



Daily Report

Monday, 3 February 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 3 February 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:57 P.M., 03 February 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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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

■ Attorney General: Apprentices

Steve Reed:

[\[9691\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what proportion of staff employed by his Department are apprentices.

Michael Ellis:

As of 31 January 2020, there are no apprentices in the Attorney General's Office (AGO). This is 0% of the total staff employed within the department.

As of 31 November 2019, there are 39 apprentices in Government Legal Department (GLD). This is 1.53% of the total staff employed within the department.

As of 31 December 2019, 3.7% of staff employed by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) are on an apprenticeship scheme.

As of 31 December 2019, there are 4 apprentices in the Serious Fraud Office (SFO). This is 0.85% of the total staff in the department.

As of 31 November 2019, there are no apprentices at HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI). This is 0% of the total staff employed within the department.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Carbon Capture and Storage

Alan Brown:

[\[8369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2020 to Question 2480, on Carbon Capture and Storage, what criteria his Department plans to use to determine the eligibility of carbon capture, usage and storage clusters for inclusion in the Industrial Clusters Mission.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) will allocate up to £170 million to support the delivery of the Industrial Clusters Mission. As part of the ISCF, bids have been invited from industrial clusters for the development of decarbonisation infrastructure, including carbon capture, usage and storage infrastructure. These bids will be assessed by UK Research and Innovation, with awards made to projects that will deliver, or support delivery of, significant emissions reductions in a UK industrial cluster by 2030.

■ Carers: Leave**Steve McCabe:****[8945]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals to introduce an entitlement to leave for unpaid carers.

Steve McCabe:**[8946]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 13 June 2019 to Question 262229 on Compassionate Leave, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of introducing statutory long-term leave for unpaid carers alongside the planned introduction of one weeks' additional leave.

Steve McCabe:**[8947]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government's plans to extend the entitlement to leave for unpaid carers to one week will be in the form of paid leave.

Kelly Tolhurst:

This Government is determined to make Britain the best place in the world to work. As announced in the Queens' Speech, we will be bringing forward an Employment Rights Bill to deliver the greatest reform of workers' rights in over 20 years. This will include measures to introduce an entitlement to leave for unpaid carers.

The Government's proposal is to introduce a week of unpaid Carer's Leave. This will be in addition to existing employment rights, such as the right to request flexible working, annual leave and the right to time off for family and dependants which help employees balance work with caring responsibilities. In taking this forward, the Department will continue to engage widely to understand how carers' needs can best be met.

■ Carillion: Insolvency**Preet Kaur Gill:****[9759]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate she had made of the additional cost to the public purse of (a) delays, (b) structural flaws and (c) rebuilds on construction projects managed by Carillion before that company's liquidation.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department has not made an estimate of the specific costs relating to construction projects. The hard work of the Government means the cost to taxpayers of Carillion's collapse has been £62m rather than the originally estimated £148m. We have ensured the continuation of all day-to-day services supplied by Carillion, with more than 15,000 workers transferred to new contractors.

■ Conditions of Employment: Pregnancy

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[8449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps her Department is taking to help safeguard pregnant women from (a) workplace discrimination and (b) unfair dismissal.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 30 January 2020]: The Government recognises the importance of tackling pregnancy and maternity discrimination.

The Government's manifesto committed to reform the law so that women returning from maternity leave receive additional protection from redundancy.

We will extend the redundancy protection period for six months once a new mother has returned to work and provide similar protections for those parents taking adoption leave and shared parental leave. This will be part of an Employment Rights Bill to deliver the greatest reform of workers' rights in over 20 years.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Apprentices

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[9747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of staff employed by her Department are apprentices.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As of 31st January 2020, there were 150 apprentices working at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. This is 3.2% of departmental staff.

■ Employment Tribunals Service: Fines

Caroline Lucas:

[\[7181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 21 January 2020 to Question 3164 on Employment Tribunals Service: Fines, how many individual, previously unpaid awards are represented by (a) the total sum of £1,343,941.96 recovered as a result of only issuing a warning letter, and (b) the total sum of £1,222,472.23 recovered as a result of issuing both a warning letter and a penalty notice; and how many of the 2,067 warning letters and 1,302 penalty notices were issued in (i) 2016-17 (ii) 2017-18 (iii) 2018-19 and (iv) 2019-20 to date.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Under this government a total of £2,566,414.19 in previously unpaid awards has been secured for workers since April 2016. A total of £1,343,941.96 was recovered for 231 workers after only issuing a warning notice. A total of £1,222,472.23 was recovered for 225 workers after issuing a penalty notice.

Of the 2,067 warning letters and 1,302 penalty notices issued:

(i) 244 warning notices and 124 penalty notices were issued in 2016-17;

(ii) 390 warning notices and 277 penalty notices were issued in 2017-18;

- (iii) 736 warning notices and 471 penalty notices were issued in 2018-19 and
- (iv) 697 warning notices and 430 penalty notices have been issued in 2019-20 to date.

■ Fireworks

Steve McCabe:

[\[8137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 22 January 2020 to Question 4707, when the Office for Product Safety and Standards will publish the findings of its fact-based evidence base on the key issues that have been raised around fireworks.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 30 January 2020]: The work that the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) is conducting to develop an evidence base is ongoing. It is continuing to review new and emerging data and will report in due course.

■ Fireworks: Animal Welfare

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[9767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2020 to Question 3877 on Fireworks: Animal Welfare, what the time frame is for the Office for Product Safety and Standards' review on the effect on humans and animals of the use of fireworks.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The work that the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) is conducting to develop an evidence base is ongoing. It is continuing to assess new and emerging data and will report in due course.

■ Fireworks: Licensing

Sarah Olney:

[\[7654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether she plans to bring forward legislative proposals to provide local licensing authorities with regulatory powers over public firework displays; and if she will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

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

■ Maternity Leave

Jim Shannon:

[\[8287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, representing Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what steps the Government is taking to support the take up of keep in touch days during maternity leave.

Jim Shannon:

[\[8289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance his Department issues to businesses to promote paid keep in touch days for parents on maternity leave.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We are committed to making the UK the best place in the world to work. We will be bringing forward an Employment Rights Bill to deliver the greatest reform of workers' rights in over 20 years, including measures to ensure that women returning from maternity leave receive additional protection from redundancy.

Pregnant women and new mothers can work up to 10 Keeping in Touch (KiT) days without bringing their Maternity Leave, Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance to an end.

KiT days can only be used if both the employer and employee agree to this.

Employers cannot require their employees to use their KiT days to work, and similarly employees cannot insist on working a KiT day. Guidance on KiT days for employers and employees is published on gov.uk.

■ Minimum Wage

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[8456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which employers have been named by the national minimum wage enforcement unit for non-compliance in the last three years; and what criteria her Department uses to decide on naming an employer.

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[8457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many employers that were identified as non-compliant by the national minimum wage enforcement unit were not publicly named.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 30 January 2020]: The current NMW Naming Scheme commenced in 2013; employers named for National Minimum Wage (NMW) non-compliance since then, and the policy document which sets out how the scheme operates, can be found on gov.uk.

Following a recommendation from the Director of Labour Market Enforcement, the NMW Naming Scheme is currently under review and the Department will shortly

publish the outcome of that work. This will detail any changes we are making to the scheme to ensure its continued effectiveness as a deterrent to non-compliance.

All employers who meet the eligibility criteria for naming are given a chance to make a representation as to why they should not be named. Exemptions to naming can be granted in line with the published exemption criteria. In the most recent naming round in July 2018, 95% of eligible cases were ultimately named.

■ New Businesses: Government Assistance

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[8935]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to ensure that Government grants for start-up companies are not fraudulently obtained.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Government has robust checks in place and carries out due diligence through its Delivery Partners when issuing grants to both start-ups and established businesses. Where recipients have been found to act fraudulently serious action will be taken.

