic was the top export market for beef and veal, with 120,000 tonnes worth £426 million over the three years. Second was the Netherlands with 80,000 tonnes worth £273 million. Third was France with 28,000 tonnes worth £150 million.

Sheep meat:

	2016	2017	2018
Tonnes	78,000	90,000	83,000
Value	£327m	£385m	£367m

France was the top export market for sheep meat, with 120,000 tonnes worth £509 million over the three years. Second was Germany with 40,000 tonnes worth £174 million. Third was Belgium with 22,000 tonnes worth 124 million.

Pork, bacon & ham:

	2016	2017	2018
Tonnes	220,000	240,000	240,000
Value	£293m	£347m	£354m

The Irish Republic was the top export market for pork, bacon and ham, with 140,000 tonnes worth £363 million over the three years. Second was China with 120,000 tonnes worth £130 million. Third was Germany with 100,000 tonnes worth £108 million.

Dairy products:

	2016	2017	2018
Tonnes	1,100,000	1,400,000	1,400,000
Value	£1.3bn	£1.7bn	£1.8bn

The Irish Republic was the top export market for dairy products, with 2,700,000 tonnes worth £1.6 billion over the three years. Second was the Netherlands with 310,000 tonnes worth £506 million. Third was France with 150,000 tonnes worth £407 million.

Poultry meat and poultry products:

	2016	2017	2018
Tonnes	340,000	400,000	430,000
Value	£358m	£404m	£438m

The Irish Republic was the top export market for poultry meat and poultry products by value, with 160,000 tonnes worth £428 million over the three years. The Netherlands was the top export market by volume, with 320,000 tonnes worth £121 million over the three years. France was the third largest export market with 100,000 tonnes worth £107 million.

## ■ Food: Imports

**Hywel Williams:**

**[8153]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what (a) tonnage and (b) value of (i) beef, (ii) sheep meat, (iii) pork, (iv) dairy and (v) poultry products have been imported in the last three years, by country of source.

**George Eustice:**

According to Defra analysis of HM Revenue & Customs overseas trade statistics, UK imports in the last three years were as follows:

Beef & veal and beef products:

	2016	2017	2018
Tonnes	340,000	360,000	360,000
Value	£1.2bn	£1.3bn	£1.4bn

The Irish Republic was the top import market for beef and veal, with 700,000 tonnes worth £2.6 billion over the three years. Second was Brazil with 80,000 tonnes worth £274 million. Third was the Netherlands with 60,000 tonnes worth £262 million.

Sheep meat:

	2016	2017	2018
Tonnes	90,000	80,000	78,000
Value	£345m	£369m	£373m

New Zealand was the top import market for sheep meat, with 170,000 tonnes worth £790 million over the three years. Second was Australia with 32,000 tonnes worth £140 million. Third was the Irish Republic with 23,000 tonnes worth £78 million.

Pork, bacon & ham:

	2016	2017	2018
Tonnes	680,000	690,000	670,000
Value	£1.3bn	£1.5bn	£1.4bn

Denmark was the top import market for pork, bacon and ham, with 690,000 tonnes worth £1.3 billion over the three years. Second was the Netherlands with 450,000 tonnes worth £890 million. Third was Germany with 360,000 tonnes worth £754 million.

Dairy products:

	2016	2017	2018
Tonnes	1,400,000	1,500,000	1,600,000
Value	£2.6bn	£3.0bn	£3.3bn

The Irish Republic was the top import market for dairy products, with 1,300,000 tonnes worth £2.2 billion over the three years. Second was France with 840,000 tonnes worth £1.5 billion. Third was Germany with 700,000 tonnes worth £1.1 billion.

Poultry meat and poultry products:

	2016	2017	2018
Tonnes	860,000	850,000	860,000
Value	£2.0bn	£2.2bn	£2.4bn

The Netherlands was the top import market for poultry meat and poultry products, with 700,000 tonnes worth £1.9 billion over the three years. Second was Thailand with 440,000 tonnes worth £1.3 billion. Third was Poland with 380,000 tonnes worth £929 million.

**Hywel Williams:**

**[8154]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the (a) value and (b) proportion of market share was of imports of (i) beef, (ii) sheep meat, (iii) pork, (iv) dairy and (v) poultry products in each nation of the UK over the last three years.

**George Eustice:**

Data at the level of detail requested is not available.

According to Defra analysis of HM Revenue & Customs regional trade statistics, UK imports by region over the last three years (2016 to 2018) were as follows:

Meat and meat preparations:

UK REGION	IMPORT VALUE (16-18)	SHARE OF IMPORTS
England	£16bn	81%
Wales	£378m	1.9%
Scotland	£532m	2.7%
Northern Ireland	£1.5bn	7.5%
Unallocated regional trade	£1.4bn	7.0%

Dairy and eggs:

UK REGION	IMPORT VALUE (16-18)	SHARE OF IMPORTS
England	£7.2bn	77%
Wales	£172m	1.8%
Scotland	£281m	3.0%
Northern Ireland	£511m	5.4%
Unallocated regional trade	£1.2bn	13%

■ **Tree Planting: Wallasey**

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

**[8150]**

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 Wallasey.

**Rebecca Pow:**

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

Working with the Devolved Administrations, the Government is committed to planting 30,000 hectares per year of new forests across the UK by 2025, in line with the Committee on Climate Change's recommendation. In England, the Nature for Climate fund will help drive planting in this Parliament.

We are supporting the creation of a Great Northumberland Forest, where one million trees will be planted by 2024. We are also investing £5.7 million to accelerate and further develop the Northern Forest - planting 1.8 million new trees, helping towards a long-term ambition of 50 million trees over 25 years.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### ■ **Burma: Rohingya**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[7180]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support he will provide for the enforcement of the International Court of Justice's provisional measures indicated in the case Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar).

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

We have welcomed the International Court of Justice's decision on provisional measures, which was clear that Myanmar must do more to protect the Rohingya. We urge Myanmar to comply with the provisional measures in full. We are exploring with partners how we can best ensure that Myanmar implements the provisional measures, including through the United Nations Security Council.

### ■ **China: Oppression**

**Jonathan Edwards:**

**[8213]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in the Chinese Government on the long-term persecution of (a) the Uyghur Muslims, (b) Falun Gong practitioners and (c) other ethnic and religious minority groups in China.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

We remain deeply concerned about the persecution of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and others on the grounds of their religion or belief in China. We regularly raise our concerns about human rights and freedom of religion or belief with the Chinese authorities at senior levels. Most recently our UK Ambassador to China raised our concerns with Vice Foreign Minister Qin Gang on 24 December 2019. We also regularly discuss the situation in Xinjiang with likeminded partners including at the UN. We have issued or joined a number of statements registering our concern in recent months: on 29 October 2019 at UN Third Committee, the UK read out a joint statement signed by 22 others drawing attention to the human rights violations and abuses in Xinjiang and called on China to uphold its obligations to respect human rights. On 26 September 2019 during an Urgent

Question, the Foreign Secretary set out the UK's position on the persecution of groups in China on the grounds of religion or belief. As the Foreign Secretary stated in the House, we are concerned that Chinese Government guidelines on unapproved religious activity, education and travel may restrict the peaceful observation of those rights.

## ■ China: Politics and Government

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[7247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Chinese counterpart on (a) the situation in Hong Kong and (b) recent UN reports on the treatment of Uighur minorities.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

The Foreign Secretary has set out our concerns about the situation in Hong Kong directly to both the Chinese Foreign Minister, State Councillor Wang Yi and the Hong Kong Chief Executive, Carrie Lam. The Foreign Secretary made clear that meaningful political dialogue is the only way to resolve the situation. The Foreign Secretary also raised Hong Kong with the Chinese Ambassador in London on 19 November 2019. Senior officials have remained in regular contact with the authorities in Beijing and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government. The leadership in China and Hong Kong is in no doubt about the strength of UK concern over the current situation, and our commitment to seeing the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Joint Declaration upheld.

We have particularly serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang including the extra-judicial detention of over a million Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in “political re-education camps”, systematic restrictions on Uyghur culture and the practice of Islam, and extensive and invasive surveillance targeting minorities. On 26 September during an Urgent Question on Hong Kong the Foreign Secretary set out the UK's serious concerns about the credible reports of over a million Uyghur Muslims being held in so-called “re-education camps”. He stated in the House that the British Government will continue to ensure that these concerns are expressed directly with Chinese authorities. Most recently, the UK Ambassador to China raised our concerns with Vice Foreign Minister Qin Gang on 24 December 2019. The UK also regularly raises the human rights situation in Xinjiang at the UN Human Rights Council.

## ■ China: Transplant Surgery

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[8211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he holds information on the number of UK nationals who have travelled to China for organ transplants in the last five years.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

There are no legal provisions in place that prevent UK nationals from unknowingly participating in China's organ transplant system. Following the Westminster Hall Debate on Forced Organ Extraction on 26 March 2019, the former Minister for Asia and the Pacific commissioned from officials additional information on five countries/territories named by MPs during the Westminster Hall Debate as having such provisions. These findings were sent to the Home Office. Numbers of patients travelling to China for transplants are not collated.

**Jonathan Edwards:**[\[8212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether (a) legal and (b) other provisions are in place to ensure that UK nationals do not unknowingly take part in China's illegal organ trade.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

There are no legal provisions in place that prevent UK nationals from unknowingly participating in China's organ transplant system. Following the Westminster Hall Debate on Forced Organ Extraction on 26 March 2019, the former Minister for Asia and the Pacific commissioned from officials additional information on five countries/territories named by MPs during the Westminster Hall Debate as having such provisions. These findings were sent to the Home Office. Numbers of patients travelling to China for transplants are not collated.

**■ China: Uighurs****Jonathan Edwards:**[\[8214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in the Chinese Government on the finding by the China Tribunal that the Chinese Government are guilty of humanitarian crimes against Uyghur Muslims.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

We remain deeply concerned about the persecution of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and others on the grounds of their religion or belief in China. We regularly raise our concerns about human rights and freedom of religion or belief with the Chinese authorities at senior levels. Most recently our UK Ambassador to China raised our concerns with Vice Foreign Minister Qin Gang on 24 December 2019. We also regularly discuss the situation in Xinjiang with likeminded partners including at the UN. We have issued or joined a number of statements registering our concern in recent months: on 29 October 2019 at UN Third Committee, the UK read out a joint statement signed by 22 others drawing attention to the human rights violations and abuses in Xinjiang and called on China to uphold its obligations to respect human rights. On 26 September 2019 during an Urgent Question, the Foreign Secretary set out the UK's position on the persecution of groups in China on the grounds of religion or belief. As the Foreign Secretary stated in the House, we are concerned that Chinese Government guidelines on unapproved

religious activity, education and travel may restrict the peaceful observation of those rights.

## ■ Christianity: Oppression

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[7147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help support Christians at risk of religious persecution in countries around the world.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

As I stated in my [Minister Wheeler] answer of 21 January, the persecution of Christians, and indeed individuals of all faiths or beliefs, remains of profound concern to us. The NGO Open Doors estimate that 260 *[updated figure from latest report]* million Christians experience high or extreme persecution around the world. The scale of this persecution prompted the former Foreign Secretary to ask the Bishop of Truro to examine how the British Government could better support the plight of persecuted Christians around the world.

As you know Bishop Philip published a hard-hitting report with 22 ambitious recommendations which we have accepted in full. Only two of the 22 recommendations are Christian specific, with the others focussing on FoRB for all. Work is ongoing to implement the recommendations in a way that will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief. 10 recommendations have already been implemented, or are in the process of being implemented. The work on the Truro recommendations sits within our strong commitment to stand up for those persecuted on account of their religion or belief all over the globe. We have encouraged our diplomatic missions to consider what they can do in response to the Review, and to use it as a lever to engage their host governments where human rights violations and abuses relating to freedom of religion or belief are of concern.

## ■ Climate Change Convention: Glasgow

**Mr Jonathan Lord:**

[\[8263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what progress has been made on preparations to host the UN climate change summit in Glasgow in late 2020.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

The 2020 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) will be a major international moment in 2020. Its successful delivery is a top priority across HMG and is being led by a central Cabinet Office COP 26 Unit. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will be working in partnership with a number of other government departments such as the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to deliver a successful summit.

## ■ Developing Countries: Education

**Harriett Baldwin:**

**[7200]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what progress his Department has made on delivering the goals agreed at the first meeting of the Platform for Girls Education at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in April 2018.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

The Platform for Girls' Education was launched at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in April 2018. The Platform aims to keep girls' education high on the Commonwealth agenda during the UK's term as Chair in Office of the Commonwealth. The former Foreign Secretary co-chaired the first meeting of the Platform at the UN General Assembly in September 2018. There, it was agreed that the Platform would issue a set of recommendations, in advance of the next meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government in Rwanda in June 2020. These recommendations will focus attention on the key issues that need to be addressed if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Since then, the Platform has issued two papers – one on the state of girls' education in the Commonwealth, the other on gender responsive education sector plans. The Platform will issue its flagship paper in February 2020, on the importance of political leadership in driving change on girls' education. This paper will include the Platform's recommendations, which we will promote within the Commonwealth and beyond. The Government continues to champion girls' education through the 'Leave No Girl Behind' campaign, and at the UN General Assembly in September 2019, the Prime Minister announced £515 million to provide over 12 million children – half of them girls – with a decent education.

## ■ Diplomatic Service: Religious Freedom

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[7134]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure the implementation of its revised toolkit on freedom of religion or belief by embassies.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

We have developed a workshop that helps our Posts to implement the toolkit on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The toolkit was developed with top legal and academic experts and is intended to support FCO human rights desk officers as they promote this human right in practice, and respond to violations of it. This workshop has been successfully trialled with colleagues at our Embassy in Bahrain. We are looking for further opportunities to run the workshop and other means of encouraging posts to make active use of the toolkit.

## ■ Egypt: Religious Freedom

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[7132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to support the Government in Egypt in providing for the security and well-being of (a) Coptic Christians and (b) other religious minorities in that country.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

We regularly raise with the Egyptian authorities the human rights of religious minorities, and make the case for them to be accorded the necessary protections under Egyptian law. We welcome President Sisi's consistent calls for peaceful coexistence and the Government of Egypt's expression of support for the rights of all minorities and for religious tolerance. The UK has always been clear that the rights of minorities, wherever they exist, should be protected in line with international standards. During my visit to Cairo last September, I met Pope Tawadros II, whose Coptic Orthodox Church plays such an important part in Egyptian society.

As part of our UK-funded projects and programmes in Egypt we are providing counter-terrorism assistance to the Egyptian authorities and counter-IED training for the Egyptian security forces. We are committed to supporting the Egyptian Government's fight against terrorist groups, including those who seek to target minority groups such as Coptic Christians.

## ■ Hong Kong: Embassies

**Fiona Bruce:**

[\[8225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will publish the legal advice which led his Department to conclude that the arrest of the fifteen year old girl directly outside the UK consulate in Hong Kong on 11 January 2020 occurred on land which does not carry any special status under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

As a matter of course, the Government does not publish its legal advice.

## ■ Hong Kong: Human Rights

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[7596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the (a) Hong Kong Chief Executive and (b) representatives of the Chinese Government on breaches of human rights in Hong Kong by the Hong Kong police.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

*We remain seriously concerned at events in Hong Kong. The Foreign Secretary has set out our concerns about the situation in Hong Kong directly with both the Hong Kong Chief Executive, Carrie Lam and to the Chinese Foreign Minister, State Councillor Wang Yi. The Foreign Secretary has made clear that it is essential that*

*protests are conducted peacefully, within the law, and that the response of the authorities is proportionate. We expect the Hong Kong authorities to abide by international humanitarian laws and practices. The UK has consistently called for a robust, independent inquiry into recent events as a step towards resolution of the situation. Senior officials have remained in regular contact with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the authorities in Beijing. The leadership in China and Hong Kong is in no doubt about the strength of UK concern over the current situation in Hong Kong, and our commitment to seeing the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Joint Declaration upheld.*

## ■ Iran: Detainees

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[6739]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he has taken to protect British citizens illegally imprisoned in Iran from torture.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The Foreign Secretary raised his concerns over dual nationals, most recently, in his call with Foreign Minister Zarif on 9 January. We regularly request consular access to our dual-national prisoners to ensure that they are treated in accordance with international standards and that their welfare needs are met. We will continue to request access to them, however Iran considers these individuals to be Iranians under Iranian law and has not granted the British Government access.

## ■ Iran: Nuclear Power

**Robert Halfon:**

[7618]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his policy is on proposals to redraft the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to include provisions to curtail Iran's international aggression and financing of terrorism.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is the best means available to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. We remain committed to the deal and urge Iran to return to full compliance immediately. We, along with France and Germany, have made clear that we want to build on the JCPOA with a long-term successor that includes regional security issues and Iran's ballistic missile programme. The UK remains determined to work with Iran on a diplomatic way forward and believes discussion on these issues should take place while the current nuclear deal remains in place.

## ■ Iran: Prisoners

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[6738]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many British citizens imprisoned in Iran (a) he and (b) representatives of his Department have visited in the last 12 months.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

Iran does not grant us consular access to British dual national detainees; nor do they give us sight of legal process or changes. We will continue to request access to them, however Iran considers these individuals to be Iranians under Iranian law and have not granted the British Government access.

**Iran: Torture****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[6740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations on the torture of British citizens he has made to the Government of Iran in the last 12 months.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

We regularly request consular access to all our dual-national prisoners to ensure that they are treated in accordance with international standards, however Iran considers these individuals to be Iranians under Iranian law and have not granted the British Government access. Although there is no international legal obligation to recognise dual nationality, we consider them to be British and will continue to request access to them.

**Iraq: Kurds****Robert Halfon:**[\[6649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent diplomatic steps his Department has taken to support peace and stability in (a) Iraq and (b) the Kurdistan region; and if he will make a statement.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The UK is working actively to support continued peace, stability and democracy in Iraq following recent events. Since early January Ministers have engaged closely with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), including Iraqi President Salih, Iraqi Prime Minister Abdul-Mehdi, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hakim and KRG Prime Minister Barzani. In his conversation with his Iraqi counterpart on 6 January, the Prime Minister reaffirmed our strong support for Iraq's sovereignty and security. We have also reiterated the continued importance of the Global Coalition's role in supporting the Iraqi security forces including the Kurdish Peshmerga to prevent any resurgence of Daesh. The UK continues its support for the consolidation of democracy in Iraq including the Kurdistan Region. In light of ongoing protests in Iraq, we have encouraged political dialogue and emphasised the need to respect the right to peaceful protest.