Through Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) competitive funding is provided to businesses, including start-ups. UKRI have a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and there are stringent controls and checks in place to stop fraud from happening throughout the lifetime of a project. These include:

- A rigorous assessment of the project costs a company submits as part of its application. If an applicant's bid is successful, further due diligence checks on the viability of a company and the eligibility of the costs it has submitted are carried out, before the project is allowed to start and the company is able to start claiming any grant.
- Quarterly meetings between the project team and a dedicated Monitoring Officer, who helps ensure the project complies with the terms and conditions of the grant and is delivering it to plan.
- Participants providing evidence to support each claim made. This will include the mandatory submission of a report produced by an independent accountant alongside specific claims certifying that the costs incurred on the project are legitimate and directly attributable to the project. Grants will only be paid once audits and reports are completed, and UKRI are satisfied of their validity. Claims may be subject to an independent audit.

In addition, UKRI have a dedicated investigations team tasked with identifying individuals and companies who submit false information in order to obtain funding. Relevant information and intelligence is shared with Action Fraud and CIFAS, and where appropriate UKRI will apply as many sanctions as possible, including criminal prosecution and civil recovery. UKRI take all reasonable steps to prevent any organisation found to have acted fraudulently from accessing future funding, on behalf of the whole of Government.

■ Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures: Negligence

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[8392]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a code of conduct for companies offering (a) cosmetic fillers and (b) Botox injections in relation to (i) the age verification of clients, (ii) the professional status of practitioners and (iii) a duty of care for negligent treatment.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is committed to achieving the right regulatory balance between supporting excellent business practice and protecting workers, consumers, and the environment. I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to him by my hon. Friend the Minister for Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and Patient Safety on 22 January 2020 to Question [6799](#).

■ Railways: Manufacturing Industries

Alex Cunningham:

[9015]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the reform of (a) train manufacturing and (b) rolling stock procurement to promote productivity in the UK; and whether her Department has contributed to the Williams Rail Review.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy works closely with the Department for Transport regarding the current review of the UK's railways, independently chaired by Keith Williams.

Our work with DfT, through the Rail Supply Group Council and the Rail Sector Deal, brings the industry and government together to shape investment in our railways and encourage improvements to sustainability, digitalisation, use of data, productivity, skills and diversity, and a boost to exports.

■ Thomas Cook: Insolvency

Gill Furniss:

[7266]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when she plans to bring forward legislative proposals to support customers of Thomas Cook that have outstanding personal injury claims against that company.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Following the collapse of Thomas Cook, the Government committed to develop proposals for a capped, statutory payment scheme to support customers who suffered life-changing injuries, illness or loss of life while on Thomas Cook holidays for which the company would have been liable and who may now face serious financial hardship as a result of the company's approach.

We intend to bring forward the legislation necessary to establish such a scheme in due course.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[8162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether it is the Government's policy to introduce a statutory compensation scheme for customers facing serious hardship as a result of injuries or loss of life suffered while on a Thomas Cook holiday.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 30 January 2020]: As announced to the House by my rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 5 November, the Government intends to introduce a scheme to assist those facing serious hardship as a result of a life-changing injury, illness or loss of life for which UK-based Thomas Cook companies would have been liable, but for insolvency.

While the government cannot and will not step into the shoes of Thomas Cook, we are developing proposals to make payments to those in need, and who otherwise will receive nothing. Any scheme must strike a responsible balance between supporting those in the most serious financial need and our responsibility to the taxpayer. Accordingly, it will be a capped fund, sufficient to ensure there is support for those customers facing the most serious hardship.

Legislation to deliver the scheme will be introduced in due course.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Census: Gender Recognition

Dawn Butler:

[\[8974\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to include a non-gendered option on the Census 2021.

Chloe Smith:

The Office for National Statistics recommendations for the next Census are set out in the White Paper 'Help Shape our Future: The 2021 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales' published in December 2018. This includes the recommendation that the 2021 Census includes for the first time a voluntary gender identity question, in addition to retaining a binary female/male sex question. The relevant considerations are set out at paragraphs 3.34 to 3.45 of the White Paper.

The content of the 2021 Census for England and Wales will be set in secondary legislation, beginning with the Census Order, which will be laid before Parliament in due course.

■ Census: Statutory Instruments

Dawn Butler: [\[9615\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to lay the statutory instrument to make provision for Census 2021.

Chloe Smith:

The draft Census (England and Wales) Order 2020 will be presented to both Houses in due course.

■ Codes of Practice: Sexual Harassment

Chris Stephens: [\[R\] \[9729\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will amend the Ministerial Code to include what the steps that will be taken in the event that a (a) Minister and (b) Special Adviser is accused of sexual harassment.

Chris Stephens: [\[R\] \[9730\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has plans to amend the Ministerial Code to include the steps that will be taken in the event that a (b) a Minister and (b) Special Adviser is accused of bullying a civil servant.

Chloe Smith:

The Ministerial Code makes clear that: “harassing, bullying or other inappropriate or discriminating behaviour wherever it takes place is not consistent with the Ministerial Code and will not be tolerated”. Sections 1.4 to 1.6 of the Ministerial Code sets out steps to investigate allegations of a breach of the Ministerial Code.

The model contract for Special Advisers and the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers sets out the standards of conduct expected of special advisers, and the disciplinary procedures that will be followed where necessary.

■ Freedom of Information: Disclosure of Information

Jon Trickett: [\[8956\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to improve Freedom of Information disclosure rates across Departments.

Chloe Smith:

The Cabinet Office works with Departments across Government to make sure that 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.

■ Ministry of Defence: Offshore Funds**Tulip Siddiq:** **[8404]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the requirements are for (a) senior officials and (b) Ministers of his Department to disclose their ownership and use of offshore banking arrangements.

Oliver Dowden:

All public office holders are expected to comply with the law as it applies to offshore banking activity.

Ministers and Civil Servants must also uphold the standards of conduct as set out in the Ministerial and Civil Service Code respectively, as well as the seven principles of public life.

■ National Security**Dan Jarvis:** **[9035]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the potential increase in risk to national security of critical national infrastructure being owned by foreign governments and companies.

Oliver Dowden:

The Government undertakes regular reviews of our preparedness for the risks facing the UK through the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) and National Resilience Capabilities Programme (NRCP). This includes the risk from foreign investment into critical national infrastructure.

In addition, the Government considers any national security implications arising from foreign investment on a case-by-case basis, including in investments in Critical National Infrastructure. The Government's approach is predicated on a risk assessment based on the specific circumstances of the case.

The Government's current powers to intervene in mergers that may raise national security concerns are contained in the Enterprise Act (2002), which establishes key parts of the UK's competition regime. The vast majority of transactions raise no national security concerns and the Government expects to quickly rule out national security risks in most cases, allowing parties to proceed with certainty.

■ Political Parties: Advertising**Afzal Khan:** **[8464]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many political adverts were placed on online without a digital imprint during the 2019 General Election.

Chloe Smith:

The government does not hold the information requested.

Afzal Khan: [\[8465\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to extend the digital imprint requirement to all online campaign materials.

Afzal Khan: [\[8467\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Government response to the Protecting the Debate: Intimidation, Influence and Information consultation, published May 2019, for what reasons the Government has not yet brought forward proposals to introduce a new digital imprint regime.

Chloe Smith:

The Government is committed to implementing an imprints regime for digital election material. This will ensure greater transparency and make it clearer to the electorate who has produced and promoted online political materials.

The Government is planning to bring forward the technical proposal on the regime and further details will be announced in due course.

Afzal Khan: [\[8466\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to create a publicly available online database of political adverts.

Chloe Smith:

Whilst there are no current plans for a database of online political adverts, we are taking action to increase transparency of wider political advertising online, such as by introducing a digital imprints regime.

Online platforms should take responsibility for content posted on them, and we welcome the steps that several social media companies have taken to improve transparency of political advertisements on their platforms, including through the introduction of ad libraries.

■ Prime Minister: Apprentices

Steve Reed: [\[9692\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of staff employed by No. 10 Downing Street are apprentices.

Steve Reed: [\[9695\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of staff employed by the Department for Exiting the European Union were apprentices.

Jeremy Quin:

Data regarding the number of apprentices in each Government Department is published yearly as part of routine Government transparency. The most recent report

was published in September 2019, covering the 2018-2019 financial year, and can be found on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-apprenticeship-data-2018-to-2019>

■ Public Appointments: Standards

John Healey: [8952]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the due diligence process for public appointments following the resignation of Benita Mehra from her role as a panel member on the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

Oliver Dowden:

Ms Mehra's appointment was not a public appointment. She was appointed to the panel of a statutory public inquiry in line with the Inquiries Act 2005.

DEFENCE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Carolyn Harris: [90057]

What recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of recording veteran suicides on improving the provision of support to at-risk veterans.

Johnny Mercer:

I am always sorry to learn of veterans taking their own lives and I am willing to meet widows with the aim of better understanding the circumstances that lead to suicide to facilitate better targeted interventions and how we can prevent further losses. Suicide is a complicated issue and a tragedy for the families and friends left behind.

■ Apache AH1 Helicopters

Jeremy Hunt: [8984]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Apache AH1 helicopters are in service; what the annual maintenance cost is of those helicopters; and what the average number of operating hours are for each Apache AH1 helicopter.

James Heappey:

There are 44 Apache Mk1 helicopters currently in service.

In 2018-19, based on an in-service fleet of 50 Apache Mk1 helicopters, the total annual maintenance cost was £33 million, and the average annual number of flying hours per Apache Mk1 was 183.3 hours. Six Apache Mk1 helicopters have since been withdrawn from service and are undergoing dismantling for conversion to the AH-64E variant.

Further to the answer I gave on 21 January 2020 to Questions 4324 and 4325, the calculation for the Apache maintenance cost per hour was based on 2019 flying

hours. In the footnote to the table this was incorrectly recorded as based on financial year 2018-19 data. To ensure consistency, the table below provides revised Apache maintenance costs, based on financial year 2018-19 information:

TYPE	APACHE
Cost per annum	£33 million
Cost per hour	£3,601

**Numbers are rounded and to the nearest hour.*

■ Armed Conflict: Sexual Offences

Nickie Aiken:

[9784]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what level of training has been provided to British armed forces on tackling sexual violence in conflict; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is working with Whitehall Departments to implement the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace & Security. To support this, Joint Service Publication (JSP) 1325 'Human Security in Military Operations' issues direction on how the UK Military can recognise and protect civilians from human rights violations including sexual violence. JSP 1325 is available on Gov.uk at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-security-in-military-operations-jsp-1325

All UK Military deploying on operations receive training on preventing and responding to conflict related sexual violence. In addition to this, the MOD continues to expand the Human Security in Military Operations Adviser training programme. This equips personnel with a gender perspective to implement preventative measures to threats such as conflict related sexual violence from planning to patrol.

■ Armed Forces: Deployment

Alun Cairns:

[9666]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) reserve and (b) regular service personnel have been based in each of the (i) nations and (ii) regions of the UK in each of the last five years.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The requested information for UK Reserve Service personnel is provided in the attached tables; figures are estimates.

Official statistics on the stationed locations of UK Regular Service personnel are published annually. The latest edition of the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) *Annual*

Location Statistics, including data as at 1 April 2019 and going back to April 2012, can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/location-of-uk-regular-service-and-civilian-personnel-annual-statistics-2019>

Attachments:

1. UK Reserve Service Personnel by nations and region [9666 - Personnel based by nations and regions of UK - TABLES.xlsx]

■ **Armed Forces: Expenditure**

Mr Toby Perkins: [8993]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what was his Department's performance against Departmental Expenditure Limits in 2018-19 for (a) salaries, (b) accommodation and (c) equipment.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence performance in financial year 2018-19 for salaries, accommodation and equipment are published in the department's annual report and accounts, which can be found on

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831728/MOD_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2018-19_WEB__ERRATUM_CORRECTED_.pdf

■ **Armed Forces: Training**

Wayne David: [9600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Defence Select Committee report, Session 2015-16, *Beyond Endurance: Military Exercises and the Duty of Care* (HC598), what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of the recommendation that the Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act 2007 should be amended to provide appropriate legal restraints to the military.

Wayne David: [9601]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of Service law in holding people accountable for military training supervision.

Wayne David: [9602]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of sanctions applied to (a) his Department, (b) the armed forces and (c) individuals for failings in the safe supervision of training events.

Johnny Mercer:

I refer the hon. Member to the Government response to the Defence Committee's specific recommendations and conclusions

(https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmdfence/525/52504.htm#_idTextAnchor001), and specifically to answers 21 to 28 in the section titled "Accountability".

The exemptions to the Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act 2007 relating to operations, "hazardous training in preparation for operations", and Specialist Military Units were addressed in answer 25 of the Government response. The rationale set out then remains valid but as the answer notes, the situation is kept under review.

The Ministry of Defence believes that the range of criminal, disciplinary and administrative powers available provides a sufficient means of holding individuals, the Armed Forces, and the Department accountable for training supervision, but this too remains under review and any necessary changes will be addressed in the next Armed Forces Bill.

■ **Army: Expenditure**

Mr Toby Perkins:

[8992]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department underspent on (a) salaries, (b) accommodation and (c) equipment in 2019 through not achieving its target of a British Army standing strength of 82,000.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Defence Secretary has made recruitment and retention in the British Army the Chief of the General Staff's overriding objective.

The Department's financial planning process allows for regular re-prioritisation of funds. Accommodation and equipment costs are relatively fixed in the short term and are unlikely to vary with fluctuations in strength.

■ **British Overseas Territories: Armed Forces**

Andrew Rosindell:

[8180]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many members of the armed forces are stationed in each of the UK's overseas territories.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Details of the location of UK regular service and civilian personnel are published annually on GOV.UK and can be accessed via the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/location-of-uk-regular-service-and-civilian-personnel-annual-statistics-2019>

The second icon in the Document Section provides an Excel spreadsheet and tab 1.1b provides a breakdown of service personnel at overseas locations.

Burkina Faso: Counter-terrorism

Jonathan Edwards: [\[9645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Government is providing support to the Burkina Faso Government's anti-terrorist operations.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Her Majesty's Government is concerned about the security situation in Sahel and the spread of insecurity across the region, including to countries such as Burkina Faso. The Ministry of Defence provides direct support to the region in the form of three CH47 chinook helicopters, who provide non-combat assistance in the French-led counter terror mission Operation BARKHANE, and we deliver training to G5 Sahel militaries through the EU Training Mission Mali. The UK Government also supports the G5 Sahel Joint Force, which combats terrorist activities in Burkina Faso and the wider region.

International Military Services: Finance

Tulip Siddiq: [\[9095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how its company IMS Ltd funded its payment into court in 2001; and how much of that payment was provided by (a) his Department or (b) the public purse.

James Heappey:

In December 2002 a payment of £382,500,000 was made into court funds. Payment was made by a combination of HM Treasury, IMS Ltd., and the Ministry of Defence.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[9097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much International Military Services Ltd received from its investments in local authorities and local authority securities; on what dates those investments ended; and with which financial products those investments were made.

James Heappey:

International Military Services 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.