**Robert Halfon:**[\[6650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to support the development of democracy in (a) Iraq and (b) the Kurdistan Region in that country; and if he will make a statement.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The UK is working actively to support continued peace, stability and democracy in Iraq following recent events. Since early January Ministers have engaged closely with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), including Iraqi President Salih, Iraqi Prime Minister Abdul-Mehdi, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hakim and KRG Prime Minister Barzani. In his conversation with his Iraqi counterpart on 6 January, the Prime Minister reaffirmed our strong support for Iraq's sovereignty and security. We have also reiterated the continued importance of the Global Coalition's role in supporting the Iraqi security forces including the Kurdish Peshmerga to prevent any resurgence of Daesh. The UK continues its support for the consolidation of democracy in Iraq including the Kurdistan Region. In light of ongoing protests in Iraq, we have encouraged political dialogue and emphasised the need to respect the right to peaceful protest.

**■ Israel: Palestinians****John Howell:**[\[7602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of Fatah's recent celebrations marking 55 years since their first terrorist attack against Israel on the prospects of securing a peaceful two-state solution.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The UK strongly condemns all acts of terrorism and incitement to violence, which are a significant barrier to achieving a negotiated solution. There can be no justification for such acts of violence. Every Israeli and Palestinian has the right to live in peace and security. We consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that act as obstacles to peace and undermine the viability of the two-state solution.

**■ Kashmir: Human Rights****Sarah Owen:**[\[7246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the human rights situation in Kashmir.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

We recognise that there are human rights concerns in India-administered Kashmir and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Any allegation of human rights violations or abuses is deeply concerning and must be investigated thoroughly, promptly and transparently. We encourage all states to ensure domestic laws in line with international standards. We raise our concerns with the Governments of India and Pakistan.

**Sarah Owen:**[\[7255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support his Department is providing to Kashmiris living in the UK who are concerned for the safety of family members caught up in the recent conflicts and human rights abuses in Kashmir.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

We are monitoring the situation in Kashmir carefully and keep our travel advice under constant review. If anyone in the UK is concerned about family or friends in Kashmir who are British Nationals, they should contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office directly for advice. We should also stress that our consular services are very limited due to restrictions on communications in India-administered Kashmir. The safety and security of all people in India and India-administered Kashmir, including British nationals, is the responsibility of the Indian authorities.

**■ Kashmir: Humanitarian Aid****Sarah Owen:**[\[7242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans the Government has to help support the people of Kashmir.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

We are monitoring the situation in Kashmir carefully, and are in regular contact with the Governments of India and Pakistan. The Prime Minister has underlined the importance of resolving issues through dialogue to both of his counterparts. Most recently the Foreign Secretary discussed the situation in Kashmir with the Foreign Minister of Pakistan and Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon raised the issue with the Indian Minister of State for External and Parliamentary Affairs. Our longstanding position is that it is for India and Pakistan to find a lasting political resolution on Kashmir, taking into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

**■ Kurds: Foreign Relations****Robert Halfon:**[\[6647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what projects are in place under the reform partnership between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the UK; and if he will make a statement.

**Robert Halfon:**[\[6648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the reform partnership between the UK and the Kurdistan Regional Government; and if he will make a statement.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The UK continues to enjoy a close relationship with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq and to support economic and security reform. I reiterated our commitment to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq when I spoke to KRG Prime Minister Masrour Barzani on 8 January, and these messages were reaffirmed by the British Ambassador to Iraq when he met the political leadership of the Kurdistan Region on 16 January. As part of this support, we have contributed £16 million to a World Bank Trust Fund which can provide technical assistance to both the Government of Iraq

and the KRG to deliver economic reforms. We are also supporting reform of the Kurdish Peshmerga reform including through a British Army officer based in Erbil.

## ■ Lebanon: Politics and Government

**Mr Jonathan Lord:**

**[8269]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent diplomatic steps he has taken to help ensure a secure and stable Government in Lebanon.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

I spoke with former Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri on 9 December 2019 about the situation and with new Lebanese Foreign Minister Dr. Nassif Hitti on 28 January. Members of the International Support Group for Lebanon – including the UK – met in December 2019. The group reiterated its support to Lebanon and was unified in calling for the swift formation of a Government capable of meeting the aspirations expressed by Lebanese and capable of delivering the urgently required economic reform; it also reiterated that the right for peaceful protest must continue to be respected. The UK's Defence Senior Advisor to the Middle East and North Africa visited Lebanon on 12 December 2019 and met with senior Lebanese authorities, including President Aoun, to discuss the current situation.

## ■ Nepal: Christianity

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[7131]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the treatment of Christians in Nepal.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

Freedom of religion and belief remains a human rights priority for our Embassy in Kathmandu. We remain concerned that legal provisions on conversion do not align with international human rights norms. We regularly lobby the Government of Nepal on this issue, and our Embassy in Kathmandu hosts a regular interfaith meeting to promote harmony and religious dialogue.

The persecution of Christians, and indeed individuals of all faiths or beliefs, remains of profound concern to us. The NGO Open Doors estimate that 260 million Christians experience high or extreme persecution around the world. The scale of this persecution prompted the former Foreign Secretary to ask the Bishop of Truro to examine how the British Government could better support persecuted Christians around the world. Bishop Philip published a hard-hitting report with 22 ambitious recommendations which we have accepted in full. Work is ongoing to implement the recommendations in a way that will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief. 10 have already been implemented, or are in the process of being implemented.

## ■ Religious Freedom

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**

**[8136]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts throughout the world on the protection of religious freedoms in their countries; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

Defending and promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is a longstanding human rights priority for the British Government. Through our diplomatic network, we lobby governments for changes in laws and practices that discriminate against individuals on the basis of their religion or belief. Over recent months, ministers and diplomats have raised FoRB concerns in many countries both bilaterally and through multilateral institutions such as the UN, EU and OSCE. Our Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, has held Freedom of Religion or Belief roundtables, including in Lebanon. He met the Polish Foreign Minister on 19 January at the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance ministerial meeting to reaffirm their commitments to defend FoRB for all. The Prime Minister's Special Envoy for FoRB has visited Bahrain and the Holy See and has held discussions with the Ambassadors of a number of countries in London and also with a number of other FoRB Special Envoys to see how they can work more closely together to advance FoRB. Ministers have also pressed for the rights of those unfairly detained, including calling for the immediate release of all Baha'is in Iran and Yemen imprisoned for their beliefs.

We have encouraged our diplomatic missions to consider what they can do to engage their host governments where human rights violations and abuses relating to freedom of religion or belief are of concern. We will also continue to work with faith leaders and civil society organisations to tackle discrimination and persecution and to promote the value and benefit - to individuals, communities and wider society - of Freedom of Religion or Belief and mutual respect.

## ■ Seas and Oceans: Treaties

**Patrick Grady:**

**[8343]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to secure a global ocean treaty at the United Nations.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

My Department and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs have been closely involved in the negotiation of a new Implementing Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction – the BBNJ Agreement - as an important step forward in addressing the challenges that the ocean faces. The UK is pressing for an ambitious Agreement to be concluded in 2020. It will be a key mechanism in enabling the designation of at least 30 per cent of the global ocean as Marine Protected Areas by 2030.

**■ Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said**

**Jonathan Edwards:** [8215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2020 to Question 3169 on Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, what the composition was of the three UK delegations to the coronation of the Sultan of Oman; and if he will publish the documents relating to that coronation.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

There were no foreign governments present when His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq assumed his position. On 12 January 2020, three delegations from the United Kingdom offered condolences to His Majesty Sultan Haitham.

HRH The Prince of Wales was accompanied by his Deputy Private Secretary, Scott Fursessedonn-Wood; Her Majesty's Ambassador to Muscat, Hamish Cowell CMG; and the Director-General for Political Affairs at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Richard Moore CMG.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by Her Majesty's Ambassador to Muscat and other officials from No. 10.

The Secretary of State for Defence was accompanied by the Chief of the Defence Staff, the Defence Senior Adviser for the Middle East, officials from the British Embassy in Muscat and officials from the Ministry of Defence.

There are no official documents relating to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq assuming his position.

**■ United Arab Emirates: Freedom of Expression**

**Grahame Morris:** [8231]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of freedom of expression in the United Arab Emirates.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

We continue to raise the importance of respect for freedom of expression with the United Arab Emirates. We believe that freedom of expression is a universal human right. Citizens must be allowed to freely discuss and debate issues, challenge their governments and make informed decisions in accordance with international human rights law.

**■ Yemen: Military Intervention**

**Grahame Morris:** [8232]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) size of armed groups trained by the United Arab Emirates operating in Yemen; and if he will make a statement.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

The complex situation on the ground makes it difficult to assess the number and size of armed groups trained by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Yemen. The UAE announced they were reducing their military presence in July 2019, and have now withdrawn many of their troops from Yemen.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Abortion****Fiona Bruce:****[8221]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans undertake a review of the abortion time-limit.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Government has no plans to undertake a review of the abortion time-limit. Parliament decided the circumstances under which abortion can legally be undertaken, including time limits.

**■ Abortion: Counselling****Fiona Bruce:****[8218]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to help improve the (a) quality and (b) access to counselling services provided to women considering an abortion.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

Abortion counselling should also be available for those women who request it. Abortions provided by independent sector abortion providers must meet the Required Standard Operating Procedures (RSOPs) set out in the Department's Procedures for the Approval of Independent Sector Places for the Termination of Pregnancy (Abortion). The RSOPs require that all women requesting an abortion should be offered the opportunity to discuss their options and choices with a trained counsellor and this offer should be regularly repeated. Post abortion counselling should also be available for those women who require it.

**■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Lincolnshire****Gareth Davies:****[6755]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients attended A&E at (a) Grantham and District Hospital, (b) Pilgrim Hospital Boston and (c) Lincoln County Hospital in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017, (iii) 2018 and (iv) 2019.

**Edward Argar:**

The information is not available in the format requested. The available information in the following table shows the number of unplanned accident and emergency (A&E)

attendance, at Grantham and District Hospital, Pilgrim Hospital Boston and Lincoln County Hospital in 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.

It should be noted that the number of admissions will include those patients that attended A&E more than once.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDER	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Lincoln County Hospital	71,455	67,825	70,650
Pilgrim Hospital Boston	57,360	57,235	52,635
Grantham and District Hospital	24,115	22,750	23,755

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Digital

#### ■ Autism: Prisoners

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[7273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the diagnosis process for autistic spectrum disorder for people in custody.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Reception screening tools are used by prisons in England to flag up potential learning disabilities and difficulties, cognitive impairment and other neuro-disabilities with onward referral for specialist screening/assessments and potential diagnostic assessment. Any subsequent healthcare interventions would then be tailored to meet the patient's needs to ensure they fully understand, and can participate in, any treatment/interventions they may require.

Revised primary care service specification and accompanying best practice guidance, scheduled to be published by NHS England and NHS Improvement in April 2020, are expected to set out the specific elements of support expected for people with learning disabilities, autism or both when accessing healthcare services in prison.

#### ■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

**Mark Garnier:**

[\[6669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average cost to the NHS was of prescriptions for unlicensed cannabis-based products for medicinal use from November 2018 to October 2019.

**Mark Garnier:**

[\[6670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many prescriptions for (a) Nabilone Savitex, (b) Epidiolex and (c) unlicensed cannabis-based products for medicinal use were dispensed by hospital pharmacies from November 2018 to October 2019.

**Mark Garnier:**

[\[6671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many prescriptions for (a) Nabilone, (b) Savitex and (c) unlicensed cannabis-based products for medicinal use were issued by private healthcare specialist prescribers and dispensed in the community in October 2019.

**Mark Garnier:**

[\[6672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many prescriptions for unlicensed cannabis-based products for medicinal use were prescribed by the NHS and dispensed in the community in October 2019.

**Jo Churchill:**

The average cost to the National Health Service of all prescriptions for unlicensed cannabis-based products dispensed in the community from November 2018 to October 2019 was £2,789.21 per prescription.

The NHS Business Services Authority does not hold data for prescriptions dispensed by hospital pharmacies, including for Nabilone, Sativex, Epidyolex\* and unlicensed cannabis-based products for medicinal use. This information is not held centrally and is not routinely published. Intelligence from NHS England and NHS Improvement Controlled Drugs Accountable Officers is that a low number of patients are receiving prescriptions for cannabis-based products for medicinal use in independent secondary/tertiary care in England. However, this data is not collected nationally or routinely published.

In October 2019, for prescriptions issued by private healthcare specialist prescribers and dispensed in the community, there were no prescriptions for Nabilone, one prescription for Sativex, and 33 prescriptions for unlicensed cannabis-based products.

Finally, there was one prescription for unlicensed cannabis-based products prescribed on the NHS and dispensed in the community in October 2019.

**Note:**

\*Epidyolex was unlicensed prior to September 2019; no NHS prescriptions for Epidyolex have been recorded as submitted to the NHS Business Services Authority at the time of this request. Approximately 185 patients have accessed Epidyolex through the manufacturer's (GW Pharma) early access programmes, ahead of a licensing decision by the European Medicines Agency.

## ■ Cervical Cancer: Screening

**Bridget Phillipson:**

**[7625]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made on the adequacy of the availability of cervical cancer screenings for women with physical disabilities.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 29 January 2020]:* General practitioner practices are required to ensure that their premises are suitable for the delivery of essential services and that they are sufficient to meet the reasonable needs of its patients, including those with disabilities. This involves making any necessary reasonable adjustments; making alternative arrangements, such as referral to a specialist screening provider; or undertaking the procedures in another setting that is more suitable given any limitations to a patient's mobility. Where a patient requires specialist equipment, clinical staff will ensure that patients have access to its use in a safe environment.

NHS England is continuously investing in initiatives to help ensure equality of access to screening and, through the Section 7A public health functions agreement, aims to improve public health outcomes and reduce inequalities.

Professor Sir Mike Richards' review of Adult Screening programmes was published on 16 October 2019. As part of this review, it was recommended that good practice on physical disabilities is shared to enable this to be adopted more widely. The Department, NHS England and Public Health England is considering the recommendations from Professor Richards' report and will publish an implementation plan in spring 2020.

## ■ Clinical Commissioning Groups

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

**[6689]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which clinical commissioning groups (a) have been approved (i) conditionally and (ii) unconditionally and (b) are under consideration for mergers from April 2020 by NHS England.

**Edward Argar:**

In autumn 2019 NHS England conditionally approved the merger of 74 existing clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to establish 18 new CCGs. These are set out in the attached table.

The new CCGs will be established from 1 April 2020 where the conditions of merger are assessed as having been met in March 2020 by NHS England.

There are no mergers which have been unconditionally approved and there are no further mergers under consideration to take effect on 1 April 2020.

**Attachments:**

1. pq6689 [PQ6689 merged table.docx]

## ■ Coronavirus

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[7163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment the Government has made of the health effects of the outbreak of the Wuhan coronavirus.

**Jo Churchill:**

We have been closely monitoring the situation in Wuhan and China more widely. We have put in place proportionate, precautionary measures. Our approach has at all times been guided by the advice of the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty. Professor Whitty and Public Health England, aided by independent experts, are in close contact with their international counterparts, continually monitoring the scientific evidence as it emerges. The health effects of the novel coronavirus continue to be assessed considering emerging information from researchers in China.

The Chief Medical Officer last week revised the risk to the United Kingdom population from “very low” to “low”. This was because there was more evidence of human transmissibility since the virus was first identified.

Coronaviruses are common across the world and typical symptoms of coronavirus include fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. This is a dynamic situation which is being kept under constant review.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[8429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in the devolved Administrations on additional measures to respond to an outbreak of coronavirus in the UK.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[8430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken with local authorities to develop contingency planning for monitoring people (a) infected with and (b) at risk of contracting the coronavirus.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[8431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the (a) Government and (b) pharmaceutical industry is taking to develop a vaccine for the coronavirus.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[8432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to screen for the coronavirus at UK airports and international rail terminals during the period of high migration resulting from the Chinese lunar year festivities.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[8433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has established a contingency fund to tackle the potential effects of the Wuhan coronavirus.

**Jo Churchill:**

We have been closely monitoring the situation in Wuhan and China more widely. Our approach has been guided by the advice of the Chief Medical Officer for England, Professor Chris Whitty. We have put in place proportionate, precautionary measures to protect the United Kingdom and it will continue to take action in line with the level of threat. Funding is in place to support this.

Professor Chris Whitty and Public Health England, aided by independent experts, are in close contact with their international counterparts and are continually monitoring the scientific evidence as it emerges. This has been done in close collaboration with our health sector partners in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland during our daily national incident management call. Professor Chris Whitty is also working closely with his counterparts in the devolved administrations.

**Eating Disorders: Mental Health Services****Jack Lopresti:**[\[6658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to improve access to treatment for people with eating disorders.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Through the NHS Long Term Plan, the National Health Service commits to testing and rolling out waiting time standards for adults in selected areas. Twelve areas in England have received over £70 million of transformation funding in 2019/20 and 2020/21 to test new integrated models of primary and community mental health care for adults.

Eight of these sites are implementing innovative service models that will improve access and quality for adults and older adults with eating disorders in line with new national guidance on adult eating disorder care.

For children and young people, we have introduced a waiting time standard with the aim for 95% of children (up to 19 years old) with eating disorders to receive treatment within a week for urgent cases and four weeks for routine cases. We are on target to meet this aim by 2020/21.

**Employment: Bullying****Robert Halfon:**[\[6657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with the hon. Member for Harlow to discuss the steps his Department is taking to address the effect of workplace bullying on mental health.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

I understand that the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility (Kelly Tolhurst MP) has already agreed to meet with the Rt. hon. Member for Harlow and I would be happy to join that meeting.

## ■ General Practitioners

**Dr Luke Evans:**

**[6748]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of (a) the Primary Care Network draft outline service specifications and (b) primary care enhanced services on the workload of GPs.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have assessed that the Primary Care Network (PCN) draft outline service specifications and Network Contract Direct Enhanced Service (DES) will reduce workload pressures on general practitioners (GPs) and support improved primary care services to patients. This will be through a combination of the additional workforce capacity which is being created within primary care, and the redesign of community services provision to link with and support PCNs. For further information, the Network Contract DES draft Outline Service Specifications public consultation document published in December 2019 is available at the following link:

[https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/survey/primary-care-networks-service-specifications/supporting\\_documents/Draft%20PCN%20Service%20Specifications%20December%202019.pdf](https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/survey/primary-care-networks-service-specifications/supporting_documents/Draft%20PCN%20Service%20Specifications%20December%202019.pdf)

The PCN service specifications form part of annual GP contract negotiations between NHS England and the GP Committee of the British Medical Association. Feedback received during engagement on the drafts published in December will inform ongoing negotiations on the 2020/21 GP contract. NHS England and NHS Improvement will take a deal to Government for sign-off shortly. A statement on the engagement and the wider GP contract negotiations has been published at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2020/01/primary-care-network-service-specifications-and-the-network-des-close-of-engagement/>

The Government recognises that it is vital that PCNs are a success. We have instructed NHS England and NHS Improvement to address the concerns raised by the primary care profession following the closure of the NHS England and NHS Improvement consultation on 15 January. The final text of these specifications, and the primary care enhanced services, are not yet finalised.

**Bridget Phillipson:**

**[7621]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure sustainable workforce planning for GPs.

**Jo Churchill:**

We recognise general practice is under pressure nationally and that is why we have committed to growing the workforce by 6,000 more doctors in general practice and 6,000 more primary care professionals. This is in addition to the 20,000 primary care professionals NHS England is providing funding towards, and other commitments in the NHS Long Term Plan, with primary and community care set to receive at least £4.5 billion more a year by 2023/24, in real terms. The five-year General Practitioner

Contract will provide greater financial security and certainty for practices to plan ahead. It will also see billions of extra pounds of investment for improved access, expanded services at local practices, the development of Primary Care Networks, launched in July 2019, and longer appointments for patients who need them.

The full People Plan, published later this year, will set out a broader strategy for a sustainable general practice workforce and how we will meet our commitments through both recruitment and retention programmes.

## ■ General Practitioners: Vacancies

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

**[6019]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many vacant GP places there are in (a) Preston, (b) Lancashire and (c) the North West; and what (i) short- and (ii) long-term steps he is taking to tackle the shortage of GPs throughout the UK.

**Jo Churchill:**

The data requested is not available in the format requested. NHS Digital publishes vacancy data for England only. Only a small proportion of practices in England provide data to NHS Digital on the vacancies they hold. The published data is therefore of limited use and cannot be disaggregated into vacancies by region or local area.

We recognise general practice is under pressure nationally and that is why we have committed to growing the workforce by 6,000 more doctors in general practice and 6,000 more primary care professionals. This is in addition to the 20,000 primary care professionals NHS England will provide funding towards through Primary Care Networks. The full People Plan, published later this year, will set out a broader strategy for a sustainable general practice workforce and how we will meet our commitments through both recruitment and retention programmes.

Growing the workforce will mean larger teams of staff providing a wide range of care options for patients and will free up more time for doctors to focus on those with more complex needs. This, alongside additional support and increasing the use of technology in general practice, will create an extra 50 million appointments a year by 2024/25 and improve patient access to primary care services.

## ■ Health Services: Rural Areas

**Anthony Mangnall:**

**[6189]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that rural communities have adequate access to health care facilities.

**Jo Churchill:**

Although overall health outcomes are better in rural than urban areas, the Government recognises the specific challenges that rural areas face and the potential for certain health inequalities to develop. The Department continues to take a systematic approach to tackling health inequalities and is committed to engaging with

a range of stakeholders including the devolved administrations; encouraging spread of best practice and considering the wider drivers of ill-health in remote settings.

Within England, the NHS Long Term Plan sets out how the National Health Service will develop over the coming years and take stronger action surrounding health inequalities, including eliminating variation in quality of care across the country, building a workforce for the future, and embracing the opportunities of technology for rural communities.

NHS England has committed to continuing to ensure a higher share of funding goes towards geographies with high health inequalities than would have been allocated using solely the core needs formulae. This funding is estimated to be worth over £1 billion by 2023/24. Clinical commissioning groups benefiting from this health inequalities adjustment have been asked to report on how they are targeting that funding to improve the equity of access, experience and outcomes, and they will start to report later this year. As part of the Long Term Plan process all local health systems have been asked, as part of their overall delivery plans, to set out how they will specifically reduce health inequalities by 2023/24 and 2028/29 and their plans will be published shortly.

#### ■ **Hormone Replacement Therapy: Shortages**

**Jack Lopresti:**

**[6659]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made in tackling the shortage of Hormone Replacement Therapy drugs.

**Jo Churchill:**

We are aware of ongoing supply issues with some hormone replacement therapy (HRT) preparations due to a range of issues including manufacturing issues, regulatory issues and problems accessing the raw pharmaceutical ingredient as well as commercial decisions made by some companies to divest these products.

We have been working closely with all suppliers of HRT preparations to maintain overall supply to patients. We have shared relevant information about the supply situation and availability of HRT products with the National Health Service and are having discussions with organisations such as the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare and the British Menopausal Society.

We continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure relevant information about the HRT products affected by supply issues and the products that remain available is shared with the NHS on a regular basis.

We anticipate the supply situation will improve from February 2020.

## ■ Hospitals: Admissions

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[7137]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS hospital admissions resulted from violent crime in 2019.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Department does not yet hold the collated data for 2019-20, however we have provided the data for the year 2018-19 (1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019). For defining 'violent crime', we have reflected the focus of the Government's 2018 Serious Violence Strategy and provided information on assault by firearm, knife or sharp object (such as a broken bottle) and corrosive substance. The total number of finished admission episodes<sup>1</sup> where these were listed as the cause was 5,328.

'Assault by bodily force' and 'assault by blunt object' may also be considered as 'violent crime' and the number of finished admission episodes where these were listed as the cause were 18,503 and 2,387 respectively.

A breakdown of the information is shown in the following table:

Count of Finished Admission Episodes <sup>1</sup> where an external cause code <sup>2</sup> of assault has been recorded in 2018-19

CAUSE DESCRIPTION	ADMISSIONS
Assault by handgun discharge, rifle, shotgun, larger firearm discharge, other and unspecified firearm discharge	136
Assault by sharp object	5,069
Assault by corrosive substance	123
Assault by bodily force	18,503
Assault by blunt object	2,387

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Digital

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Finished admission episodes - A finished admission episode is the first period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Admissions do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the period.

<sup>2</sup> Cause code - This is a supplementary code that indicates the nature of any external cause of injury, poisoning or other adverse effects. Only the first external cause code which is coded within the episode is counted in HES. Recording of external cause is not mandatory and recording practice varies over time and regionally, care should be used when interpreting this data.

It should be noted that it is not possible within this dataset to classify the reason behind the assault. The information covers activity in English NHS Hospitals and English NHS commissioned activity in the independent sector.

## ■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[6687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce consultant-led referral to treatment waiting times; and if he will make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

Under the NHS Long Term Plan, the National Health Service remains committed to improving access to elective care. We're providing an extra £33.9 billion a year by 2023/24 to grow the amount of planned surgery year on year to reduce the waiting list.

In the shorter term, the NHS Accountability Framework for 2019-20 outlines how NHS England and NHS Improvement will continue ongoing service development, so that performance is maintained and improved. This includes the commencement of the redesign of outpatient services, which will reduce the need for unnecessary face to face appointments in hospitals, saving patients time and freeing up medical and nursing time.

## ■ Joint Replacements: Waiting Lists

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[6684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people waited for more than 40 weeks from referral to treatment for (a) hip and (b) knee replacements by NHS Hospital Trust in each month from April 2018 to December 2019.

**Edward Argar:**

A count of finished admission episodes with a main operative procedure of hip and knee replacements with a treatment waiting time of more than 40 weeks by National Health Service Hospital trust in each month from April 2018 to December 2019 is attached. This is a count of admissions, not attendees as the same person may have had more than one admission within the time period. Data for 2019-20 is currently provisional.

**Attachments:**

1. pq6684 table [PQ6684 table.xlsx]

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[6685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people waited for more than 52 weeks from referral to treatment for (a) hip and (b) knee replacements, by NHS Hospital Trust in each month from April 2019 to December 2019.

**Edward Argar:**

A count of finished admission episodes with a main operative procedure of hip and knee replacements with a treatment waiting time of more than 52 weeks by NHS

hospital trust in each month from April 2019 to December 2019 is attached. This is a count of admissions, not attendees as the same person may have had more than one admission within the time period. Data provided is currently provisional.

**Attachments:**

1. pq6685 [Data for PQ6685.xlsx]

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[6686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time was for (a) hip and (b) knee replacement surgery in each NHS Foundation Trust in each month of 2018-19.

**Edward Argar:**

A count of finished admission episodes with a main operative procedure of hip and knee replacements, with average (mean and median) waiting times, per month between April 2018 to March 2019 by hospital provider is attached. This is a count of admissions, not attendees as the same person may have had more than one admission within the time period.

**Attachments:**

1. pq6686 table [PQ6686 table.xlsx]

■ **Mental Health Services**

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[7600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that mental health is prioritised within the Primary Care Network Contract Direct Enhanced Service Specifications 2020-21.

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[7601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment her Department has made of the potential of effect the draft service specifications for Primary Care Networks, published on 23 December 2019, on people with mental health problems.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 29 January 2020]:* The Network Contract Direct Enhanced Service Specifications published in December 2019 have placed a clear emphasis on other providers of community services, including mental health services, being able to work alongside Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to ensure delivery of the multidisciplinary elements of the proposed new service model.

The 2019/20 General Practitioner contract that came into force in April 2019 is the most ambitious in a generation, creating a five-year framework for general practitioners. It supports the NHS Long Term Plan by increasing primary care funding and establishing new PCNs across the country. The PCN service specifications form part of annual GP contract negotiations between NHS England and the General Practitioners Committee of the British Medical Association. Feedback received during engagement on the draft service specifications published in December 2019 has informed ongoing negotiations on the 2020/21 GP contract. NHS England will take a

deal to Government for sign-off shortly. The detail within the service specifications are still subject to negotiation and therefore not yet finalised. A statement on the engagement and negotiations can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2020/01/primary-care-network-service-specifications-and-the-network-des-close-of-engagement/>

## ■ **Mental Health Services: Inspections**

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

**[7269]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve hospital inspections to ensure adequate treatment and care for patients with mental health conditions.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care providers in England and is responsible for deciding its own regulatory inspection and assessment framework.

The CQC is delivering a programme of improvement to its regulation of inpatient and community mental health services, with specific improvements for people who are subject to the Mental Health Act 1983 and a focus on human rights principles.

## ■ **Mental Health Services: Out of Area Treatment**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[8442]**

To ask the Secretary of state for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to reduce the number of people sent out of area for mental health treatment.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We are taking forward a number of actions to improve rehabilitation pathways and ensure that patients with mental health conditions can receive treatment as close as possible to where they live.

This includes improving our understanding of how people currently cared for in long-term inpatient settings might be better supported closer to home, and in the community, and supporting local areas to test innovative approaches to providing locally-based care for those with the most complex needs. NHS England and NHS Improvement are also providing targeted support to local areas to develop robust recovery plans where there is reliance on out of area placements.

## ■ **Mental Health Services: Research**

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

**[7262]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) researching and (b) introducing multi-diagnostic pathways for neurodevelopmental conditions.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[7263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much research funding his Department has allocated for multi-diagnostic assessments for neurodevelopmental conditions in the last five years.

**Caroline Dineneage:**

The Department funds research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). It is not usual practice to ring-fence funding for particular topics or conditions. The NIHR welcomes funding on applications for research into any aspect of human health, including neurodevelopmental conditions. Applications are subject to peer review and judged on open competition, with awards being made on the basis of importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

## ■ NHS Trusts: Subsidiary Companies

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[8353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many applications have been considered under the process set out in the Addendum to the transactions guidance for trusts forming or changing a subsidiary; and how many of those applications have been approved.

**Edward Argar:**

Ministers do not have a role in approving Wholly Owned Subsidiary companies created by National Health Service foundation trusts, with this role undertaken through the statutory powers and duties of NHS England and NHS Improvement.

As of 28 January 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement had been notified of 22 business cases as part of their Wholly Owned Subsidiary review process. A number of these are still 'live' cases where information is still being received as part of the review.

Information of how many applications have been approved is not available in the format requested. When trusts submit a proposal to NHS England and NHS Improvement, a panel reviews the business case and determines a transaction classification based on the nature and level of risks identified, in accordance with the requirements of the Addendum to the transactions guidance. Transactions are then classified as material or significant. Of the cases reviewed to date, the following classification decisions have been made:

- 13 cases were material;
- 4 cases were significant;
- 1 case did not meet the threshold for being material; and
- 4 cases have yet to receive a classification decision.

## ■ NHS: Digital Technology

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[8252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the ability of elderly people to engage with NHS digital services.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We are committed to ensuring that all those using the National Health Service have fair and equitable access to high quality, effective healthcare services that are responsive to all patients' needs.

Digital tools, such as the NHS App, which have been designed to be useable by all age groups. They can support older people to manage repeat prescriptions, book and cancel appointments and view their medical record.

In July 2019, we published the Digital Inclusion Guide for Health and Social Care to help support local commissioners and designers ensure that services delivered digitally are as inclusive as possible to meet the needs of all members of the population.

## ■ NHS: Directors

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[7141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many non-medical directors employed in NHS Hospital Trusts and NHS England earn more than the Prime Minister.

**Edward Argar:**

There are currently 349 non-medical directors, including chief executives, in NHS trusts and foundation trusts, and 27 in NHS England and NHS Improvement who earn more than £150,000 per annum.

The salaries of all NHS board level appointments are set by the employers remuneration committee. Additionally, posts attracting a remuneration package of £150,000 per annum or more are further scrutinised by ministers. Posts in NHS England require both the Department of Health and Social Care Remuneration Committee and Ministerial approval, and those in NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts require ministerial approval or comment respectively.

There are two elements to the prime minister's salary – pay for being an MP with a constituency, which is set independently by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority and pay for holding a ministerial office i.e. prime minister, which is set by the Government itself. The overall salary that the prime minister is entitled to claim as from April 2019 is £158,754 per annum.

## ■ NHS: Innovation

**Royston Smith:**

[\[6727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the NHS is able to adopt new technology to enable the effective delivery of services.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Department's technology vision sets the foundation for a new generation of digital and technology services focused on user need and interoperability, whilst safeguarding patient privacy and security. This will support delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan, transforming the health system by providing more integrated and person-centred care.

We have made significant investment in new technology for the National Health Service to support service delivery since 2013. This includes funds such as Safer Hospitals Safer Wards, Integrated Digital Care Records, Nurse Technology, Local Health and Care Records Exemplar, Electronic Prescribing and Global Digital Exemplars.

## ■ NHS: Migrant Workers

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[7098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many migrants from EU countries have been employed by the NHS in England in each year from 2015 to date.

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[7099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many migrants from EU countries have been employed by the NHS in London in each year from 2015 to date.

**Edward Argar:**

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

The following table shows the number of non-United Kingdom European Union nationals employed in the National Health Service in England and London as at September 2019, latest available data and each year since 2015, headcount.

-	SEPTEMBER 2015	SEPTEMBER 2016	SEPTEMBER 2017	SEPTEMBER 2018	SEPTEMBER 2019
England	52,808	59,796	61,974	63,484	65,992
London	17,732	19,567	20,395	20,782	21,464

## ■ Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures: Children

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

**[6799]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 21 October 2019 to Question 757 on cosmetic fillers and Botox injections for children, what progress he is making on (a) the review of industry standards of practice; (b) ensuring that effective registration and regulation of companies performing cosmetic interventions and (c) assessing the health risks and psychological impact of access arrangements to injectable cosmetic procedures by children.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government remains committed to improving the safety of cosmetic procedures through better training for practitioners, and clear information so that people can make informed decisions about their care.

The Department continues to consult with stakeholders on industry standards of practice and the health risks posed by current access arrangements to non-surgical cosmetic procedures. On the basis of the evidence gathered to date, the Government supports the principle of increased protections for children and young people for some injectable cosmetic procedures. The Department is exploring the legal implications and potential impacts of an age restriction that would bring these procedures in line with other body modifications such as tattoos and sunbed use.

## ■ Obesity: Children

**Catherine West:**

**[7650]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of his Department's policy, Childhood obesity: a plan for action.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 29 January 2020]:* Through the three chapters of 'Childhood obesity: a plan for action' we are delivering a wide range of measures to reduce childhood obesity. We have seen important successes including the average sugar content of drinks subject to the soft drinks industry levy decreasing by 28.8% between 2015 and 2018, and significant investment being made in schools to promote physical activity and healthy eating.

## ■ Ophthalmic Services

**Helen Hayes:**

**[8394]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to increase capacity in NHS eyesight services and ensure all patients are seen within a safe time frame.

**Jo Churchill:**

Clinical commissioning groups are responsible for commissioning secondary care ophthalmology services to meet local need. We would expect services to be commissioned in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

guidance where it is available or best available evidence and for patients to receive treatment, in line with their clinical priority, without any undue delay at any stage of their referral, diagnosis or treatment.

National Health Service patients have a right in the NHS Constitution to drugs and treatments recommended by the NICE, where the patient's clinician considers it appropriate.

As part of the NHS Long Term Plan, the goal of the outpatients transformation programme is to avoid 30 million face-to-face outpatients appointments and reduce face-to-face visits to hospital outpatients by up to a third by 2023/24. NHS England and NHS Improvement estimate that this could save up to £1 billion in expenditure. If the programme achieves its goals, it will mean the successful creation of a digital-first outpatients service, which gives all appropriate patients the option for a virtual outpatients appointment. NHS England and NHS Improvement advise that ophthalmology has been identified as the first priority speciality for the National Outpatient Transformation Programme.

Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) is a national clinical improvement programme, working with frontline clinicians to identify and reduce unwarranted variations in service delivery and clinical practice. NHS England advise the GIRFT report into ophthalmology shared with providers in December 2019, identifies a number of recommendations for service improvement to help to free up capacity and help to address the issue of delays to follow-up appointments.

## ■ Opiates: Prescriptions

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

**[4714]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he (a) is taking and (b) plans to take to tackle the over-prescription of opioids by GPs in deprived areas.

**Jo Churchill:**

Guidance on opioid dependence is published by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and was refreshed in July 2019. NICE is leading the development of new guidelines for safe prescribing of drugs associated with dependence. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) reviews how healthcare providers are using NICE guidelines and quality standards to prescribe safely.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care introduced prominent addiction warnings for all opioid medicines in 2019. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is seeking voluntary compliance from industry and, if necessary, the changes will be mandated. Packs including the warnings on product labelling began to be seen by patients in late 2019.

In September 2019 Public Health England published an evidence review of medicines associated with dependence or withdrawal. Alongside ongoing improvements to medicines safety and the use of prescribed drugs, NHS England and national partners are developing actions to reduce prescription medicine dependency.