Ministry of Defence: Apprentices

Angela Rayner: [\[9047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of staff employed by his Department are apprentices.

Johnny Mercer:

As at 31 December 2019, three per cent of civilian staff employed by the Ministry of Defence are apprentices.

■ Ministry of Defence: Public Expenditure

Jeremy Hunt:

[9624]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the expenditure of his Department was in net cash requirement terms in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Expenditure on net cash requirement in each of the last five years can be found in table 1 of the open data source tables relating to our finance and economics annual statistical bulletin: departmental resources 2019 which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mod-trade-industry-and-contracts-2019/finance-and-economics-annual-statistical-bulletin-trade-industry-and-contracts-2019>

■ Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations Review

Dr Julian Lewis:

[7573]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to publish the findings of the recent Review of the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association; and if he will publish the terms of reference for that review.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Ministry of Defence intends to publish the review of the Reserve Forces and Cadets Associations in February 2020.

The terms of reference for the review can be found at the following address:

[http://qna.files.parliament.uk/qna-attachments/1140326/original/RFCA%20Review%20TORs%20\(PQ\).docx](http://qna.files.parliament.uk/qna-attachments/1140326/original/RFCA%20Review%20TORs%20(PQ).docx)

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Amusement Arcades: Children

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[6729]

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make (a) an assessment of the implications for her policies of the fact that over half of child gamblers last gambled at a family arcade or amusement centre and (b) if her policy to review category D provisions that exempt family arcades from needing a licence to operate machines with money prizes.

Helen Whately:

Protecting children and vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited by gambling is a core objective of the regulation of gambling in Great Britain, and a priority for the government. The Government has committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 and will announce further details in due course.

Depending on the category of machines they offer, Family Entertainment Centres (FECs) may require either a licence from the Gambling Commission or a permit from the local authority. FECs which are not licensed by the Commission may offer only category D machines and fall under the control of the local authority. Category D machines include crane grabs and penny falls; slot machines with a money prize are permitted a maximum stake of 10p and maximum prize of £5.

In considering applications for FEC permits, the local authority must have regard to the licensing objectives in the Gambling Act 2005, which include preventing children from being harmed and exploited by gambling. The machine supplier must also be licensed by the Gambling Commission.

Voluntary action is being taken by the sector to improve safer gambling standards in all FECs and the government will continue to challenge operators to build on this. For example, in November the arcades trade association BACTA announced a new rule in its Code of Conduct preventing young people under the age of 16 playing on category D slot machines with a money prize unless accompanied by an adult.

The evidence suggests that the number of children and young people participating in gambling is reducing. The Gambling Commission's annual survey of young people in 2019 found that 11% had spent their own money on a gambling activity in the 7 days prior to taking part in the study, compared to 14% in 2018 and 23% in 2011.

■ **BBC: Information Services**

Catherine West:

[9100]

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 older people of the decision by the BBC to end the red button service; and what representations he has made to the BBC on this decision.

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 older people. 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.

■ **Boats: River Thames**

Sarah Olney:

[9757]

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the potential effect of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's proposals for older river boats on established river services on the River Thames between Kew and Richmond.

Helen Whately:

No DCMS ministers have had discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport regarding this matter. However, National Historic Ships UK (NHS-UK, an independent advisory body reporting to DCMS), responded to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's 2019 consultations on behalf of the sector, and discussed the potential impacts of the new requirements on vessels on the National Historic Ships Register, which it maintains. NHS-UK praised the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's inclusive approach.

Children and Young People**Afzal Khan:**[\[7667\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to Answer of 21 January 2020 to Question 3229 on Children and Young People, what will be classified as harder to reach areas.

Helen Whately:

My department is committed to ensuring this investment reaches young people who need it most, including those who currently have difficulty in accessing youth services. We are still developing plans for the delivery of the Youth Investment Fund and will announce more information in due course.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Apprentices**Angela Rayner:**[\[9048\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of staff employed by his Department are apprentices.

Nigel Adams:

DCMS has 32 apprentices, which is equivalent to 2.5% of the department's headcount.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Overseas Trade**Tracy Brabin:**[\[9752\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2020 to Question 6790 on Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Overseas Trade, if she will publish the membership of each committee.

Nigel Adams:

The government intends to publish the membership of each committee in due course.

Digital Technology**Chi Onwurah:**[\[9674\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the Government's target is for achieving digital literacy among the UK population.

Matt Warman:

The Government is committed to ensuring all users, children and adults, are empowered to understand and manage risks so that they can stay safe online. Online media and digital literacy can equip users with the skills they need to spot dangers online, critically appraise information and take steps to keep themselves and others safe online. The Government is ensuring that children get high quality education at school to develop their digital literacy. The Online Harms White Paper, published in April 2019, also set out the government's intention to develop an online media literacy strategy. The strategy will ensure a coordinated and strategic approach to online media literacy education and awareness for children, young people and adults. It will be published in summer 2020.

The Government's Digital Strategy, published in March 2017, sets out the Government's approach to tackling digital exclusion. Our objective is to tackle the root causes of digital exclusion so that everyone can increase their digital capability to make the most of the digital world. We also committed to facilitating strong collaboration between the public, private and third sector to tackle the digital skills gap in a coordinated and coherent way.

Further, from August, we will introduce a legal entitlement for adults with no or low digital skills to undertake new digital qualifications free of charge.

■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Databases**Eddie Hughes:**[\[9131\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the timeframe is to enable access to the DVLA database of licences to private sector identity organisations that are not part of the Gov.verify project.

Matt Warman:

The Digital Identity call for evidence, published in July 2019, sought views on how the government can support the development and secure use of digital identities across the public and private sector. A government response and next steps will be published in Spring 2020.

■ Electronic Government: Proof of Identity**Eddie Hughes:**[\[8440\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the (a) terms of reference, (b) membership and (c) minutes of the meetings of the Digital Identity Unit.

Matt Warman:

The Digital Identity Unit is a collaboration between DCMS and Cabinet Office. Further information on the work of the Unit will be published in the government's response to the Digital Identity Call for Evidence in Spring 2020. Any additional information will be released in line with DCMS and Cabinet Office publication schemes.

■ Internet: Safety

Alex Sobel:

[\[9141\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to classify (a) video game loot boxes and (b) FIFA Ultimate Team Packs as gambling in the forthcoming Bill on online harms.

Nigel Adams:

The Government will respond to the Online Harms White Paper consultation shortly.

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

Barbara Keeley:

[\[9626\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the report of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Technology use and the mental health of children and young people, published in January 2020, what plans he has for a consultation on a voluntary harm reporting scheme for online platforms, similar to the MHRA's Yellow Card scheme for monitoring the harms of medical products.

Matt Warman:

The government is developing world-leading plans to make the UK the safest place to be online. The Online Harms White Paper set out proposals to establish a statutory duty of care on online companies, overseen by an independent regulator with tough enforcement powers, to hold them to account. The regulator will have the power to require transparency reports from companies outlining what they are doing to protect people online, such as the processes to report content. These reports will be published so parents and children can make informed decisions about their internet use.

■ Music: Licensed Premises

Dan Jarvis:

[\[7629\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to support music venues in improving accessibility for disabled (a) audiences and (b) performers.

Nigel Adams:

We believe everyone should have equal access to music, arts and culture and that opportunities should be available to all. We work with venues and organisations representing disabled people to identify barriers to access and; to consider what more cultural venues need to do to be accessible to people with disabilities.

We are supportive of the work being undertaken by Attitude is Everything which aims to improve deaf and disabled people's access to live events, working in partnership with audiences, artists, and the music industry.

■ Public Service Broadcasting

Kevin Brennan:

[\[9603\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to bring forward legislative proposals to safeguard Public Service Broadcasting prominence in the digital age by the end of the 2019-21 Parliamentary session.