A national review of overprescribing in the National Health Service is being led by Chief Pharmaceutical Officer Dr Keith Ridge and will be published in 2020. The review is looking at patients taking multiple medicines unnecessarily, the role of digital technologies in reducing overprescribing, and the increased role for alternatives to prescribing and other forms of care.

The UK Commission on Human Medicines Opioid expert working group is a comprehensive independent scientific review that will make recommendations this year about further regulatory action and information for clinicians and patients.

## ■ **Organs: Donors**

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[8297]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to publicise the changes to the law resulting from the introduction of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019.

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[8298]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the timetable for the changes to the law following the introduction of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019 and accompanying guidance and regulations.

**Caroline Dineneage:**

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

Ahead of the new system coming into force, the Government held a 12-week public consultation to seek views on a proposed list of organs and tissues to exclude from deemed consent. The Government Response to the consultation, the accompanying regulations and a Code of Practice for healthcare professionals, prepared by the Human Tissue Authority following public consultation, will be laid in Parliament in the near future, with information about the timetable.

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

**■ Sapropterin****Catherine West:** [\[6734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has met BioMarin to discuss securing NHS access to Kuvan for people with PKU; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

There have been no meetings between BioMarin with Ministers and officials at the Department on this matter.

**■ Smoking****Paul Bristow:** [\[7286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to publish a White Paper on implementing the key recommendations on smoking cessation from the recent Prevention Green Paper; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

Following the consultation on the prevention green paper, Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s, we intend to publish a Government response in due course.

**■ Social Services: Recruitment****Andrew Rosindell:** [\[7130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of recruitment in social care; whether he is taking steps to increase the level of recruitment in that sector; and if he will make a statement.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

The Department provides funding for Skills for Care to collect data from social care employers on the adult social care workforce. According to their most recent published data, there are now 1.62 million adult social care jobs in England. This is a 22% increase between 2009 and 2018. The average vacancy rate was 7.8%, equivalent to 122,000 vacancies at any one time.

The Government is working alongside stakeholders in the adult social care sector to ensure there is the right number of people, with the right skills, knowledge and values to meet increasing demand, and deliver high quality, compassionate care and support. We have invested £7 million over the past two years in a national recruitment campaign designed to raise the profile of adult social care, encourage potential applicants to apply for job vacancies, and highlight opportunities for career development and progression. Through our continued funding of Skills for Care we have also provided a range of resources and practical toolkits for providers to help attract, train and retain staff.

## ■ South Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group: Finance

**Gareth Davies:**

[6763]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding his Department plans to allocate to South Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group in the next three years.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England is responsible for the allocation of resources to clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). Funding is distributed on the basis of a weighted capitation formula, informed by independent advice from the Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation, and population estimates provided by the Office for National Statistics.

NHS England published five-year CCG allocations 2019-20 to 2023-24 on 8 February 2019 at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/ccg-allocations-2019-20-to-2023-24-core-services/>

Allocations figures for South Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group in the years requested are set out in the following table.

-	-	-	£000s
-	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Revenue allocation	228,565	238,794	249,083

## ■ Surrogate Motherhood

**Anna McMorris:**

[8438]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals on surrogacy before the planned report on the issue by the Law Commission in 2021; and if he will make a statement.

**Anna McMorris:**

[8439]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the Government's response to the Law Commission's consultation entitled Building families through surrogacy: a new law, which closed on 11 October 2019.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Law Commissions of England and Wales, and Scotland, are undertaking an independent review of United Kingdom surrogacy legislation, funded by the Government. I am intending to meet with the Law Commissions' team in the spring to discuss their analysis of the consultation responses and the policy implications.

The Government has no plans to publish any draft legislative about surrogacy of its own.

The Government does not provide a formal Government response to the Commissions' independent consultations. Under the Government's Protocol with the Commissions we commit to providing an interim response to the recommendations within six months of publication of the report, and a full response within one year. The Law Commissions intend to publish a report, which will consider the responses received to their consultation and set out their recommendations for reform of the law, in 2021. This will be accompanied by a draft Bill.

## ■ Tobacco: Research

**Sir Charles Walker:** [8193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Green Paper entitled Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s, when he will call for independent evidence to assess the effectiveness of heated tobacco products in helping people to quit smoking and reduce the health harms from smoking.

**Sir Charles Walker:** [8194]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to evaluate and harness the potential benefits of (a) heated tobacco products and (b) other new technologies in order for the Government to meet its smoke-free target by 2030.

**Jo Churchill:**

As announced in the Prevention Green Paper, as part of our commitment to evaluate the evidence on new products, we will run a call for independent evidence to assess further how effective heated tobacco products are, or are not, in helping people quit smoking and reducing the associated health harms.

The call for evidence will be announced by summer 2020. We continue to monitor the evidence base on e-cigarettes and novel tobacco products. The next Public Health England annual review is to be published shortly.

## ■ Urgent Treatment Centres

**Philip Davies:** [7178]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2020 to Question 2446 on Urgent Treatment Centres, how many cities in England and Wales with a population greater than Bradford do not have an urgent treatment centre.

**Philip Davies:** [7179]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2020 to Question 2446 on Urgent Treatment Centres, how many cities in England and Wales with a population smaller than Bradford have an urgent treatment centre.

**Edward Argar:**

The information is not held in the format requested.

## ■ Urgent Treatment Centres: Bradford

**Philip Davies:** [\[6629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January to Question 2446 on Urgent Treatment Centres, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Bradford gets an Urgent Treatment Centre.

**Edward Argar:**

Urgent treatment centres (UTCs) are commissioned by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) as they best know the needs of their local population.

The local accident and emergency (A&E) delivery board have been considering options for the future, including the development of a UTC, but will evaluate them all fully before reaching a conclusion.

## ■ Visual Impairment

**Helen Hayes:** [\[8395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have suffered severe or permanent loss of sight whilst awaiting treatment; and what the cost to the NHS has been in compensation claims for sight loss due to delays in receiving treatment in each year since 2015.

**Jo Churchill:**

Data is not collected in the requested format.

## ■ WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

**Mr David Jones:** [\[8195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether at the ninth Conference of Parties of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control the UK will be required procedurally to vote in alignment with EU member states as a result of the conference taking place during the implementation period following the UK's departure from the EU.

**Jo Churchill:**

The United Kingdom intends to attend the 9th Conference of the Parties to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in accordance with the terms set out within the withdrawal agreement with the European Union.

## HOME OFFICE

## ■ Asylum: Applications

**Catherine West:** [\[8419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the time taken to process asylum and refugee claims.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Home Office is 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 at 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.

**Betting Shops: Crimes of Violence****Carolyn Harris:****[7645]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many violent incidences have been recorded in betting shops in the six months (a) before 1 April 2019 and (b) after 1 April 2019.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects data on the number of violent crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales and these data are published quarterly.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>

However, these data do not identify whether the offence took place at a betting shop.

**British Nationality: Northern Ireland****Claire Hanna:****[6775]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on providing a legal entitlement for citizens of Northern Ireland to be recognised as (a) Irish, (b) British and (c) both.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement sets out 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 confirms their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship.

In line with this commitment, the people of Northern Ireland are legally able to hold British, or Irish citizenship or both.

The reciprocal Common Travel Area arrangements between the UK and Ireland ensure that the people of Northern Ireland are not required to choose and assert an identity, or to align their citizenship with their choice of identity, in order to access public services and other entitlements in the UK.

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. This will enable the people of Northern Ireland to bring their family members to the UK on an equal basis regardless of whether they are British, Irish or both, and regardless of how they identify.

## ■ Domestic Abuse

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[6709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on progressing the Government's plans for the Domestic Abuse Bill.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The landmark Domestic Abuse Bill was announced alongside the Queen's Speech on 19 December 2019.

Subject to parliamentary approval, we are fully committed to enacting this landmark legislation at the earliest opportunity and implementing it quickly. I am in regular discussion with my ministerial colleagues to this end.

## ■ Gambling: Crime

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

[\[6728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the 28 December 2019 NHS England news story on gambling, whether she has had discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on (a) the cost to the public purse in policing the increase in cases of pathological gambling whereby people turn to crime to fund their addiction and (b) the revenue accruing to the public purse from taxes on gambling.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Secretary has regular meetings with Ministerial colleagues and others as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

## ■ Human Trafficking: Children

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[6690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 5 November 2019 to Question 8260, when the Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship scheme will be rolled out nationally.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs) are currently operational in one third of all local authorities in England and Wales.

Ongoing considerations are underway into the recommendations made by the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 relating to the wider roll out of this service. The Government remains committed to the national roll out of ICTGs.

**■ Immigration: EU Nationals**

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[8253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 3 July 2019 to Question 269726 on Immigration: EU Nationals, what proportion of the 2% of people whom her Department estimated might benefit from tax credits data being included in those automated checks were (a) women and (b) men.

**Kevin Foster:**

The analysis referenced in Written Answer 269726 was conducted against data which was anonymised. It is therefore it is not possible to answer the questioned posed.

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[8254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 5 November 2019 to Question 4998 on Immigration: EU Nationals, whether the Government plans to share information with an external organisation for any purpose other than verifying the authenticity of a document.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Home Office is the data controller for all data processed within the EU Settlement Scheme. This includes where organisations are contracted to act on behalf of the Home Office. No other organisations have access to the personal information of applicants to the EU Settlement Scheme.

The Home Office may share information with other organisations, but only where the information needs to be shared and there is an appropriate legal basis for doing so.

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[8255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister of State for Security and Deputy for EU Exit and No Deal Preparation of 7 January 2020, official report, column 320, whether the definition of a good reason to miss the deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme will be the same as that set out in the guidance published by the Home Office on 5 August 2019 entitled Applications from overstayers, version 8.0.

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[8256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether a person who meets the criteria for the EU Settlement Scheme but missed the deadline without a good reason will be eligible for settled or pre-settled status.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Government has made clear that, where a person eligible for leave under the EU Settlement Scheme has reasonable grounds for missing the application deadline of 30 June 2021, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

As this is over 17 months away, our focus is on encouraging all those who need to apply to do so before the deadline. EU citizens can apply to the scheme, free of charge, simply by completing three key steps: proving their identity, showing that they

live in the UK and declaring any criminal convictions. There is support available for any who need help in applying, including through the EU Settlement Resolution Centre, which is open seven days a week.

However, our compassionate and flexible approach will ensure that individuals who miss the deadline through no fault of their own can still obtain lawful status in the UK. We will publish clear guidance for caseworkers in due course to ensure consistency of approach.

## ■ Merseyside Police: Recruitment

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [8148]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress she is making on the recruitment of new frontline police officers in Merseyside.

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [8149]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much additional funding from the public purse will be allocated to Merseyside Police for (a) training and (b) recruitment; and how many additional police officers will be recruited to Merseyside Police in each of the next five years.

### **Kit Malthouse:**

In October 2019 Home Office confirmed officer allocations for every force in England and Wales in the first year of the uplift. The Home Office is working with the National Police Chiefs' Council to support all forces deliver these allocations.

Merseyside Police has been allocated 200 officers in year 1 of the uplift. Merseyside Police will receive up to £359.4m in funding in 2020/21 an increase of up to £27.1m on 2019/20, and of up to £46.8m compared to 2018/19.

The Home Office publishes the statistical series 'Police workforce, England and Wales' on a biannual basis. The next publication is scheduled for release on Thursday 30 January and will contain information on the number of officers in post as at 30 September 2019. Data on joiners and leavers are published annually, in the July release of the bulletin, which covers the situation as at 31 March.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-announces-first-wave-of-20000-police-officer-uplift>

## ■ Police: Training

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [7274]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what training her Department provides to police officers to improve awareness of autism.

### **Kit Malthouse:**

It is the responsibility of individual police forces, through Chief Constables, to ensure officers and police staff receive appropriate training and that they have regard to the appropriate Authorised Professional Practice when discharging their responsibilities.

The College of Policing remain responsible for providing those working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to undertake their role, and set the standards for training and professional development for police forces in England and Wales.

They continue to review training packages to enable police officers to help vulnerable people effectively, including those with mental health problems, such as training on the law – including duties under equalities and human rights legislation – and on the roles and responsibilities of the relevant agencies. Training is integrated throughout the initial police learning programme which all new recruits – police constables, special constables and PCSOs – must complete.

## ■ Refugees: Children

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[8249]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to permit unaccompanied refugees the right to family reunion in the UK.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government already provides a safe and legal route to bring refugee families together through its family reunion policy. This allows a partner and children under 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join them here, if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country.

Refugees can also sponsor adult dependent relatives living overseas to join them where, due to age, illness or disability, that person requires long-term personal care that can only be provided by relatives in the UK. Further, there is discretion to grant visas outside the Immigration Rules, which caters for extended family members in exceptional circumstances – including young adult sons or daughters who are dependent on family here and living in dangerous situations.

These routes will not be affected by the UK's departure from the EU.

## ■ Refugees: Syria

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[8411]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it remains the Government's policy to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees in Syria by the end of 2020; and how many Syrian refugees have been successfully resettled to date.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government committed to resettle 20,000 vulnerable refugees who have fled the conflict in Syria under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. Thanks to the efforts of local authorities and civil society, the UK is on track to deliver this important humanitarian commitment in 2020.

The Home Office is committed to publishing data in an orderly way as part of the regular quarterly Immigration Statistics, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. These can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-)

[statistics](#) Latest statistics published on 28 November 2019 show that a total of 18,252 people had been resettled in the UK under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme since it began, across 317 local authorities.

The next set of figures will be in the quarterly release on 27 February 2020 and will cover the period up to December 2019.

## ■ Repatriation

**Afzal Khan:**

[6800]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many voluntary removals were performed in each of the last five years; and how many of those voluntary removals were classified as (a) assisted returns, (b) controlled returns and (c) other verified returns.

**Kevin Foster:**

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

Data on the number of voluntary returns, including type of voluntary return, are published in table Ret\_D01 of the returns detailed datasets .

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/returns-and-detention-datasets>

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2019. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the 'summary tables'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-statistics-data-tables-year-ending-september-2019#returns>

The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on returns. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'. [https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?content\\_store\\_document\\_type=upcoming\\_statistics&organisations%5B%5D=home-office&order=release-date-oldest](https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?content_store_document_type=upcoming_statistics&organisations%5B%5D=home-office&order=release-date-oldest)

## ■ Slavery

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[7278]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has plans to implement a licensing system to protect people in the UK working in fast fashion garment factories from modern slavery; what discussions she has had with retailers on working practices in garment factories; and if she will make a statement.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government is committed to tackling labour exploitation and protecting workers' rights and we have taken a number of steps to deal with the issues in the textiles sector.

We have widened the remit of the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority through the Immigration Act 2016, giving it new powers under the Police and Criminal

Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 to investigate serious labour market offences, including in the textiles sector.

In November 2018, we launched 'The Apparel and General Merchandise Public and Private Protocol', a partnership between labour enforcement bodies and industry partners, including, the GLAA, the British Retail Consortium, UK Fashion and the Textile Association. The protocol commits its signatories to work together to eradicate slavery and exploitation in textile supply chains.

We recently ran a public consultation on the establishment of a new Single Enforcement Body for employment rights, which included questions on extending licensing to other high-risk sectors. We will publish a response to this consultation in due course.

### ■ Undocumented Migrants

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[8257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been arrested for immigration offences as part of Operation Nexus in each of the last three years.

**Kevin Foster:**

Due to the way in which people are encountered and recorded when referred for enquiries on their immigration status, an immigration offence may not be immediately identifiable by the arresting or referring officer.

It is therefore not possible to provide accurate data in relation to the number of people arrested for immigration offences as part of Operation Nexus in each of the last three years.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Buildings: Insulation

**Steve Reed:** [\[8309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policy on the applicability to cladding of paragraph 12.7 of the Approved Fire Regulations of the letter from the Centre for Window and Cladding Technology to the Chair of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, dated 10 May 2018.

**Esther McVey:**

*[Holding answer 30 January 2020]:* In December 2018 the Government introduced regulations that banned the use of combustible materials in the external walls of specific types of high-rise buildings.

The ban provides clear performance requirements for materials in the external walls.

The amendment to the Building Regulations was introduced alongside a commitment to review the ban annually as stated in the Explanatory Memorandum published alongside SI 2018/1230.

The Government is currently consulting on reducing the current height threshold from 18 metres to 11 metres. The consultation closes on 13 April 2020 and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-the-ban-on-the-use-of-combustible-materials-in-and-on-the-external-walls-of-buildings>

**Steve Reed:**

**[8310]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policy on the applicability to cladding of paragraph 12.7 of the Approved Fire Regulations of the view expressed by Dr Barbara Lane in her evidence to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry that I cannot agree with the clarification provided after the Grenfell Fire, that the Filler material referred to in Section 12.7 of the ADB 2013, was intended to incorporate the external surface (dealt with by means of Diagram 40) when it is formed of an aluminium composite panel.

**Esther McVey:**

*[Holding answer 30 January 2020]:* The steps which the Department took in relation to the guidance in Approved Document B are matters that will be looked at in the public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire.

## ■ **Housing: Solar Power**

**Helen Hayes:**

**[8396]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring solar panels to be installed on all new dwellings.

**Esther McVey:**

Mandating a particular renewable technology, such as solar panels, may not be appropriate for all dwellings in all areas. Building regulations and national planning policy encourage the use of renewables without mandating any particular technology. Building regulations are deliberately couched in performance terms, allowing builders, local councils and architects the flexibility to select from a range of renewable energy technologies to suit the potentially unique circumstances of a particular development.

## ■ **Knowsley Heights: Fires**

**Steve Reed:**

**[8311]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department holds a copy of the report undertaken by the Building Research Establishment on behalf of the Government into the 1991 Knowsley Heights fire.

**Esther McVey:**

The Building Research Establishment was commissioned by the Department to investigate the fire at Knowsley Heights. The report is held by the National Archives and can be requested. <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11197377>

**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT****■ Asia and South America: Infrastructure****Andrew Rosindell:****[7129]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether he is taking steps to prioritise infrastructure investment in (a) Asia and (b) South America; and if he will make a statement.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

Supporting infrastructure investment in Asia is a priority. DFID funds bilateral projects in six countries in Asia, for example the £265 million Pakistan Corridors Programme, the £46 million Accelerating Investment and Infrastructure in Nepal. The CDC and the predominantly UK financed Private Infrastructure Group also invest in Asia. In addition, in both Asia and South America the UK's membership of the four multilateral developments working in these regions enables a substantial flow of infrastructure projects.

To accelerate progress further I established an Infrastructure Commission which reported earlier this month (

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-development-infrastructure-commission-report> ). In response, DFID will scope and design a new Project Development Facility and will explore detailed options for expanding the use of guarantees and new structures to mobilise institutional investment into sustainable, resilient infrastructure.