Nigel Adams:

In July 2019, Ofcom published its report and recommendations on how the prominence regime may need to change to ensure that Public Service Broadcasting programming remains easy to find regardless of how viewers are watching and accessing content. The report included recommendations for new legislation.

The Government is giving careful consideration to Ofcom's recommendations, and will set out next steps in due course.

■ Technology: Older People

Catherine West:

[\[9101\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to help older people manage the increasing reliance on technology in society.

Matt Warman:

Government is committed to helping elderly people acquire basic digital skills.

Through the £400,000 Digital Inclusion Innovation Fund, the Government is supporting projects aimed at addressing the digital exclusion of older and disabled people. One pilot, led by Uttlesford Council for Voluntary Service, is developing "smart homes" for elderly people to improve their digital skills, supported by their peers and younger 'digital buddies'.

Government funds the Future Digital Inclusion programme delivered through Online Centres based in libraries and other community spaces. This supports some of the hardest to reach groups in society, including older people. Over the last five years, the programme has supported over 1.3 million adult learners to engage with digital technology and develop their basic digital skills in community settings.

Libraries are a vital source of advice and support on digital skills. Government invested £2.6m to enable 99% of libraries in England to offer free wifi to users; and older people can also gain access and support in using computers and other technology.

Government ensures its services are accessible by design and for the services it provides, has committed to ensuring that assistance is always available for those who are not online. Government departments are mandated to provide assisted digital (offline) support for their services where it is required.

■ Television: Licensing

Kevin Brennan:

[\[9604\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on increasing the take-up of Pension Credit by pensioners who are eligible for that benefit ahead of the withdrawal of free TV licences for people over 75.

Nigel Adams:

Policy responsibility for take-up of Pension Credit is a matter solely for the Department for Work and Pensions.

However, the Government is committed to ensuring that older people receive the support they are entitled to and the DWP targets activity on engaging with people who may be eligible to benefits at pivotal stages, such as when they claim State Pension or report a change in their circumstances.

The DWP uses a wide range of channels to communicate information about benefits to potential customers; including information on <https://gov.uk/>, in leaflets and by telephone. DWP staff in Pension Centres and Jobcentres including visiting officers are able to provide help and advice about entitlement to benefits, as are staff in Local Authorities who administer Housing Benefit.

■ Voluntary Work: Ethnic Groups

Afzal Khan:

[\[7668\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many young people participated in the National Citizen Service in each of the last 10 years, by classified ethnic group.

Helen Whately:

Please see a breakdown of participation in National Citizen Service Trust for the period 2015-2017, classified by ethnic group:

	2015	2016	2017
Total	75,605	92,996	98,808
Ethnic Group	2015	2016	2017
White	70.7%	70.7%	67.9%
Asian	13.5%	14.0%	15.8%
Black	7.8%	7.9%	7.9%

Mixed	5.1%	4.7%	5.0%
Other	1.5%	1.6%	1.9%
NA	1.4%	1.2%	1.6%
BAME	27.9%	28.2%	30.5%

NCS attracts young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and participation by those who classify themselves as BAME has been consistent since 2015.

In 2017, more than a quarter (30.5%) of NCS participants classified themselves as BAME. This compares to 26% of the state secondary school population.

The NCS annual report for financial year 2018/19 has not yet been published and therefore the data for 2018 and 2019 has not been shared here.

NCS used a different data management system prior to 2015. As a result, the data is not consistent over the ten year period. I will write with further clarification once I have received further information from NCS.

Afzal Khan:

[\[7669\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to raise awareness of the National Citizen Service among young people from each of the classified ethnic groups.

Helen Whately:

NCS Trust's contracts with their local partners include a requirement that young people participating in NCS match, as closely as possible, to the local demographics. For example in areas where there are mixed ethnic groups our partners are required to reflect this in the makeup of NCS participants. This is tracked by the NCS Trust as part of their overall contract management of partners.

In addition marketing campaigns and materials have been developed to appeal to a wide and diverse mix of young people with many featuring local participants.

■ Youth Centres: Construction

Afzal Khan:

[\[7666\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to Answer of 21 January 2020 on Question 3229 on Children and Young People, where she plans to build the 60 new youth centres.

Helen Whately:

We are still developing plans for the delivery of the Youth Investment Fund - including the building of new youth centres - and will announce more information in due course.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices: Energy Industry

Giles Watling:

[7673]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to encourage the energy industry to increase the number of apprenticeships in that industry.

Michelle Donelan:

We have put employers at the heart of our apprenticeship system, empowering them to design the standards they need to meet their emerging skills needs in a changing economy. The independent Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education supports employers to develop standards and acts as the guarantor of their quality. Apprenticeships available in the sector include junior energy manager, smart home technician and power engineer.

Employers in the energy industry in England can use their apprenticeship levy funds to invest in these new high quality apprenticeship standards, unlocking the productivity benefits associated with employing apprentices.

We are encouraged to see companies in the energy sector engaging positively with the apprenticeship system. E.ON, for example, has apprentices working throughout its business in areas as diverse as cyber security, renewables, smart metering and customer service.

■ Children's Centres

Angela Rayner:

[9706]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many designated Sure Start Children's Centres there were in each local authority in England in (a) 2015 and (b) 2017.

Michelle Donelan:

Since 18 September 2017, data on Sure Start children's centres and children's centre linked sites has been supplied by local authorities via the department's Get Information about Schools (GIAS) database portal at: <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>.

Based on the information supplied by local authorities[1], the attached spreadsheet provides details of the number of children's centre sites by local authority in 2015 and 2017[2].

Councils are reconfiguring services to deliver them more efficiently. If a council decides to close a children's centre, statutory guidance is clear that they should demonstrate that local children and families would not be adversely affected and local areas continue to have sufficient children's centres to meet their needs.

[1] The number of children's centres is based on information supplied by local authorities as at 3 January 2020 and shows the number of children's centre sites in each local authority at the end of the 2015 and 2017 calendar years. These figures

may be different to previous answers, and could change again in future, since local authorities may update their data at any time.

[2] The GIAS database does not hold information on the date a children's centre converts to a children's centre linked site therefore, while a figure for the split between children's centres and children's centre linked sites at the point a query is made can be established, it is not possible to provide a historic breakdown of this figure in previous years.

Attachments:

1. 9706_Table [9706_Childrens_Centre_Numbers_2015_and_2017.xls]

■ **Department for Education: Apprentices**

Angela Rayner: [\[9046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of staff employed by his Department are apprentices.

Chris Skidmore:

As at 31 December 2019, the proportion of Department for Education staff employed as apprentices was 5%.

■ **Education and Skills Funding Agency: Apprentices**

Angela Rayner: [\[9704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of staff working at the Education and Skills Funding Agency are apprentices.

Angela Rayner: [\[9705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of staff working at the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education are apprentices.

Chris Skidmore:

As at 31 December 2019, the proportion of Education and Skills Funding Agency staff employed as apprentices was 6%.

This is a matter for the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. I have asked its Chief Executive, Jennifer Coupland, to write to the hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ **Educational Exchanges**

Ben Lake: [\[9126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 17 January 2020 to Question 2671 on access to educational and cultural exchange programmes, what steps his Department has taken to maintain international exchange and collaboration in education and training in the event that the UK does not participate in the Erasmus+ programme.

Ben Lake:

[9128]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 17 January 2020 to Question 2671 on access to educational and cultural exchange programmes, what plans his Department has for the future of international exchange and collaboration in education and training after the UK leave the EU.

Chris Skidmore:

The UK government wants to ensure that UK and European students can continue to benefit from each other's world-leading education systems. We highly value international exchange and cooperation in education and training. Even after we leave the EU on the 31 January, the Withdrawal Agreement ensures that students, young people, and learners will be able to participate fully in the remainder of the current Erasmus+ programme and organisations should continue to bid for programme funding until the end of 2020.