**■ Democratic Republic of Congo: Measles****Emily Thornberry:****[7165]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support he has provided to the (a) Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and (b) World Health Organisation to tackle the measles outbreak in that country.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The UK is a longstanding donor to the health sector in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, improving health services, including capacity to tackle disease outbreaks. The UK remains deeply concerned by the ongoing Measles outbreak. We are providing support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo government response through United Nations agencies and Global Alliance for Vaccines (GAVI).

The UK has ensured a £3.2 million emergency allocation from the UN Humanitarian Fund, mostly going to the World Health Organisation for measles vaccinations and

treatment. DFID is the largest contributor to the Humanitarian Fund. As a key core funder of GAVI, the UK is also supporting ongoing immunisation work nationwide, including for measles.

We are continuing to follow progress with the response together with partners, keeping resource requirements to end the outbreak under review.

## ■ Developing Countries: Education

**Harriett Baldwin:**

[\[7201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how Official Development Assistance has been allocated to Education Cannot Wait in each financial year since it was established; and what future allocations of funding he plans to make.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The UK is the largest donor to Education Cannot Wait. Education Cannot Wait has supported over 2 million children since its inception.

The funding provided directly to Education Cannot Wait in each financial year has been:

- **2016/17** - £7.5m
- **2017/18** - £10m
- **2018/19** - £12.1m
- **2019/20** - £38.5m

**Total - £68.1m**

Planned future spend provided directly is anticipated as:

- **2020/21** - £25.6m
- **2021/22** - £14.9m
- **2022/23** - £10m

**Total - £50.5m**

Exact disbursements are based on performance in annual reviews, together with reviews of financial documentation to ensure payments are not in advance of need. Allocations beyond 2022/2023 will be determined closer to the time, based on progress made.

Exact disbursements are based on performance in annual reviews, together with reviews of financial documentation to ensure payments are not in advance of need. Allocations beyond 2022/2023 will be determined closer to the time, based on progress made.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

[\[7202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much UK aid has been allocated to the International Financing Facility for Education; and what assessment his

Department has made of effect of the work of that Facility on delivering the UN Sustainable Development Goal on global education.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Prime Minister has publicly stated that education, particularly girls' education, is a priority for the UK.

He announced a commitment of up to £300 million for the International Finance Facility for Education at the UN General Assembly in September 2019, consisting of £100 million in grant funding and \$250 million in paid-in cash and guarantees.

The Facility will make a generate additional finance for education in up to 40 lower-middle income countries where funding is inadequate, learning is off track, and around 155 million children are out of school.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

[\[7203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the Girls' Education Challenge has achieved to date; and what the projected outcomes are of its programmes.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The UK launched our flagship Girls' Education Challenge programme – the world's largest global fund dedicated to girls' education – in May 2012.

The first phase of the Girls' Education Challenge (2012-2017) directly provided quality education for over a million marginalised girls through 37 different projects in 18 countries across Africa and Asia, many operating in conflict and crisis. The programme also benefitted other girls, boys, and wider communities through activities such as teaching training and improving school infrastructure.

The second phase of the Girls' Education Challenge (2017-2025) is supporting up to 1.5 million marginalised girls with access to education through 41 projects across 17 countries. This second phase includes support for highly marginalised girls who have never attended school, or have dropped out due to poverty, motherhood, disability or conflict.

**Harriett Baldwin:**

[\[7204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2020 to Question 3741 on Developing Countries: Education, how much of the £7.08 billion was spent bilaterally in each year from 2009 to 2018; and what the top 10 countries were in which that funding was spent.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

Distribution of the £7.08 billion spent bilaterally on education between 2009 and 2018 is listed below:

2009	£523M
2010	£482m
2011	£649m

2009	£523M
2012	£620m
2013	£905m
2014	£820m
2015	£651m
2016	£961m
2017	£785m
2018	£686m

These amounts include contributions which cannot be disaggregated by country, some of which is channelled through multilateral programmes such as the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait.

Top ten country spend over this time period is as below:

1	PAKISTAN
2	India
3	Bangladesh
4	Malawi
5	China
6	Nigeria
7	Ghana
8	Ethiopia
9	West Bank & Gaza Strip
10	South Africa

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[8427]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the economic effect of climate change does not result in a disproportionate reduction in adolescent girls accessing education.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

Coping with climate change is a challenge that faces us all and it is having wide ranging effects on economies, livelihoods, access to education and natural resources. The poorest communities, and girls and women within them, are likely to

be hardest hit, which is why we are investing in building the resilience of the world's poorest by doubling our International Climate Finance which since 2011, has helped 57 million people cope with the effects of climate change.

We know that girls are two and half times more likely to be out of school in emergencies, including climate related emergencies. That's why at the G7 Summit in 2019, the Prime Minister announced an unprecedented £90 million commitment for education in emergencies over 4½ years. This included £85 million to Education Cannot Wait the global fund for education in emergencies. UK support has helped the fund reach over a million of the most vulnerable girls, including those affected by Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi. The £90 million investment is a key plank of the PM's plan to ensure more girls benefit from 12 years of education.

As the leading global actor on girl's education, we will continue to make substantial investments supporting marginalised girls in education. The UK's Flagship Girls' Education Challenge, the largest global fund to girls' education, is now supporting up to 1.5 million girls across 17 countries.

#### ■ Developing Countries: Human Trafficking

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[8428]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much his Department spent from the public purse on preventing the trafficking of adolescent girls in humanitarian crises in (a) 2016-17, (b) 2017-18 and (c) 2018-19.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

Since 2017 the Government has more than doubled UK aid spending to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking – committing just over £200 million to date. This includes work to prevent the trafficking of adolescent girls.

We do not have figures specifically for humanitarian crises. However, examples of our current work to protect vulnerable children in protracted crises include:

- a £10 million Children on the Move Programme (in partnership with UNICEF) over the period 2017-2020 to protect up to 400,000 children at risk of violence and slavery in the Horn of Africa; and
- a £12 million UK Aid Connect Programme over the period 2018-2022 to address child labour in fragile and conflict affected states in Africa (such as the DRC).

Full details of this work can be found at <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk>.

#### ■ Developing Countries: Sustainable Development

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[7146]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment he has made of the UK Government's capability to support the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The UK Government is committed to supporting implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UK published a [Voluntary National Review](#) of progress towards the SDGs in June 2019. This is a comprehensive account of how government, business, civil society and others are contributing to the SDGs both at home and around the world. It also sets out areas of further work and next steps.

■ **Israel: Palestinians****Mrs Sharon Hodgson:****[8197]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans he has for the People for Peaceful Change programme after 31 March 2020.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

Our people to people programme aims to bring together Israelis and Palestinians. This is aimed at having a positive impact on both communities and at building understanding between people on both sides of the conflict. The programme is due to be completed by March 2020. It includes a research component that is looking more broadly at the impact of people to people work on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to build the evidence base in this area, which is presently limited. We will evaluate the evidence which will inform future decisions on work in this area.

It would be great if I could receive the PQs earlier next time as it has been quite frantic this afternoon ensuring the Minister clears these by the deadline between his back to back meetings.

■ **Lebanon: Humanitarian Aid****Alec Shelbrooke:****[R] [8245]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent steps he has taken to enable the provision of humanitarian aid in Lebanon.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

In Lebanon, DFID is providing regular targeted cash transfers to help over 10,000 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugee families to meet their most basic survival needs. The UK also funds legal assistance, support and advice (e.g. birth/marriage registration, civil documentation) to 55,000 individuals to uphold rights, facilitate access to basic services and to better prepare refugees for their eventual return to Syria. DFID is also supporting provision of non-formal education for up to 114,500 vulnerable children and providing child protection and gender-based violence services to 295,930 girls, boys and caregivers.

The UK strongly advocates for the rights and protection of refugees and is working with aid agencies to further reform the aid system to deliver more effective, smarter aid to the most vulnerable. The UK continues to play a leading role in mobilising the international community. On 12 – 14 March 2019, the UK attended the third Brussels Conference on “Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region”, driving forward the legacy of our own London Conference held in 2016. The money pledged will save

lives and enable the provision of life-saving supplies and resources to build the livelihoods of millions of internally displaced persons and refugees, and their host communities.

## ■ Marie Stopes International: Finance

**Fiona Bruce:**

**[8220]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether he has plans to undertake a review of the funding allocated by his Department to Marie Stopes International.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

Last year I made a new commitment to ending preventable deaths of mothers, newborn babies and children in the developing world by 2030. Prioritising access to healthcare for women and girls, including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, is fundamental to this agenda. In this work, we work closely with Marie Stopes International and they are a valued partner. I have no plans to review DFID funding at this point.

## ■ Overseas Aid

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[7144]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which five countries have received the largest proportion of Official Development Assistance in each of the last three years.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The table below shows the five countries which received the largest proportion of UK ODA in the last three years and their percentage share of the UK's country-specific bilateral ODA.

	2016		2017		2018	
Rank	Country	% Country-Specific Bilateral ODA	Country	% Country-Specific Bilateral ODA	Country	% Country-Specific Bilateral ODA
1	Pakistan	9.6%	Pakistan	8.2%	Pakistan	7.3%
2	Syria	7.3%	Nigeria	6.7%	Ethiopia	6.7%
3	Ethiopia	6.9%	Ethiopia	6.7%	Nigeria	6.6%
4	Nigeria	6.6%	Syria	6.4%	Afghanistan	5.5%
5	Afghanistan	4.9%	Somalia	5.8%	Syria	5.1%

*Source: Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend 2018*

## ■ **Palestinians: Overseas Aid**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[7145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Official Development Assistance is not allocated by the Palestinian Authority to the families of people who have been involved in terrorist activity.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

No UK aid is used for payments to prisoners or their families or the Martyrs Fund. DFID has robust measures in place to ensure UK Aid reaches only its intended beneficiaries. UK aid to the Palestinian Authority's (PA's) health and education sectors is channelled through the EU Palestinian-European Socio-Economic Management Assistance Mechanism. Our money goes into a dedicated bank account before being paid to individuals who have been carefully vetted in advance. The bank account is only used for UK aid. Independent auditors check that the money paid out from this bank account only went to the vetted individuals after every disbursement.

UK assistance to the PA for water and energy will be through the World Bank Partnership for Infrastructure Development in the West Bank and Gaza Multi Donor Trust Fund. UK aid will flow from the trust fund to dedicated accounts that will be managed by the PA in accordance with rules established by the World Bank, and be subject to the review of external financial auditors to provide assurance that the expenditure of funds was only on agreed programme activities.

## ■ **Philippines: Volcanoes**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[7174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support he has offered to the Philippine Government for evacuations within the Cavite province.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are closely monitoring the Taal volcano eruption. The Philippine Government is evacuating affected areas and has not requested assistance. The UK Government continues to liaise closely with the Philippine authorities and stands ready to assist should a request be made.

## ■ **Tanzania: Non-governmental Organisations**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[7143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much and what proportion of Official Development Assistance allocated to Tanzania was received by local and national nongovernmental organisations.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

For the previous fiscal year 2018/19, £8.7 million of DFID Tanzania bilateral spend (equivalent to 6%) was received by local and national non-governmental organisations.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Agricultural Products: Overseas Trade****Jim Shannon:****[8290]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to encourage fair trade in agricultural produce.

**Conor Burns:**

The UK government is committed to free and fair trade and using trade to promote global development and poverty reduction. Fair trade plays an important role in helping producers around the world improve their lives and making agricultural practices more sustainable.

**■ Beef: Uganda****Ben Lake:****[8434]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans she has to increase the import of Ugandan beef into the UK.

**Conor Burns:**

Uganda is eligible to trade with enhanced access to the UK via the Everything But Arms (EBA) tier of the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences. The EBA tier grants duty-free quota-free market access on all products except arms and ammunitions to all least developed countries (LDCs). The UK will provide the same level of access as the current EU trade preference scheme. The UK's scheme will come in to effect after the EU transition period, which will encourage imports from developing countries, including Uganda.

**■ Department for International Trade: Northern Ireland Executive****Jim Shannon:****[8292]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with Ministers in the Northern Ireland Executive.

**Conor Burns:**

We are excited to resume work with our counterparts in the Northern Ireland Executive. Despite the short time since its restoration, my Rt. Hon Friend the Minister of State for Trade Policy (Conor Burns), has proactively engaged with the Hon Member the Minister for the Economy of Northern Ireland (Dianne Dodds MEP). Minister Dodds participated in the Ministerial Forum for Trade discussion on 23 January 2020, along with Ministers from Scotland and Wales. This forum brings Ministers together from the Department for International Trade and the devolved administrations to discuss trade policy.

## ■ Overseas Trade: Carbon Emissions

**Hywel Williams:**

[8157]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has made an assessment of the carbon footprint of each economic sector in its trade strategy.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department for International Trade is considering how to factor climate change and environmental impacts into the Government's trade strategy, in order to drive the transition to a more sustainable global economy, whilst delivering economic benefits for the UK.

The Government is committed to tackling climate change at home and overseas. That is why we were the first major economy to legislate for net zero emission by 2050 and we will be targeting ambitious action to deliver on the promise of the 2015 Paris Agreement during our presidency of COP26 this year.

## ■ Trade Agreements: British Overseas Territories

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[8182]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the potential advantages that the British Overseas Territories could provide when negotiating new free trade agreements.

**Conor Burns:**

The Overseas Territories are valued constitutional partners, and the UK Government is committed to supporting and representing their interests in future trade policy, including free trade agreements (FTAs). We are engaging with the Overseas Territories to understand how this works in practice and what the possible opportunities may be. I look forward to future discussions with the Overseas Territories regarding their interests and priorities. We are determined that the new FTA's will work for the whole UK family.

## ■ Trade Agreements: Japan and South Korea

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[8187]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the publication of the negotiation objectives for trade deals with (a) Japan and (b) South Korea.

**Conor Burns:**

The Department for International Trade continues to carry out internal processes to prepare for future negotiations with Japan. Both countries have agreed that they will work quickly to build a new economic partnership.

On 22 August 2019, the UK signed a continuity Free Trade Agreement with South Korea. Information about the terms of the agreement is outlined in the Parliamentary report, published on GOV.UK.

**■ UK-Africa Investment Summit**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[6060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2020 to Question 2474, what businesses (a) were invited to and (b) attended the UK-Africa Investment Summit on 20 January 2020.

**Graham Stuart:**

*[Holding answer 27 January 2020]:* Subject to data disclosure rules I will write to the Hon Member as soon as I can with more information. A copy of this letter will be placed in the libraries of the House.

**■ World Expo: United Arab Emirates**

**Grahame Morris:** [\[8230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of protections of the (a) human rights and (b) safety of workers building the British pavilion for the Dubai Expo in the UAE; and whether there has been any violations of those rights and protections.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has ensured that stringent contract provisions are in place with the suppliers who have been appointed to construct the UK Pavilion, requiring all work to be carried out in accordance with the Expo 2020 Workers Welfare Minimum Standards (which are higher than the UAE's standard welfare regulations). These suppliers are monitored closely by DIT's project management supplier to ensure performance against their contractual conditions.

According to the last health and safety audit by the Expo 2020 Dubai authorities the UK was amongst the most positively scored Pavilions. In addition, DIT has appointed a specialist risk management organisation (with expertise in carrying out worker welfare audits in line with the Expo 2020 standards) to carry out regular independent audits of the UK pavilion site and its contractors. Where any issues have been raised, all parties have worked together to rectify these.

**JUSTICE****■ Dangerous Driving: Sentencing**

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[8274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make each category of careless and inconsiderate driving an offence that carries a custodial sentence.

**Chris Philp:**

The government has committed to increase the maximum penalty for causing death by dangerous driving and causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs to life imprisonment, and create a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving as soon as possible.

## ■ European Convention on Human Rights

**Stella Creasy:**

[7199]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many declarations of incompatibility the Supreme Court has issued, and how many declarations of incompatibility the Government has acted on.

**Chris Philp:**

All declarations of incompatibility made under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the actions taken to address them are set out in the Government's annual report to the Joint Committee on Human Rights. The latest report was laid before Parliament on 30 October 2019 and we have not been notified of any further declarations of incompatibility since then.

## ■ Offences Against Children: Convictions

**Alex Norris:**

[8446]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many offenders have been convicted of offences relating to the live-streaming of the sexual exploitation of children in each of the last three years.

**Alex Norris:**

[8447]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Justice, what the average custodial sentence imposed on offenders convicted for offences relating to the live-streaming of the sexual exploitation of children online has been in each of the last three years; and how many international travel restrictions have been imposed on people convicted of those offences.

**Chris Philp:**

Live-streaming of sexual exploitation of children may be prosecuted under a number of offences. These include (but are not limited to) causing the sexual exploitation of a child (s48 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (SOA 2003)), controlling a child in relation to sexual exploitation (s49, SOA 2003), arranging or facilitating the sexual exploitation of a child (s50, SOA 2003).

The Ministry of Justice publishes information on prosecutions and convictions by detailed offence and figures relating to the offences outlined above can be found in the Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code data tool available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/804510/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2018.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/804510/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2018.xlsx)

The data tool can be filtered by 'Offence code', for offences relating to the above, filter to the following:

07108 Causing or inciting child prostitution or pornography - child aged 13 to 17

07109 Controlling a child prostitute or a child involved in pornography - child aged 13 to 17

07110 Arranging or facilitating child prostitution or pornography - child aged 13 to 17

07111 Causing or inciting child prostitution or pornography - child under 13

07112 Controlling a child prostitute or a child involved in pornography - child under 13

07113 Arranging or facilitating child prostitution or pornography - child under 13

Please note that these offences cover a broader range of behaviour than live-streaming, such as recording or otherwise transmitting indecent images of children.

The court proceedings database does not include information on the imposition of international travel restrictions in these cases.

## ■ Prisoners: Females

**Chris Evans:** [\[6095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many women serving a custodial sentence have been a victim of domestic violence.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The latest data available relates to those in custody on 30 June 2019, aged 18 and over. Information is available for individuals whose relationship status had been assessed by that date on the Offender Assessment System, which accounts for 2,437 women and 60,157 men.

From these totals 1,525 female prisoners were identified as having ever been the victim of domestic violence. This equates to 63% of female prisoners.

Figures for the extent of Offender Assessment System coverage exclude "layer 1" assessments, which do not include questions on domestic violence. Previous figures quoted for 2017 in the Answer of 9 October to Question 174010 included these, so percentages for 2019 are increased accordingly.

## ■ Probate: Greater London

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[6598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many complaints his Department has received on the effectiveness of the London Probate Office in each of the last five years.

**Chris Philp:**

In each of the last 5 years London Probate Office has received the following number of complaints about its effectiveness:

2019 – 106

2018 – 24

2017 – 9

2016 – 10

2015 – 14

## ■ Trials

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [8204]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of listed cases are listed as floaters each month.

**Chris Philp:**

Listing is a judicial matter and approaches vary from court to court. There is not a comprehensive data set available that would provide an answer to this question.

## ■ Trials: Crown Courts

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [8203]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what criteria his Department uses to assess whether the average time from first listing of a case to trial in a Crown court is (a) increasing and (b) decreasing; and whether the length of that period is assessed in each Crown court in England.

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [8207]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what methodology HM Courts and Tribunals Service uses for comparing the length of time taken at each court between the first listing of a case and the first hearing; and if he will publish that data.

**Chris Philp:**

Data on time from first listing to completion is published in the Criminal Court Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>. This includes the Crown Court Case Timeliness Tool, which provides first listing to completion statistics for each Crown Court.

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [8205]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average time was between the first appearance of a case in the Crown Court to the commencement of the trial in (a) Southwark Crown Court, (b) Lancaster Crown Court and (c) Brighton Crown Court in 2019.

**Chris Philp:**

The information requested is not available due to disproportionate cost.

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [8206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of cases were heard in more than one Crown Court in 2019.

**Chris Philp:**

The information requested is not available due to disproportionate cost.

## ■ Youth Custody: Restraint Techniques

**Steve Reed:**

[6696]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if his Department will extend the Government's guidance, Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention, published on 27 June 2019, to secure (a) training centres, and (b) children's homes.

**Wendy Morton:**

The guidance already applies to secure children's homes.

The safety and welfare of children held in youth custody, including secure training centres (STCs), is our highest priority and we take any incident in which a child is restrained very seriously. In STCs, restraint is only ever to be used in accordance with the Secure Training Centre Rules 1998 and as a last resort where there is a risk of harm and no other form of intervention is possible or appropriate.

The guidance for STCs, Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint, has been specifically developed to help staff avoid physical restraint as far as possible by using a range of de-escalation, diversion and behaviour management techniques.

## SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS AUTHORITY

## ■ Members: Allowances

**Scott Benton:**

[4498]

To ask the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, what the total cost has been to the public purse of hon. Members who have not taken their seats in the House of Commons in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017 and (d) 2018.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

All MPs are able to claim for business costs and expenses in line with the rules established by IPSA in the Scheme of MPs' Business Costs and Expenses. All business costs and expenses claimed by MPs, including those who have not taken their seats in the House of Commons, are routinely published and can be viewed on IPSA's website: [www.theipsa.org.uk/mp-costs/your-mp/](http://www.theipsa.org.uk/mp-costs/your-mp/).

The figures below outline the business costs and expenses of those MPs who have not taken their seats.

MPs WITH									
FINANCIAL	PUBLISHED	OFFICE	STAFFING	STAFF	WINDING	ACCOMMODATION /	TRAVEL		
YEAR	HED COSTS	COSTS	G	ABSENCE	G-UP BUDGET	HOTELS			TOTAL
2015-16	6	£12,334.65	£545,454.86	NA	£89,712.95	£0.00	£597.69		<b>£648,100.15</b>

MPs WITH		PUBLISHED		STAFF		WINDING-UP		ACCOMMODATION / TRAVEL		TOTAL
FINANCIAL YEAR	HEAD COSTS	OFFICE COSTS	STAFFING	ABSENCE	G-UP BUDGET	TION / HOTELS				
2016-17	4	£20,504.85	£434,266.07	NA	£0.00	£0.00		£5,146.49		<b>£459,917.41</b>
2017-18	8	£115,569.72	£683,680.99	£0.00	£35,163.41	£7,835.00		£32,210.58		<b>£874,459.70</b>
2018-19	7	£115,667.58	£893,333.79	£7,879.49		£0.00		£19,597.03	£119,282.23	<b>£1,155,760.12</b>

Under a resolution of the House, Representative Money is provided to opposition parties represented by Members who have chosen not to take the Oath. Payment of Representative Money is administered by the House of Commons Members' Hub. Budget allocations for Representative Money since 2005-6 are published in Appendix 4 of the following document:

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

The Representative Money allocation figures for the four years in question are as follows:

FINANCIAL YEAR	PERIOD	MAIN ALLOCATION	TRAVEL ALLOCATION	TOTAL ALLOCATION
		£	£	£
2015/16 *	01/04/15 - 07/05/15	11,511.00	329.45	11,840.45
	08/05/15 - 31/03/16	87,783.00	1,898.90	89,681.90
2016/17	01/04/16 - 31/03/17	97,556.00	2,224.32	99,780.32
2017/18 *	01/04/17 - 08/06/17	18,737.00	431.41	19,168.41
	09/06/17 - 31/03/18	130,970.00	2,901.64	133,871.64
2018/19	01/04/18 - 31/03/19	165,864.00	3,674.62	169,538.62

FINANCIAL YEAR	PERIOD	MAIN ALLOCATION	TRAVEL ALLOCATION	TOTAL ALLOCATION
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**\* General  
Election years**

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

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

The Representative Money actual expenditure for each financial year since 2016-17 was as follows:

FINANCIAL YEAR	PERIOD	MAIN ALLOCATION SPEND	TRAVEL ALLOCATION SPEND	TOTAL SPEND
		£	£	£
<b>2016/17</b>	01/04/16 - 31/03/17	97,743.00	0.00	97,743.00
<b>2017/18 *</b>	01/04/17 - 08/06/17	18,737.00	0.00	18,737.00
	09/06/17 - 31/03/18	131,824.00	0.00	131,824.00
<b>2018/19</b>	01/04/18 - 31/03/19	166,005.00	0.00	166,005.00

**\* General  
Election years**

Any spend above the Main Allocation has been funded by the parties themselves.

■ **Members: Pay**

**Scott Benton:**

**[4497]**

To ask the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, what plans the Committee has to review the arrangements on access to salaries and expenses for hon. Members and their staff who do not take their seats.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

Arrangements for paying salaries and expenses to MPs and their staff are for IPSA to determine, as set out in the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009. Section 4(6) of the Act states that IPSA is only able to pay the salaries of MPs who have taken the Oath and thereby take their seats in parliament. MPs who do not take the Oath, and the staff employed by them, are nonetheless eligible to claim for business costs in pursuit of their constituency work in line with the Scheme of MPs' Business Costs and Expenses.

**TRANSPORT**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Rachel Maclean:****[900502]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve rail services in the Midlands.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Major investment is planned to improve rail services throughout the region. In the West Midlands, £700m is being invested in a fleet of 180 new carriages which will deliver 20,000 more peak hour seats into Birmingham over the next two years,

The East Midlands will benefit from our £1.5 billion upgrade of the Midland Mainline, with faster peak time journeys to London from this December and a brand-new fleet of bi-mode trains entering service from 2022.

■ **Electric vehicles****Drew Hendry:****[8364]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of amending the Road Traffic Act 1988 to enable the legal road usage of personal light electric vehicles.

**George Freeman:**

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

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

The Strategy can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-mobility-urban-strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-mobility-urban-strategy)

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

## ■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**

**[8129]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to Answer of 27 January 2020 to Question 6592, on High Speed 2 Railway Line, if he will list (a) the 2,000 organisations that have been awarded contracts to deliver work on High Speed Two and (b) the services each of those organisations are providing.

**Paul Maynard:**

HS2 Ltd can supply a spreadsheet that details the suppliers that they have transacted with along with a product category description that is identified during the creation of purchase orders. However, HS2 Ltd are already included in the Department's published monthly spending transparency data, setting out data on all spending over £25k and detailing the types of services provided and the suppliers engaged in those services. Further, HS2 Ltd separately detail contract opportunities on their web site, where contracts let to date are publicly available. We therefore do not deem it appropriate to re state this already publicly available data.

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**

**[8130]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2020 to Question 6592, on High Speed 2 Railway Line, whether Ministers in his Department authorised the award of those contracts to deliver work on High Speed Two.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Department has granted delegated authority to HS2 Ltd to undertake their own procurement activity, which is set out under the terms of the Development Agreement between HS2 Ltd and the Department. Where this level of delegation may be exceeded on specific contract approvals, then this is progressed through the Department's internal Governance arrangements.

## ■ High Speed Two Railway Line: Forests

**Wera Hobhouse:**

**[900517]**

What recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the effect of High Speed Two on ancient woodland.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Secretaries of State are in on-going contact and discuss a range of issues concerning HS2 and the environment. The Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd work closely with DEFRA, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission to ensure the project complies with environmental commitments, and to mitigate environmental impacts.

## ■ High Speed Two: Contracts

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**

[\[8131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, above what level of contractual payment are contracts awarded to HS2 Ltd required to be authorised by (a) a Minister and (b) the Treasury.

**Paul Maynard:**

The Department has granted delegated authority to HS2 Ltd to undertake their own procurement activity, which is set out under the terms of the Development Agreement between HS2 Ltd and the Department. The tiered levels of authority pertaining to contractual authorities recorded in the Development Agreement are commercially sensitive.

## ■ Public Transport

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[8233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will bring forward legislation proposals to give local authorities control over regional public transport similar to the remit of Transport for London.

**George Freeman:**

The Government is committed to supporting places across the country to level up powers and funding to deliver improved public transport. Through devolution deals, eight 'Metro' mayoralities have now been established and the Government is committed to levelling-up places and striking deals with more places.

The Government will be publishing an English Devolution White Paper as a key part of our strategy to unleash the potential of our regions, which will include plans for expanding devolution across England and levelling up powers between Mayoral Combined Authorities.

## ■ Railways: Urban Areas

**Alun Cairns:**

[\[900524\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to connect more towns to the rail network.

**Paul Maynard:**

We have pledged £500m to begin reopening closed railway lines and stations. We are funding plans to reopen the lines to Fleetwood in Lancashire and Ashington in Northumberland, and are making up to £20m available for new stations. We have written to my honourable friends inviting them to a briefing on 4th February where we will explain how they can put forward ideas for reopening and seek funding to develop existing and new schemes.

## ■ Railways: West Midlands

**Suzanne Webb:**

[\[900522\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to improve rail services in the West Midlands.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Major investment is planned to improve rail services throughout the region. In the West Midlands, £700m is being invested in a fleet of 180 new carriages which will deliver 20,000 more peak hour seats into Birmingham over the next two years,

The East Midlands will benefit from our £1.5bn upgrade of the Midland Mainline, with faster peak time journeys to London from this December and a brand-new fleet of bi-mode trains entering service from 2022.

**Roads: Standards****Gillian Keegan:**[\[900518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve the road network in England.

**George Freeman:**

Through the first Road Investment Strategy, the Government has invested £17.6 billion in England's Strategic Road Network since 2015. We intend to make £28.8 billion from the National Roads Fund available for our most strategically important roads over the next five years from 1 April 2020.

In addition, we are providing funding to local highway authorities to support maintenance of their roads, and have pledged £2 billion for the country's largest ever pothole fixing programme.

**Taxis: Licensing****Wes Streeting:**[\[8393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his policy on the Task and Finish group report on Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing is the same as the previous Government's as published in its February 2019 response to that report.

**George Freeman:**

The Government's response to the Task and Finish Group report on taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing, set out its commitment to taking action where needed, to ensure a safe and well-functioning taxi and PHV sector, meets the needs and expectations of its passengers. This is still the Government's position. We will shortly be issuing Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Standards.

**Transport: North East****Grahame Morris:**[\[8234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if the Government will undertake a review of transport infrastructure to identify schemes with the aim of improving (a) regional connectivity, (b) economic performance and (c) employment opportunities in (i) the North East and (ii) Easington constituency.

**George Freeman:**

The Government is committed to improving transport infrastructure across the North and is investing £13bn to 2020, including £337m towards the replacement of Tyne and Wear Metro rolling stock and £7.7m towards the £10.4m cost of the new station at Horden. The Transforming Cities Fund is also providing £2.5 billion investment to drive up productivity and improve access to good jobs. Decisions on the North East's bid to the TCF will be taken in the Spring.

**■ Transport: Planning Permission****Bob Seely:**[\[900514\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the adequacy of planning requirements for new housing developments in relation to (a) motorists, (b) cyclists and (c) pedestrians.

**George Freeman:**

The Department works closely with MHCLG on planning policy related to transport for new housing, but we need to go further to ensure better integration at all scales.

The National Planning Policy Framework ensures sustainable transport issues are included at the beginning of housing planning and decision making and a projected £2.4bn will be invested over this parliament to support local authorities to develop ambitious Local Cycling and Walking Plans.

**TREASURY****■ Average Earnings****Damian Hinds:**[\[7188\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the average wage of people in employment who had been unemployed in the latest period for which figures are available.

**John Glen:**

The welfare system ensures that work pays and supports claimants through the transition into work. Employment is at a record high and there are 3.9 million more people in work than in 2010. Wages have outpaced inflation for almost a year and a half.

The lowest earners have seen their real wages grow by 11% between April 2015 and April 2019 and on April 1, following the recommendations of the independent Low Pay Commission, the Government will increase the National Living Wage by 6.2% to £8.72 an hour.

**■ Botulinum Toxin: VAT**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[8163\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether botox injections for cosmetic surgeries that are regarded as essential medical procedures are VAT deductible.

**Jesse Norman:**

Medical services, including cosmetic surgeries, are exempt from VAT when carried out by a health professional to protect, maintain or restore an individual's health.

They are subject to VAT at 20% when they are carried out to enhance a person's appearance. VAT that is charged by the supplier can be reclaimed by the individual concerned if the services are for a business need, subject to the normal rules.

**■ Child Benefit: Romford**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[7138\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many children there are in households to which the high income child benefit charge applies in Romford constituency.

**Jesse Norman:**

The information requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

**■ Child Trust Fund**

**Conor McGinn:** [\[8356\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to (a) raise public awareness of and (b) encourage young people to access monies held in their name in Child Trust Fund accounts.

**Conor McGinn:** [\[8357\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the total number of unclaimed Child Trust Fund accounts in (a) St Helens North constituency and (b) the UK.

**Conor McGinn:** [\[8358\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the total value of unclaimed funds currently residing in Child Trust Fund accounts.

**John Glen:**

HMRC is working closely with Child Trust Fund providers and the wider industry to assist those who have difficulty in locating a misplaced Child Trust Fund account.

HMRC:

- has improved the National Insurance Notification (NINO) letter, which is sent out prior to a child's 16th birthday, to raise awareness of the Child Trust Fund scheme;
- has worked with a charity, The Share Foundation, to develop a process whereby the charity can link children with their account; and

- is developing a simplified system for account tracing which will assist those with a limited digital footprint.

In addition, while CTF providers are already required to send regular statements to the contact for the account, regulations were laid on 15 January which will require them to send a statement in the year the child reaches 17 in anticipation of the maturity of the account.

If a child, or their parent, does not know which provider is managing the child's account, HMRC provides a tracing service, which can be accessed at:

[www.gov.uk/child-trust-funds](http://www.gov.uk/child-trust-funds)

As accounts do not begin to mature until September 2020, no accounts are currently unclaimed, and the total value of unclaimed funds is zero.

The regulations laid on 15 January ensure that any CTF account not claimed by the account holder when they turn 18 will retain its tax-free status until it is claimed.

These regulations also provide that funds in a mature CTF may be transferred to an ISA without counting towards the individual's annual ISA subscription limit.

## ■ Coinage

**Neil Coyle:**

**[8331]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the manufacturing cost per coin of the commemorative 50 pence coins that are due to enter circulation on 31 January 2020 to mark the UK's departure from the EU.

**John Glen:**

Any coins issued into circulation will meet existing demand for 50ps. There is no additional cost in minting coins with one design over another.

**Neil Coyle:**

**[8332]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost of (a) designing, (b) producing and (c) publicising the commemorative 50 pence coins that are due to enter circulation on 31 January 2020 to mark the UK's departure from the EU.

**John Glen:**

The cost of designing all UK coins, including the coin to mark the UK's departure from the European Union, is met by the Royal Mint out of its own revenues.

Any coins issued into circulation will meet existing demand for 50ps. There is no additional cost in minting coins with one design over another.

This announcement was promoted in the same way as any Treasury announcement, and there were no specific costs associated with it.

**Neil Coyle:**

**[8333]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost of (a) designing, (b) producing and (c) publicising the 50 pence coins that were due to enter

circulation on (i) 29 March 2019 and (ii) 31 October 2019 to mark the UK's departure from the EU but were subsequently melted down.

**John Glen:**

The cost of designing all UK coins, including the coin to mark the UK's departure from the European Union, is met by the Royal Mint out of its own revenues.

No coins were due to enter circulation on 29 March 2019. Approximately 1 million coins were minted in October to mark the UK's departure from the European Union. The cost of minting these coins is commercially sensitive.

The Treasury announced at Budget 2018 that the Royal Mint would produce a coin to mark the UK departing the European Union, and there were no specific costs associated with this announcement.

■ **Electronic Publishing: VAT**

**Afzal Khan:** [\[6756\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will review the merits of VAT on eBooks and audiobooks in the upcoming Budget.

**Afzal Khan:** [\[6757\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of VAT rates applicable to digital publications on literacy levels among young people.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government keeps all taxes under review, including VAT.

The impact on literacy levels 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 event process.

■ **Financial Conduct Authority and Financial Services Authority**

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:** [\[6599\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many times senior executives of the (a) Financial Conduct Authority and (b) Financial Services Authority met representatives of a foreign government in each of the last 12 years; and for each of those meetings if he will publish the (i) location, (ii) date, (iii) agenda and (iv) identity of the participants.

**John Glen:**

This is a matter for the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), which is operationally independent from Government. The question has been passed on to the FCA. The

FCA will reply directly to the right honourable member by letter. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

■ **Financial Conduct Authority and Financial Services Authority: Russia**

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

[\[6600\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many times the Russian Ambassador to the UK met representatives of the (a) Financial Conduct Authority and (b) Financial Services Authority to discuss (i) the Alfa Group, (ii) Mikhail Fridman and (iii) other Russian, Ukrainian or Kazakh (A) business people and (B) companies in each of the last twelve years.

**John Glen:**

This is a matter for the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), which is operationally independent from Government. The question has been passed on to the FCA. The FCA will reply directly to the right honourable member by letter. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

■ **Government Securities: Environment Protection**

**Gareth Davies:**

[\[6770\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government has plans to issue a sovereign green gilt as part of the transition to a net zero economy.