As noted in the political declaration, the UK is open to participate in certain EU programmes, such as the next Erasmus+ programme (2021-2027), if it is in our interest to do so. The proposed regulations for the next programme are still being discussed in the EU and have yet to be finalised. Future participation in EU programmes will be a subject of our negotiations on the future of UK-EU relationship.

The UK government is preparing for every eventuality and is considering a wide range of options with regards to the future of international exchange and collaboration in education and training, including potential domestic alternatives. Officials from the Department of Education are liaising with their colleagues in the devolved administrations on a potential domestic alternative should it be needed.

■ **Free School Meals: Pupil Premium**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[8980]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the effect on the level of take-up of free school meals of linking that take-up to provision of the pupil premium.

Michelle Donelan:

We allocate pupil premium funding every year that a child is claiming a free school meal and for the following 6 years should they cease claiming free school meals, recognising the importance of continuing the additional investment for those that have experienced economic disadvantage.

Evidence proves economic deprivation is strongly consistently linked to under-achievement at school. Pupil eligibility for free school meals in the last 6 years (known as "Ever6 FSM") remains the best available proxy measure of economic deprivation at individual pupil level.

We want to make sure as many eligible pupils as possible are claiming their free school meals, and to make it as simple as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility. To support this, we provide an Eligibility Checking System to

make the checking process as quick and straightforward as possible for schools and local authorities. We have also developed a model registration form to help schools encourage parents to sign up for free school meals, and we provide guidance to Jobcentre Plus advisers so that they can make Universal Credit recipients aware that they may also be entitled to wider benefits, including free school meals.

We will continue to look at what the most effective schools do and highlight and disseminate best practice. We are prepared to consider any further steps we can take to improve the take-up of free school meals.

■ Holiday Activities and Food Research Fund

Grahame Morris: [\[8999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2020 to Questions 6080, 6081 and 6082 on Holiday Activities and Food Research Fund, what the total value was of the unsuccessful bids received by his Department for the provision of free holiday activities and food in 2019.

Grahame Morris: [\[9000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding allocated by his Department to support the provision of free (a) activities and (b) food during school holidays.

Grahame Morris: [\[9001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to increase the level of funding allocated to the provision of free school holiday activities and food in the 2019 Parliament.

Grahame Morris: [\[9002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's news story of 4 January 2020, Free meals and summer holiday activities for children, how many bids have been received for the £9million of allocated funding from organisations operating in (a) the North East and (b) England.

Grahame Morris: [\[9003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's news story of 4 January 2020, Free meals and summer holiday activities for children, what the total value of bids received was for the £9million of allocated funding from organisations operating in (a) the North East and (b) England.

Michelle Donelan:

We have invested £2 million on this programme in 2018 and £9 million in 2019 and have previously announced a £9 million programme for summer 2020.

In summer 2019 we invested £9 million in 11 local authority areas reaching around 50,000 children and received 53 eligible bids for funding in 2019 that were unsuccessful with a total value of £29.8 million. We also received 28 further bids that

did not meet the basic eligibility criteria for the fund and so did not receive substantive assessment. Feedback was offered to all the unsuccessful bidders.

For our 2020 programme, we have received 9 bids from the North East region and 62 bids in total across England. The total value of bids in the North East is £6.3 million and the total across England is £41.4 million. The assessment process for bids for the 2020 summer programme remains ongoing and we will announce the outcome of the process shortly.

■ **Post-18 Education and Funding Review**

Layla Moran:

[9770]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to respond to Sir Philip Augar's review of Post-18 Education and Funding.

Nick Gibb:

Philip Augar and his independent panel have made thoughtful recommendations on tuition fee levels and loan repayment, the balance of funding between universities, further education, apprenticeships and adult education, and we will consider all these recommendations carefully.

We are considering the report carefully but have not yet taken decisions with regard to the recommendations put forward.

As my right hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation announced on 20 January at education oral questions, the Government will conclude the review alongside the next Spending Review, providing the sector with clarity about the future of post-18 education and funding.

We want to ensure we have an education system that is accessible to all and encourages the development of the skills we need as a country.

■ **Schools: Insulation**

Steve Reed:

[9037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2019, to Question 6117, on Schools: Insulation, if his Department will undertake an audit of schools to establish what forms of cladding are present on all buildings in the education estate.

Nick Gibb:

The safety of pupils, students and staff across the education estate remains the Department's highest priority.

The Department has taken appropriate action as part of the cross-government response to the Grenfell Tower fire. Updated building safety guidance for owners of residential buildings was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 20 January. In light of this guidance, the Department for Education will gather any additional information required on residential buildings

across the education estate and work with building owners to ensure that any subsequent remediation work is undertaken.

■ Schools: North West

Ms Angela Eagle:

[9594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the national funding formula for schools on levels of socio-economic inequality in (a) Wallasey, (b) Wirral, (c) Merseyside and (d) the North West.

Nick Gibb:

The National Funding Formula commits extra funding for pupils with additional needs, based on levels of deprivation, low prior attainment, English as an additional language and mobility. This is because evidence shows that pupils with these characteristics are more likely to fall behind, and need extra support to reach their full potential. In 2020-21, £6.3 billion will be allocated in the National Funding Formula for 5-16-year olds with additional needs in England. Areas with high levels of additional needs will attract more funding.

Next year, primary schools and secondary schools in Wallasey will, on average, attract £4,328 and £5,813 per pupil respectively. This reflects a 4.1% increase in per pupil funding when compared to this year.

In Wirral, primary and secondary schools will, on average, attract £4,146 and £5,439 per pupil respectively next year. This reflects a 3.9% increase in per pupil funding compared to this year.

For the local authorities that make up the Merseyside area (Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton and Wirral), this totals to a cash increase of £43.6 million in additional schools funding when compared to last year, which is a 4.3% increase in their total cash funding.

For the North West region, primary and secondary schools will, on average, attract £4,281 and £5,459 per pupil respectively. This reflects a 4.0% increase in per pupil funding compared to last year.

■ Speech and Language Therapy

Steve McCabe:

[9588]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to map speech and language therapy provision across the UK.

Michelle Donelan:

We are committed to supporting children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). This government has increased local authorities' high needs funding by £780 million in 2020-21, boosting the budget by 12% and bringing the total spent on supporting those with the most complex needs to over £7 billion for 2020-21.

Speech and Language therapists working with children in England are employed by local authorities, the health service or directly by schools, in response to children's and young people's needs in each area. For this reason the Department does not map services centrally.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Sustainable Development

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[8425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of (a) changing (i) subsidies and (ii) grant support and (b) other steps to encourage the transition of UK agriculture towards a more sustainable plant-based system.

George Eustice:

The Agriculture Bill will allow us to replace the restrictive EU Common Agricultural Policy with an ambitious new Environmental Land Management scheme. This scheme is based on the principle of 'public money for public goods' and will deliver financial support for farmers who protect our environment and deliver high animal welfare and food quality standards in a sustainable way. As such, this scheme will significantly contribute to the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and others such as net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Defra has commissioned its lead Non-Executive Director, Henry Dimbleby, to lead an Independent Review to develop a series of recommendations that will help shape a National Food Strategy, considering the entire food system from field to fork. The terms of reference of the review include seeking to ensure that our food system restores and enhances the natural environment for the next generation in this country, and is built upon a resilient, sustainable and humane agriculture sector. The Independent Review, launched on 25 June 2019, will publish its interim report in spring 2020 and its final report the following winter. The Government has committed to publishing a White Paper in response within six months of the review being published.