**John Glen:**

The government remains open to the introduction of new financing instruments but would need to be satisfied that they would meet value-for-money criteria, enjoy strong and sustained demand in the long-term and be consistent with the wider fiscal objectives of government. The government continues to monitor the case for issuing a sovereign green bond and will keep this under review.

■ **National Minimum Wage Enforcement Unit: Staff**

**Anneliese Dodds:**

[\[8454\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many FTE staff worked in the national minimum wage enforcement unit in each month in each of the last three years.

**Anneliese Dodds:**

[\[8455\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) current and (b) former employees have contacted the national minimum wage unit in relation to alleged non-compliance by their employer in each month in each of the last three years.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is determined that everyone who is entitled to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) receives it.

All businesses, irrespective of size or business sector, are responsible for paying the correct minimum wage to their staff.

If anyone thinks they are not receiving at least the minimum wage, they can contact Acas, in confidence, on 0300 123 1100 or submit a query online using the link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pay-and-work-rights-complaints> .

The Government has more than trebled annual funding for minimum wage enforcement since 2014, providing a total budget of £26.3m in 2018-19. The additional investment has enabled a significant expansion of resources dedicated to enforcing the NMW.

The table below provides a breakdown of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff working in NMW enforcement, by month, for the last 3 years.

Other staff across HMRC also contribute to enforcing the NMW, including lawyers, technical advisors and those specialising in criminal investigations. These staff are not included in these numbers.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
April	256	388	403
May	257	389	399
June	270	395	402
July	269	394	419
August	271	396	418
September	279	395	424
October	288	394	424
November	287	393	438
December	321	390	435
January	350	409	421
February	346	415	424
March	352	412	429

HMRC do not specifically record data on current and former employees when logging complaints. The table below shows the total number of complaints received from workers by HMRC, for each month, for the last 3 years.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
April	143	414	808
May	236	310	611

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
June	175	299	598
July	206	454	617
August	165	341	213
September	176	342	342
October	219	501	302
November	154	626	287
December	147	550	331
January	174	665	266
February	313	754	297
March	465	771	252
Total	2573	6027	4924

#### ■ Non-domestic Rates

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[8196]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the timeframe is for his Department's review of business rates; and whether the findings of that review will be implemented before April 2021.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is committed to conducting a fundamental review of business rates and further information will be announced in due course.

#### ■ Non-domestic Rates: Retail Trade

**Anneliese Dodds:**

[8458]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many retail businesses have a rateable value of under £51,000.

**Jesse Norman:**

As of 31 March 2019, there were 467,040 non-domestic properties in the Rating List in England and Wales with a Rateable Value of under £51,000 that are classified as part of the retail sector.

The Valuation Office Agency publishes statistics on the stock of properties at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/non-domestic-rating-stock-of-properties-including-business-floorspace-2019>. The next published update to the above statistics is planned for July 2020.

## ■ Tax Avoidance

**Tracy Brabin:**

**[8420]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many individuals (a) in total and (b) per parliamentary constituency will HMRC directly notify of the changes to the application of the loan charge.

**Jesse Norman:**

On 20 December 2019, the Government published the Independent Review of the Loan Charge and the Government's response to the Review. The Government accepted all but one of the Review's recommendations.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) are writing to around 50,000 individuals directly to notify them of the outcome of the review, setting out what it means for the individual and the next steps for them. Information is not currently available at constituency level for these individuals.

**Sarah Olney:**

**[8422]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to tackle the sale of loan charge products.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government and HMRC are determined to continue to tackle promoters of tax avoidance schemes. It is not acceptable for promoters to market tax avoidance schemes which do not work and deprive the Exchequer of tax that is owed, and it is unfair to the vast majority of taxpayers who pay in full and on time.

In December 2019 the Government announced in its response to the Independent Loan Charge Review further measures to tackle promoters of avoidance schemes that will reduce the scope for promoters to market tax avoidance schemes.

The Government will:

- Ensure HMRC can more effectively issue stop notices to promoters to make it harder to promote schemes that do not work;
- Prevent promoters from abusing corporate entity structures that sell schemes to avoid their obligations under the Promoters of Tax Avoidance Scheme (POTAS) rules;
- Ensure HMRC can obtain information about the enabling of abusive schemes as soon as they are identified, and enabler penalties are felt without delay when a scheme has been defeated at tribunal;
- Ensure that HMRC can act decisively where promoters fail to provide information on their avoidance schemes; and
- Make further technical amendments to the POTAS regime so that it continues to operate effectively and to ensure that the General Anti Abuse Rule (GAAR) can be used to counteract partnerships as intended.

Further detail on these measures will be set out at the Budget.

## ■ Vans: Input Tax

**Darren Jones:**

[\[6747\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will issue updated guidance on the makes and models of car-derived vans and combi-vans which HMRC defines as (a) cars and (b) vans for input tax deduction purposes.

**Jesse Norman:**

HM Revenue and Customs update the list of relevant vehicles upon receipt of a notification from manufacturers or sole concessionaires of new vehicles that qualify as car-derived vans and combi-vans for input tax deduction purposes. The current list was discussed with The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders trade body in April 2019 and to date no new notifications have been received.

## ■ VAT

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[8354\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Health on 9 January 202, Official Report, Column 727, what progress his Department has made on the review of the section 41 VAT rules.

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[8355\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Health of 9 January 2020, Official Report, Column 727 when he plans to issue a call for evidence on the review of the section 41 VAT rules.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is currently working on the section 41 VAT policy paper and this will be published in due course.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

## ■ Disability: Employment

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[8286\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what discussions her Department has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the fiscal support available for employers who incur costs by making reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government is committed to protecting people with disabilities in the workplace. The Equality Act 2010 places obligations on employers in relation to disabled employees, including a duty to provide reasonable adjustments. However, the legislation recognises the need to strike a balance between the needs of disabled people and the interests of service providers. What is 'reasonable' will vary from one situation to another. This is because factors like the practicability of making the

adjustment, the cost of the adjustment and the resources available to a business, will vary from one situation to another.

The government runs Access to Work, a demand-led discretionary grant scheme that offers up to £59,200 funding per year for in-work support for people whose disability or health condition affects the way they do their job. The scheme is designed to offer support above the level of employers' statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010, as well as providing advice to employers on in work support available for their employees which could include reasonable adjustments.

### ■ **Employment Tribunals Service: Pregnancy**

**Mr Stephen Morgan:** [\[8448\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment her Department has made of the effect on the ability of pregnant women to represent their cases of the three-month time limit for submitting an employment tribunal claim.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:** [\[8451\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect on the (a) well-being of pregnant women and (b) equality of the employment tribunal system of introducing a six-month time limit for employment tribunals involving pregnant women.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government recently consulted on whether the three-month time limit for bringing Equality Act claims to an Employment Tribunal is sufficient. Although this question formed part of the Government Equalities Office consultation on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, it was not limited to this issue and invited views on time limits for all prohibited behaviours, across all protected characteristics, including pregnancy and maternity.

The consultation concluded in October 2019 and a Government response will be published in due course.

### ■ **Offshore Industry: Discrimination**

**Cat Smith:** [\[7222\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to prevent offshore employment providers recruiting in the UK from discriminating against an applicant on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Companies based in the United Kingdom and which recruit here are subject to British laws, including those which protect people from discrimination because of their sex or any other protected characteristic. Conversely, employers based overseas who recruit British workers for overseas work are subject to the laws of the country in which they are based, and similar arrangements apply to work on ships where the

ship's ownership is outside the UK and the ship is to operate outside UK territorial waters.

This general legal position in no way excuses companies, as recently reported, which deny British women job opportunities on ships registered or owned abroad, especially where the company in question is seeking to recruit in this country. It is unacceptable to see this sort of blatant sex discrimination in 2020 if there is no genuine occupational requirement for a position to be filled by a man. The Department for Transport will be reviewing regulations on the treatment of seafarers and will be looking at this issue as part of the review.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Career Development: Females

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[7659]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support upward mobility for women in low wage jobs.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 29 January 2020]:* We are committed to ensuring that everyone – irrespective of their gender – is able to enter work, progress in work and realise financial security. We are proud that the female employment rate is at a record high. And we are looking to build on this by making Universal Credit better for lone parents (90% of whom are women), and exploring how we can support those in low-paid employment to increase their earnings through a programme of research and testing, looking into barriers to progression (for women in particular), and what works to tackle them.

### ■ Child Benefit

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[8250]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the two child benefit limit on the income of single parents.

**Will Quince:**

DWP and HMRC produce a joint report with statistics related to the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children, the latest of which was published in July 2019 and can be found online at:

<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>

Providing support for a maximum of two children, or qualifying young persons in Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit, ensures fairness between claimants and 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.

### ■ Disability: Children

**Fiona Bruce:** [\[8219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to increase the financial support parents receive for raising children with disabilities.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Child Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a benefit for children under the age of 16 who, due to a disability or health condition, have mobility issues and/or require substantially more care, attention and supervision than children their age normally would. Parents of disabled children may be also able to claim Carer's Allowance.

The government is committed to protecting and supporting the most vulnerable in society. It is for that reason the government has continued to uprate disability and carer benefits by inflation, including the disability elements of tax credits.

### ■ Employment and Support Allowance

**Dame Diana Johnson:** [\[7161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to implement the recommendations of the Seventh Report of the Work and Pensions Committee, PIP and ESA assessments, Session 2017–19, in relation to the issue of new guidance to ESA assessors.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Department, in conjunction with the assessment provider (the Centre for Health & Disability Assessments (CHDA)), regularly reviews the guidance provided to Health Care Professionals (HCPs) conducting Work Capability Assessments. The guidance in place for HCPs, in relation to a request for a home visit, states that they can consider evidence from the claimant's GP or from other health professionals involved in their care.

In addition, DWP has been working with CHDA to identify potential new approaches to determining home visit eligibility with the aim of reducing the need to request evidence from claimants in the future.

### ■ Employment: Autism

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[7271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to help support people with autistic spectrum disorder in making job applications.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches provide personalised support to people to find jobs and move towards work, including individuals with Autistic Spectrum Conditions.

Training and guidance is provided for working with different vulnerable groups, including customers with Autistic Spectrum Conditions. Support is also provided by Disability Employment Advisers and Work Psychologists. Work Coaches can refer individuals to personalised provision and support such as the Work and Health Programme (available in England and Wales) or Fair Start Scotland (devolved programme available Scotland).

**Dr Lisa Cameron:****[7272]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to encourage (a) managers and (b) employees to undertake autism awareness training in the workplace.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Through the Disability Confident scheme, DWP is engaging with employers and helping to promote the skills, talents and abilities of people with disabilities, including people with autism. Through the scheme, DWP is providing advice and support to help employers feel more confident about employing disabled people, by signposting them to appropriate advice guidance and support. As of 31 December 2019, 15,832 employers have signed up. A Disability Confident Toolkit has been developed to provide employers with comprehensive information on autism and hidden impairments, as well as guidance on employment and local authority services. This Toolkit is hosted on the Autism Alliance website:

<https://www.autismandneurodiversitytoolkit.org/>

Access to Work has staff with a specialist knowledge of autism and offers customers and employers tailored packages of support and advice.

**■ Food Poverty: Wallasey****Ms Angela Eagle:****[8152]**

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

**Will Quince:**

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.

## ■ Poverty: Children

**Grahame Morris:** [8229]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will introduce a target to (a) reduce child poverty to four million children by 2021, (b) reduce child poverty to two million children by 2025 and (c) eradicate child poverty by 2030.

**Will Quince:**

I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave on 27 January to question number 6646.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-22/6646/>

## ■ Universal Credit

**Neil Gray:** [8322]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the five-week wait for a first payment of universal credit on levels of poverty.

**Neil Gray:** [8327]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the five-week wait for a first payment of universal credit on levels of foodbank use.

**Neil Gray:** [8329]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the five-week wait for a first payment of universal credit on levels of poverty in (a) Airdrie and Shotts constituency and (b) Scotland.

**Will Quince:**

No one has to wait five weeks for their first payment of Universal Credit. New claim advances are available to support those in financial need until their first payment is made. The Department has learnt from where we did not get things right in the past in the legacy benefit system. Too often, the desire to pay quickly meant claimants not receiving their correct entitlement as we did not have an appropriate timeframe to review household circumstances.

Claimants can access up to 100% of the total expected monthly award, which they can pay back over a period of up to 12 months. We have announced that from October 2021, the repayment period for these advances will be extended further, to 16 months. Proposed repayments of the advance are explained, and all claimants are advised to request a level of advance which is manageable both now and when considering the repayments required.

The best way to help people improve their lives is through employment. Households where all adults are in work are around 6 times less likely to be in relative poverty than adults in a household where nobody works. This improves further if all the adults are working full time, reducing a child's risk of being in poverty from 66% for (two-parent) families with only part-time work to 7%. Universal Credit allows households the freedom from the 'cliff edges' which featured in the legacy benefits system, where money was lost when working more than 16, 24 or 30 hours.

There are many reasons people use foodbanks and their growth cannot be linked to a single cause. We have listened to feedback on how we can support our Universal Credit claimants and acted quickly, making improvements such as removing waiting days and introducing housing benefit run on. These changes are giving support to vulnerable people who need it most, whilst at the same time helping people get into work faster.

**Neil Gray:**

**[8323]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the five-week wait for a first payment of universal credit on levels of homelessness.

**Neil Gray:**

**[8324]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the five-week wait for a first payment of universal credit on levels of indebtedness.

**Neil Gray:**

**[8328]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the five-week wait for a first payment of universal credit on levels of rent arrears incurred by (a) social landlords and (b) private landlords.

**Will Quince:**

No one has to wait five weeks for their first payment of Universal Credit. New claim advances are available to support those in financial need until their first payment is made. The Department has learnt from where we did not get things right in the past in the legacy benefit system. Too often, the desire to pay quickly meant claimants not receiving their correct entitlement as we did not have an appropriate timeframe to review household circumstances.

Claimants can access up to 100% of the total expected monthly award, which they can pay back over a period of up to 12 months. We have announced that from October 2021, the repayment period for these advances will be extended further, to

16 months. Proposed repayments of the advance are explained, and all claimants are advised to request a level of advance which is manageable both now and when considering the repayments required.

Our Work Coaches gauge claimants' financial needs from their first interview. For those who need help with budgeting, we are able to signpost additional support, for example through the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS), who can help with personal budgeting and money management through its free helpline, printed guides and digital guidance.

Alternative Payment Arrangements (APAs), such as a managed payment to landlord (MPTL), are available to enable the housing costs element to be paid directly to the landlord if the tenant is likely to have difficulty in managing their rent payments or is in rent arrears. APAs will only be considered where a lack of financial capability poses a risk to the claimant, or their family, and the decision to implement one is assessed on a case by case basis.

Our own analysis shows that Universal Credit in fact reduces rent arrears, supporting research carried out by the National Federation of ALMOs which shows over three quarters of their tenants come onto Universal Credit with pre-existing rent arrears. It also shows that arrears tend to increase prior to making a claim for Universal Credit, and that Universal Credit actually appears to be helping to clear arrears over time. We are currently extending this analysis to include a number of housing providers. It will be published when completed.

**Neil Gray:**

**[8325]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the five-week wait for a first payment of universal credit on the mental health of applicants.

**Neil Gray:**

**[8326]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of potential options for reducing the five-week wait for a first payment of universal credit.

**Will Quince:**

No one has to wait five weeks for their first payment of Universal Credit. New claim advances are available to support those in financial need until their first payment is made. The Department has learnt from where we did not get things right in the past in the legacy benefit system. Too often, the desire to pay quickly meant claimants not receiving their correct entitlement as we did not have an appropriate timeframe to review household circumstances. Universal Credit is calculated to reflect the claimant's circumstances at the end of their monthly assessment period to accurately reflect circumstances at the point of payment.

Claimants can access up to 100% of the total expected monthly award, which they can pay back over a period of up to 12 months. We have announced that from October 2021, the repayment period for these advances will be extended further, to

16 months. Proposed repayments of the advance are explained, and all claimants are advised to request a level of advance which is manageable both now and when considering the repayments required.

Universal Credit is simpler and fairer than the legacy benefit system. It is designed to target resources at those that need them most and to provide support for people who can't work or need help moving towards the labour market. Our work coaches all undertake a robust learning process which includes a focus on health conditions and disabilities, how to tailor service delivery according to needs, and has specific content on requirement setting for people with mental health conditions.

Our Work Coaches gauge claimants' financial needs from their first interview. For those who need help with budgeting, we are able to signpost additional support, for example through the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS), who can help with personal budgeting and money management through its free helpline, printed guides and digital guidance.

## ■ Universal Credit: Severe Disability Premium

**Ronnie Cowan:**

**[4395]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to complete the process of back paying claimants who were incorrectly moved from severe disability premium on to universal credit.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

*[Holding answer 21 January 2020]:* The SDP gateway has been in place for over a year to prevent those claimants entitled to the Severe Disability Premium (SDP) as part of their legacy benefit from claiming Universal Credit. We have successfully identified eligible former SDP claimants who have already moved to Universal Credit due to a change in circumstances, providing them with monthly payments and a lump sum in arrears, where appropriate.

As of 17 January 2020, 15,397 claims have been paid an SDP transitional payment. The average (median) value of the lump sum payments is £2,280. To date, over £51.5m has been disbursed to support former SDP claimants, including the recurring payments that have now commenced.

Positive progress has been made and caseload growth has now slowed, however, in the event a new case is discovered payments will be in place quickly. It is not possible to estimate when we will have paid everyone who is entitled as some people become entitled to these payments retrospectively, and therefore the caseload is not a fixed number.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

## DEFENCE

## ■ War Pensions Scheme Up-rating 2020

Minister for Defence People and Veterans (Johnny Mercer):

[\[HCWS79\]](#)

The new rates of war pensions and allowances proposed from April 2020 are set out in the tables below. The Annual uprating of war pensions and allowances for 2020 will take place from the week beginning 6<sup>th</sup> April. Rates for 2020 are increasing by 1.7 per cent in line with the September 2019 Consumer Price Index.