■ Animal Welfare: Sentencing

Jim Shannon:

[\[9023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with devolved Administrations on ensuring consistency of sentencing for animal abuse offences.

George Eustice:

Sentencing is a matter for the courts, which are independent from the Government. When deciding what sentence to impose the courts take into account the circumstances of the offence and any mitigating and aggravating factors, in line with the sentencing guidelines which are published by the independent Sentencing

Council for England and Wales. The guidelines are intended to promote greater transparency and consistency in sentencing. Sentencing is a devolved matter in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In line with the manifesto commitment to introduce tougher sentences for animal cruelty, the Government remains fully committed to increasing the maximum custodial sentences for animal cruelty offences from six months to five years. The necessary legislation will be introduced as soon as Parliamentary time allows. The Welsh Government has agreed this increase should apply in Wales. The Scottish Government has proposed a similar increase for its equivalent offence in Scotland. Northern Ireland already has a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment for animal cruelty offences.

■ Biodiversity

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[8259]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to protect biodiversity in (a) Surrey and (b) the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

This is a devolved matter and the information provided relates to England only.

The Government has strong protections in place for biodiversity on land and at sea. In England, over 1.09 million hectares of land is designated and strictly protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are 62 SSSIs in Surrey such as Chobham Common, one of the largest heathlands in the Thames Basin area.

We are expanding our protected areas at sea. An ambitious third tranche of 41 Marine Conservation Zones were designated in May 2019.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 apply across England. These laws make it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or capture listed species, as well as damage or destroy breeding sites.

This Government is also investing in improving habitats and recovering species. We are spending £2.9 billion on agri-environment schemes in England through our 7 year Rural Development Programme. We are additionally investing in woodland expansion and peatland restoration, to help mitigate climate change and halt biodiversity loss.

Our statutory nature conservation advisers, Natural England, work with a range of conservation organisations and landowners on species recovery projects, for example through the Back from the Brink programme. This is funded primarily by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and aims to put over 100 species on the road to recovery by 2020. In Surrey, at Farnham Heath, this work includes re-introduction and recovery of the rare Field Cricket – a specialist of heathland habitats which are a particular feature of Surrey's biodiversity.

This Government is determined to continue to work to protect and enhance biodiversity. We are developing a new Environmental Land Management scheme, which will reward farmers and land managers for delivering environment outcomes

such as protection of habitats which will support our biodiversity goals. We will be introducing the first Environment Bill in over 20 years. This will seek to mandate biodiversity net gain in development and will include ambitious legislative measures to address the biggest environmental priorities of our age including nature recovery.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Apprentices**

Steve Reed:

[9694]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of staff employed by her Department are apprentices.

George Eustice:

As of 31 December 2019, there were 72 apprentices in Defra. This is 1.4% of the total staff employed in the department.

Data regarding the number of apprentices in each Government department is published yearly as part of routine Government transparency. The most recent report was published in September last year, covering the 2018-19 financial year, and can be found on the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-apprenticeship-data-2018-to-2019>

■ **Domestic Animals: Animal Welfare**

Dr Luke Evans:

[9151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that (a) pets are protected from violence and (b) people who perpetrate violence against domestic animals are prosecuted.

George Eustice:

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 it is an offence to cause any unnecessary suffering to an animal or to fail to provide for its welfare needs. Under the Act, anyone can take forward a prosecution if they consider that they have the necessary evidence. Around 800 people are successfully prosecuted each year for causing unnecessary suffering to an animal.

The maximum penalty for causing unnecessary suffering or failing to provide for an animal's welfare needs is six months' imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. However, the Government has committed to introducing tougher penalties for animal cruelty. This will increase the maximum custodial penalty for causing unnecessary suffering to five years' imprisonment which will make it among the highest maximum penalties for such an offence in the world. This will be taken forward when Parliamentary time allows.

■ Electronic Training Aids

Mr Stephen Morgan: [9766]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals to ban the use of electronic shock collars.

George Eustice:

The Government remains committed to banning the use of certain types of electronic training collars for dogs. We will introduce the necessary legislation to implement the ban as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

■ Fish: Sales

Luke Pollard: [7677]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether fish from an under 10 metre licensed fishing vessel are required to appear on a sales note if the buyer of those fish purchases less than 30kg of fish and the fish are used only for private consumption.

George Eustice:

For under 10 metre licensed fishing vessels, a sales note is not required to be submitted in instances where less than 30kg of fish is bought per day directly from a commercial fisher for personal consumption.

■ Fishing Catches

Luke Pollard: [7678]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what quantity of fish can be landed without being required to be reported or recorded by the Marine Management Organisation, if those fish have been caught by recreational anglers or by unlicensed fishermen and are not sold.

George Eustice:

The requirement to report fish caught to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) only applies to licenced commercial fishing vessel owners.

Recreational sea anglers can fish for most finfish and shellfish species unrestricted and without the need to report catches to the MMO. However, recreational sea anglers are obliged to comply with EU minimum landing sizes and catch limits for certain species, for example those currently set under EU regulations for bass.

A voluntary option for recreational sea angling catch reporting is available, via the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science managed Sea Angling diary: www.seaangling.org.

■ Fishing Catches: Computer Software

Luke Pollard:

[7676]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the (a) estimated weight of the fish submitted on the catch recording app or (b) weight of those fish shown on sales notes, in circumstances where (a) and (b) differ, will be used to determine quota take-up and catch limits.

George Eustice:

The catch recording system is currently in its roll out phase. As the system enters full usage and fishers get used to the system, the data gathered from it will be used to cross check data from sales notes. For at least the current quota management year catch records will be used to supplement but not replace sales note data in tracking uptake and setting limits.

As the catch records capture a complete record of landings, any species or landing undeclared on a sales note will be taken from the catch record. Where sales notes and catch records both capture a species and/or a landing but differ in the recorded quantity then the Marine Management Organisation will give due consideration to the reason for the difference when making a decision on which value to use.

■ Food: Exports

Hywel Williams:

[8156]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much and what proportion of exports of (a) beef, (b) sheep meat, (c) pork, (d) dairy and (e) poultry products were attributable to each devolved nation of the UK in each of 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 exports by region over the last three years (2016 to 2018) were as follows:

Meat and meat preparations:

UK REGION	EXPORT VALUE (16-18)	SHARE OF EXPORTS
England	£3.3bn	63%
Wales	£310m	5.9%
Scotland	£310m	5.9%
Northern Ireland	£970m	18%
Unallocated regional trade	£342m	6.5%

Dairy and eggs:

UK REGION	EXPORT VALUE (16-18)	SHARE OF EXPORTS
England	£2.4bn	48%
Wales	£319m	6.4%
Scotland	£141m	2.8%
Northern Ireland	£1.4bn	28%
Unallocated regional trade	£706m	14%

■ Forests and Trees: Conservation

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[8258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to protect (a) trees and (b) woodlands in (i) Surrey and (ii) the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

Measures to protect our trees and woodlands apply nationally and are not county dependent.

We committed in our 25 Year Environment Plan to increase protection of our existing trees and forests.

As part of this, we have already strengthened the protection of ancient woodlands through the National Planning Policy Framework and the accompanying Planning Policy Guidance and we are introducing a new duty on local authorities to consult local communities when they wish to remove street trees.

The Environment Bill is also providing additional powers to the Forestry Commission, to increase the deterrent for illegal felling, protect our woodlands and ensure that illegally felled land is restocked.

In the Spring, Defra will be consulting on its forthcoming England Tree Strategy, setting out the Government's vision for English forestry.

■ Fracking: Water

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[9768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her Department's policy on fracking in the UK of the findings of the Center for Environmental Research and Education at Duquesne University on the radioactivity of fracking waste water contents (brine).