*War Pensions Rates*

	RATES	RATES
(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	2019	2020
	£	£
<b>WAR PENSIONS</b>		
Disablement Pension (100% rates)		
officer (per annum)	9,904.00	10,071.00
other ranks (weekly amount)	189.80	193.00
Age allowances payable from age 65		
40%-50%	12.70	12.90
over 50% but not over 70%	19.55	19.90
over 70% but not over 90%	27.80	28.25
over 90%	39.10	39.80
Disablement gratuity (one-off payment)		
specified minor injury (min.)	1,209.00	1,230.00
specified minor injury (max.)	9,028.00	9,181.00
1 – 5% gratuity	3,019.00	3,070.00
6 – 14% gratuity	6,711.00	6,825.00
15 – 19% gratuity	11,737.00	11,937.00

	RATES	RATES
<b>SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCES</b>		
Unemployability allowance		
Personal	117.30	119.30
adult dependency increase	65.20	66.30
increase for first child	15.15	15.40
increase for subsequent children	17.80	18.10
Invalidity allowance		
higher rate	23.20	23.60
middle rate	15.10	15.40
lower rate	7.55	7.70
Constant attendance allowance		
exceptional rate	143.20	145.60
intermediate rate	107.40	109.20
full day rate	71.60	72.80
Part-day rate	35.80	36.40
Comforts allowance		
higher rate	30.80	31.10
lower rate	15.40	15.55
Mobility supplement	68.35	69.50
Allowance for lowered standard of occupation (maximum)	71.60	72.80
Therapeutic earnings limit (annual rate)	6,838.00	7,280.00
Exceptionally severe disablement allowance	71.60	72.80
Severe disablement occupational allowance	35.80	36.40

	RATES	RATES
Clothing allowance (per annum)	245.00	249.00
Education allowance (per annum) (maximum)	120.00	120.00
<b>WIDOW(ER)S BENEFITS</b>		
Widow(er)s' - other ranks (basic with children) (weekly amount)	143.95	146.40
Widow(er) - Officer higher rate both wars (basic with children) (per annum)	7,656.00	7,786.00
Childless widow(er)s' u-40 (other ranks) (weekly amount)	34.48	35.07
Widow(er) – Officer lower rate both wars (per annum)	2,659.00	2,704.00
Supplementary Pension	96.31	97.95
Age allowance		
(a) age 65 to 69	16.40	16.70
(b) age 70 to 79	31.55	32.10
(c) age 80 and over	46.80	47.60
Children's allowance		
Increase for first child	22.60	23.00
Increase for subsequent children	25.30	25.55
Orphan's pension		
Increase for first child	25.85	26.30
Increase for subsequent children	28.25	28.75
Unmarried dependant living as spouse (maximum)	141.60	144.05
Rent allowance (maximum)	54.20	55.10
Adult orphan's pension (maximum)	110.65	112.55

## EDUCATION

### ■ Application System for Initial Teacher Training

**The Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb):**

[\[HCWS75\]](#)

In the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, published in January 2019, the Government committed to helping great people become teachers by introducing a new application system for initial teacher training. This application system will be easier to use and designed to better meet the needs of potential trainees. The new service will also ensure Universities and schools delivering teacher training can make accurate decisions on whether their applicants are right for the courses they are offering.

I confirm that the pilot for this new service has started and will involve a number of schools delivering School Centred Initial Teacher Training. My Department will continually improve the service, based on feedback from candidates and those schools and Universities delivering teacher training. Universities providing teacher training will also be able to join the pilot from October this year.

The Government's new service will fully replace the existing UCAS Teacher Training service from the October 2021 admissions cycle.

### ■ School Funding Update

**The Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb):**

[\[HCWS78\]](#)

Today I am laying the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2020, which ensure that in 2020-21 every secondary school will receive at least £5,000 per pupil, and every primary school at least £3,750 per pupil – on the path to £4,000 the following year. As I confirmed in my statement of 20 December last year, this additional funding is provided through the National Funding Formula (NFF) and included in local authorities' Dedicated Schools Grant allocations. The new regulations require local authorities to deliver the minimum per pupil funding levels to all schools in their area.

The change will level up the lowest funded schools across the country so that all schools are able to provide an excellent education for their pupils. It forms one part of the government's increases to school funding, which will invest an extra £14 billion in total over the next three years – starting with an additional £2.6 billion in 2020-21 and rising to £7.1 billion more by 2022-23, compared to 2019-20 levels. That is on top of the £1.5 billion we are providing each year to fund additional pensions costs for teachers, bringing the total schools budget to £52.2 billion in 2022-23.

As well as delivering on a key government pledge made during the general election campaign, the mandatory minimum per pupil levels mark an important step towards our commitment to deliver a 'hard' NFF, whereby school funding is determined by a single formula, so that it is fair and equitable for every school in the country. We will consult on the further steps needed to complete this transition in due course.

The Department for Education has also launched a new website which allows the public to see the funding that has been allocated for individual schools through the NFF in 2020-21. The national formula directs money where it is most needed, based on schools' and

pupils' needs and characteristics. Compared to 2019-20, every school is attracting at least a per-pupil increase in line with inflation, with an average increase of over 4% per pupil. The new, user-friendly tool is available to use from today at:

<https://skillsfunding.service.gov.uk/national-funding-formula/2020-2021/start>

In addition, today I am confirming that all Pupil Premium rates, which are funded outside the NFF, will increase in line with inflation in 2020-21. This will ensure that this targeted funding can continue to support the most disadvantaged children in our schools.

The department has also published an official statistics report on school funding over the past decade on our website. This reaffirms our commitment to transparency and aims to support public understanding of school funding by providing a consistent and comprehensive set of statistics. The report shows school revenue funding for 5-16 year olds for 2010-11 to 2020-21, and school-level funding allocations for 2019-20.

Finally, we have published a government response to the consultation undertaken last autumn on clarifying the specific grant and ring-fenced status of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ The Environment Bill

**The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Theresa Villiers):**  
**[[HCWS80](#)]**

I am pleased to announce that today we will be introducing the government's flagship Environment Bill. There is a clear and urgent scientific case, and growing public demand for acting decisively to address biodiversity loss and climate change, which this Bill responds to.

We first introduced the Environment Bill on 15 October 2019. It continues to form a central part in the government delivering a step-change in environmental protection and recovery and will help deliver the government's manifesto commitment to deliver the most ambitious environmental programme of any country on earth. It will also support recent legislation to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 by minimising our waste, cleaning our air and water, and restoring habitats to allow plants and wildlife to thrive.

Taken together the measures in the Bill will help to manage the impact of human activity on the environment, create a more sustainable economy, and enhance well-being and quality of life. The Bill will engage and empower citizens, local government, and businesses to deliver environmental outcomes and create a positive legacy for future generations. I set out the measures in the Bill below.

#### Environmental Governance and Targets

We will establish a new system of green governance and accountability, creating an environmental watchdog in the Office for Environmental Protection, and embedding environmental values at the heart of government policy making. To ensure the UK continues to drive forward ambitious action to tackle climate change, we are bringing

climate change legislation within the enforcement remit of the Office for Environmental Protection.

The Bill will also implement a new statutory cycle of target setting, monitoring, planning, and reporting to help deliver significant, long-term environmental improvement. This will include Environmental Improvement Plans, the first being the 25 Year Environment Plan, and a framework for setting legally-binding targets in four priority areas: air quality, waste and resource efficiency, water, and nature. Together they will drive action by businesses and wider society to deliver environmental improvement alongside sustainable growth.

The Bill will include a UK Environmental Protections policy which will allow for greater transparency and give Parliament greater scrutiny over new environmental legislation. Ministers will be required to make a statement to Parliament setting out the impact of new primary environmental legislation on existing levels of environmental protection. These statements will be published and open to scrutiny by Parliament, environmental stakeholders and the broader public.

We will also review significant developments in the environmental protection legislation of other countries and prepare a report for Parliament every two years. This will ensure we keep abreast of international developments in driving forward our environmental protection legislation.

#### Waste and Resource Efficiency

The Bill will drive a major shift in **maximising resource efficiency**, minimising waste, and moving towards a more circular economic model. We will introduce measures based on the 'polluter pays' principle, create a simplified approach to recycling, and tackle waste crime. Powers to introduce new extended producer responsibility schemes will make producers responsible for the full net costs of managing their products at end of life, encouraging them to design their products with re-use and recycling in mind. New government powers to set resource-efficiency standards for products will drive market and consumer behaviour towards durable, repairable, and recyclable products. To tackle plastic pollution, the Environment Bill will enable the creation of new charges for other single-use plastic items, similar to the carrier bag charge, which will incentivise a shift towards reusable items. We are taking powers to establish deposit return schemes which will further incentivise consumers to reduce litter and recycle more. The Bill also sets out how government will mandate weekly collections of food waste for every household, subject to consultation. The Environment Bill also contains powers which will enable the government to ban the export of polluting plastic waste to non-OECD countries, consulting with industry, NGOs, and local councils on the date by which this should be achieved.

#### Air Quality and Environmental Recall

We already have a strong track record of tackling air pollution – for example, direct action on nitrogen dioxide has led to emissions falling by almost 29% between 2010 and 2017 and they are now at their lowest level since records began. The Bill will further enable greater local action on **air pollution**, ensuring responsibility is shared across local government structures and public bodies; better enabling them to tackle emissions from

burning coal and wood; and bringing forward powers for government to mandate recalls of vehicles and machinery when they do not meet relevant legal emission standards. The Environment Bill makes a clear commitment to set a legally binding target for the pollutant with the most significant impact on human health, fine particulate matter.

#### Water

The Environment Bill will help to secure long-term, **resilient water and wastewater services**. It will introduce additional requirements for water company planning for future water supply and wastewater and drainage networks, enabling more resilient solutions to drought and flooding. In a changing climate, these measures will ensure the water regulator has the powers it needs to respond to new priorities. The Bill enhances flood and coastal erosion risk management, allowing for the expansion of existing internal drainage boards or the creation of new ones where there is local appetite to do so. We are reforming elements of abstraction licensing to link it more tightly to our goal of restoring water bodies to as close to natural state as possible, and are creating a power to update the lists of substances and their respective standards which are potentially harmful to surface waters and groundwater.

#### Nature and Biodiversity

The Environment Bill supports and enables action to **create or restore wildlife rich habitats** to enable wildlife to recover and thrive. The Bill introduces mandatory biodiversity net gain, to ensure that new developments enhance biodiversity and help deliver thriving natural spaces for communities. This will also support certainty in the planning system and therefore the delivery of new housing, while retaining and providing habitats that can enhance biodiversity. Provisions requiring the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies across England will support better spatial planning for nature recovery, by setting out priorities and opportunities for protecting and investing in nature within a local area. The Bill also strengthens a duty within the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to ensure public authorities play their part in conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

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The Environment Bill gives the Secretary of State the power to amend two pieces of legislation **regulating the use of chemicals** in the UK (REACH 2008). This will allow the Secretary of State to take further steps where necessary to ensure a smooth transition to a UK chemicals regime following the UK's exit from the EU. It will also make it possible to

keep the legislation up to date and respond to emerging needs or ambitions for the effective management of chemicals.

The Environment Bill is the result of extensive public consultation. In July 2019 we published six government responses to consultations on measures in the Bill. And in October 2019 we published the government response to the consultation on protecting and enhancing England's trees and woodland, covering measures to increase the transparency and accountability in the process of felling street trees.

Over half of all measures in the Environment Bill are to be extended beyond England and adopted across the Devolved Administrations. The positive extent of the join up demonstrates our ambition in working with the Devolved Administrations across the UK to better protect the environment and strengthen the Union, while respecting the devolution settlement. This co-ordination is the result of extensive engagement with the Devolved Administrations over the past year by both Ministers and officials during which we have discussed all policy areas of the Bill.

This Environment Bill is a landmark commitment to protecting and improving the environment for future generations. It grasps opportunities created from leaving the European Union and I hope that it will deliver a step-change in environmental protection and recovery

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## EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

### ■ International Agreements

**Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Steve Barclay):** [\[HCWS82\]](#)

The UK has strong partnerships with virtually every country around the world and aims to strengthen them as we leave the European Union.

During the UK's membership of the EU, important aspects of these relationships have been governed through EU arrangements: through formal and informal cooperation and collaboration; dialogues; memoranda of understanding; regulatory arrangements; and in some cases through international agreements or treaties.

The Government has been committed to preserving the relationships governed by these agreements and arrangements. Accordingly, Article 129 of the Withdrawal Agreement (WA) specifies that, for the duration of the transition period, the UK will remain bound by the obligations under existing EU-Third Country international agreements. In addition, the asterisk to Article 129(1) provides for the EU to issue a notification to its treaty partners stating that the UK is to be treated as an EU Member State for the purposes of those agreements.

Following signature of the Withdrawal Agreement on 24 January, the EU has now issued the notification described above to its treaty partners, as well as to the depositaries of multilateral agreements to which it is a party.

This notification provides an important platform for continuity. Some EU treaty partners may choose to respond publicly to the EU's notification, but this is not a precondition for continuity provided a treaty partner intends the UK to be covered and continues to act accordingly.

If businesses or other stakeholders find that these arrangements, for whatever reason, are not being implemented smoothly, they should make their concerns known to the relevant UK authorities.

As of 1 February, the UK will also become bound by any obligations stemming from EU international agreements which are concluded or provisionally applied during the transition period. The Government expects that the arrangements above will also apply to such agreements.

To prepare for the end of the transition period, the Government will continue to work to transition those international agreements which are relevant and necessary, where there is mutual interest to do so. In some cases, this will be through a formal successor treaty between the UK and a third country or group of countries. In other cases, this will be through another type of arrangement, for example a memorandum of understanding.

I will be depositing a copy of the EU's notification (in the form of a note verbale and covering letter) in the libraries of both Houses.

**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE****■ General Affairs Council – 28 January 2020****Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Christopher Pincher):**  
**[[HCWS77](#)]**

Andreja Metelok-Zgombić, Croatian State Secretary for European Affairs, chaired the General Affairs Council (GAC) in Brussels on 28 January. I represented the United Kingdom.

*Adoption of A Items*

A number of A items were considered, including on accession negotiations with Serbia, the EU position on TIR Convention and the safeguarding of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. A full list can be found on the EU Council's website at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/gac/2020/01/28/>.

*Presentation of Priorities of the Croatian Presidency*

The Presidency presented on their priorities for their presidency. These include: sectoral and horizontal legislation related to the next multiannual financial framework; enlargement policy, particularly in the run-up to an informal EU-Western Balkans summit in May; implementation of the EU Strategic Agenda; cohesion; and promoting the EU as a community of values. The Presidency also listed as a priority enabling an orderly withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU and starting negotiations on a future partnership.

*Conference on the Future of Europe*

There followed a substantial discussion on the proposed Conference on the Future of Europe, including its content, scope, composition and functioning. This followed recent communications from both the Commission and EU Parliament setting out their position on the conference.

*Any Other Business*

I intervened, on the occasion of the last attendance of a United Kingdom Minister at an EU Council, in relation to the United Kingdom's exit from the EU. In doing so, I reiterated that while the United Kingdom will be leaving the EU, we will not be leaving Europe; and that while we will have a different relationship, we will continue to stand together as sovereign equals to defend our shared values. I further reiterated the United Kingdom's hope that we can deliver on our joint aspiration for a high quality free trade agreement to be agreed by the end of the year.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ **Housing update**

**Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick):** [\[HCWS81\]](#)

The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission has published their final report today. I am depositing this report in the libraries of the House and made it available on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). I would like to thank the Commissioners for all of their hard work in producing the report. The government will provide a response in due course.

**JUSTICE**■ **Informal Justice and Home Affairs post-Council statement**

**The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland):** [\[HCWS84\]](#)

The Informal Justice and Home Affairs Council under the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU took place on 23 and 24 January 2020 in Zagreb.

I represented the UK on Justice Day. My colleague Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP, Minister for Security, attended the meeting for Interior Day.

Justice Day began with a discussion on the future of EU Justice and Home Affairs in the fields of freedom, security and justice, with a focus on the following justice policies: fundamental rights and the rule of law; civil judicial cooperation; judicial training and criminal justice.

Over lunch, Ministers considered the role of the European Judicial Network in civil and commercial matters, recognising its importance in facilitating judicial cooperation.

Ministers then discussed judicial training. I provided an overview of judicial training in the UK, including the independent role of the judiciary in assessing the required learning and development. I highlighted that our approach to providing training for the judiciary is in accordance with the separation of powers, in that training is under the control of the judiciary and not the Government.

The first agenda item of Interior day discussed the Future of EU Justice and Home Affairs Activity, focusing on the Home Affairs area. The Minister for Security intervened to highlight issues relating to end-to-end encryption, drawing attention to the open letter to Facebook from the Home Secretary.

The Minister for Security also encouraged Member States to ensure that the voice of their law enforcement agencies and Interior Ministries was heard during discussions on the EU's negotiating mandate for a future internal security agreement with the UK.

Interior Ministers then discussed implementation of legislation on the interoperability of EU JHA databases.

Over lunch, Ministers discussed tackling organised immigration crime in the Western Balkans, including a proposal to create a regional Western Balkans system similar to the Eurodac database (stores fingerprint and biometric data of asylum applicants).

The afternoon session focused on implementation of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, which the UK does not participate in.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Local line update

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

[\[HCWS76\]](#)

Today I am announcing the preferred route for the Bedford to Cambridge section of the East West Rail line between Oxford and Cambridge. This follows a public consultation last year on five route options.

The preferred route, route E from the consultation would link Bedford Midland, a new station between Sandy and St Neots, a new station at Cambourne and Cambridge station. The route would provide improved connectivity between towns and cities across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, improving passenger journey times and supporting the Oxford-Cambridge Arc to fulfil its economic potential as a world-class strategic innovation Arc.

The Bedford to Cambridge section of East West Rail has been designated a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

The preferred route will now be the focus for further development. This further development work will include environmental and engineering studies to identify potential route alignments on which the railway could run, within the preferred route option and will lead to the Government making a final decision on whether to take this project forward, and to make an application for a Developed Consent Order (DCO). In advance of submitting the application for Development Consent Order, we will confirm that there are no material changes that might have affected our preferred route choice.

## TREASURY

### ■ ECOFIN: 21 January 2020

**The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sajid Javid):**

[\[HCWS83\]](#)

A meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN) Council was held in Brussels on 21 January 2020. The Council discussed the following:

#### **Early Morning Session**

The Eurogroup President briefed the Council on the outcomes of the 20 January meeting of the Eurogroup, and the European Commission provided an update on the current economic situation in the EU. Following this, ministers took stock of the process of

nominating a European candidate for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Presidency.

### **Current Financial Services Legislative Proposals**

The Croatian Presidency provided an update on current legislative proposals in the field of financial services.

### **Presidency Work Programme**

The Croatian Presidency presented its work programme for January to June 2020.

### **European Green Deal**

The European Commission presented the economic and financial aspects of the European Green Deal.

### **European Semester 2020**

To launch the new European Semester exercise, the European Commission presented the Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy, the Alert Mechanism Report, and the Euro area recommendation.

### **Tax Challenges Arising from Digitalisation**

The Council held an exchange of views on the state of play of negotiations in the OECD on tax challenges arising from digitalisation.