Rebecca Pow:

Radioactive substances are regulated in England and Wales under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016. These implement the relevant aspects of European Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom (Basic Safety

Standards Directive 2013) based on standards recommended by the International Commission for Radiological Protection. In England the Environment Agency regulates the management of waste water from hydraulic fracturing sites to ensure these high standards of protection are met.

■ Hunting

Luke Pollard:

[8473]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many representations she has received from (a) pro-hunting and (b) anti-hunting groups to extend the length of the consultation on banning trophy hunting by a month.

Rebecca Pow:

Although we are still analysing the consultation responses received to date, we are not aware of any representations made by any interested party to extend it.

The decision to extend the consultation was taken by Ministers, in line with best practice guidelines. This will reduce the risk of individuals and organisations being unable to fully engage due to the pre-election and Christmas periods. It is usual to consider an extension in circumstances such as these to make sure we hear from all sides of the debate.

■ Livestock: Disease Control

Tim Farron:

[9630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made on the effect of preventable disease on the (a) health, (b) welfare, (c) productivity and (d) sustainability of agriculture.

George Eustice:

Improving animal health through addressing endemic diseases will improve the welfare of livestock and reduce the need to use antibiotics. It can also significantly improve productivity on farm; endemic livestock diseases are estimated to cost the English livestock industry between £290 million and £710 million per year.

Improving animal health will contribute to the UK five-year action plan for tackling anti-microbial resistance and the 25 Year Environment Plan commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from livestock.

Tim Farron:

[9631]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the recent outbreak of coronavirus, if she will bring forward proposals to (a) prevent animal disease and (b) ensure animal (i) health and (ii) welfare in the Agriculture Bill.

George Eustice:

While the initial cases of coronavirus may have been through contact with wildlife in China, this is now a human to human transmission cycle and there is no evidence for the infection in livestock in any affected country. We continue to monitor the situation.

The Agriculture Bill was introduced to Parliament on 16 January. The Bill gives the Secretary of State the power to make payments to protect and improve the health and welfare of livestock, as well as to collect and share data relating to livestock health and traceability.

■ **Livestock: Vaccination**

Tim Farron:

[\[9629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of routine vaccination in livestock; and whether she will provide support to farmers delivering a preventative approach to livestock disease.

George Eustice:

Where considered appropriate by a vet and farmer, vaccination has a role to play in preventing diseases in livestock. We know that the majority of farmers have animal health plans and good biosecurity measures in place, but there is a clear opportunity to go further.

We are working with industry and veterinary representatives to develop practical actions to help reduce the impact of endemic diseases on livestock and improve animal health. We will also work to improve the breadth and detail of animal health data gathered.

■ **Plastics: Malaysia**

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[7580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to take to ensure that the contents of the 42 containers of plastic being returned by the Malaysian Government are recycled in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

Thirty-five of the containers have already arrived in England and the remaining seven were scheduled to leave Malaysia before the end of January. The Environment Agency, as competent authority of England, is overseeing the voluntary return of all 42 containers of waste. The return of these containers is being managed and financed by the parties involved in the original export to Malaysia as it is their responsibility. The Environment Agency is closely monitoring their return to England and subsequent lawful recovery or disposal of the waste in the UK.

The Government is deeply concerned about the illegal trade in waste, including reports of illegal plastic waste exported from the UK to Malaysia. Recognising the difficulties experienced by some countries in managing imports of plastic waste, the Queen's Speech on 19 December last year included a commitment to ban the export of polluting plastic wastes to countries that are not members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. We will consult this year on the date by which this should be achieved.

■ Recycling

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[9772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the December 2018 document, Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England, what steps her Department has taken to extend the lives of products through repair, reuse and remanufacture.

Rebecca Pow:

Our Strategy is guided by the objectives of maximising the value of resource use and minimising waste and its impact on the environment. One of our underlying principles is to prevent waste, where we can, from occurring in the first place.

With this in mind, we have taken steps towards supporting ecodesign of products so they are durable, repairable and capable of remanufacture. We are seeking powers in the Environment Bill to put in place, subject to consultation, ecodesign and consumer information requirements for non-energy using products. As to energy-using products, we will seek to drive change to ensure products can be repaired, reused and remanufactured making use of powers on ecodesign that we are taking back from the EU. The powers in the Environment Bill will enable us to supplement these requirements with consumer information requirements to facilitate sustainable purchasing. We are also reviewing the contribution that producer responsibility schemes for priority products could make to encourage better product design.

Additionally, we are in the process of developing a new Waste Prevention Programme for England, on which it is intended to consult this year, aimed at supporting reuse, repair and remanufacture as well as other means of waste prevention.

■ Rural Areas: Finance

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[8334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effect on rural areas of the termination of funding from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development following the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

George Eustice:

The Government is committed to continuing to support rural areas, for example through its manifesto pledge to maintain the current annual budget to farmers in every year of this Parliament. We have also confirmed that all Rural Development Programme projects that have funding agreed before 31 December 2020 will be fully funded for their lifetime. The Government considers that the benefits that rural areas will gain from the new schemes now being developed for England will substantially outweigh those they receive from the current complex and bureaucratic arrangements. In England, these new schemes include Environmental Land Management and Future Farming Productivity Grants.

■ Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Debbie Abrahams:

[9028]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the cost to the public purse was of Natural England's programme of monitoring of SSSIs in each calendar year since 2009.

Rebecca Pow:

Natural England (NE) expenditure on monitoring sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) is set out in the following table.

YEAR	EXPENDITURE
2010/11	£1,570,755
2011/12	£1,517,691
2012/13	£1,797,287
2013/14	£1,420,892
2014/15	£1,381,580
2015/16	£900,633
2016/17	£1,028,533
2017/18	£700,452
2018/19	£700,000

This includes NE staff time and the costs of specialist surveys.

This year NE is prioritising actions to address particular issues on SSSIs, especially those affecting upland SSSIs. NE continues to support and encourage partners in the work they do themselves to undertake SSSI monitoring.

NE is also developing an approach to the monitoring of SSSIs which will make better use of new technologies, such as remote sensing and greater partnership involvement. This is intended to improve efficiency of SSSI monitoring.

Debbie Abrahams:

[9029]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many and what proportion of SSSI units were monitored (a) by number of units and (b) by area, in hectares as part of Natural England's SSSI monitoring programme in each calendar year from 2009.

Rebecca Pow:

The numbers of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) units monitored and the area of units monitored in each calendar year from 2009 to 2019 are given below.

The proportions of SSSI units and SSSI area have been expressed against a single

common figure, reflecting the current SSSI extent, rather than the extent in each year. This is because the area and number of SSSI units have changed within the individual years from 2009 to 2019.

YEAR	AREA MONITORED (HA)	NUMBER OF UNITS MONITORED	PROPORTION OF SSSI UNITS (BASED ON CURRENT NUMBER OF SSSI MONITORING UNITS)	PROPORTION OF SSSI AREA (BASED ON CURRENT AREA OF SSSI MONITORING UNITS)
2009	204,465	3,655	17%	19%
2010	339,441	5,009	23%	31%
2011	79,753	2,349	11%	7%
2012	108,615	2,689	12%	10%
2013	91,471	1,993	9%	8%
2014	67,274	1,437	7%	6%
2015	72,115	1,599	7%	7%
2016	61,983	1,097	5%	6%
2017	36,187	769	4%	3%
2018	38,987	968	4%	4%
2019	75,619	1,275	6%	7%

Debbie Abrahams:

[9030]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many full-time equivalent staff were employed by Natural England's SSSI monitoring programme in each calendar year from 2009.

Rebecca Pow:

The information is only available for financial years rather than calendar years.

YEAR	FTE
2010/11	33.2
2011/12	24.3
2012/13	22.8

YEAR	FTE
2013/14	16.0
2014/15	14.0
2015/16	11.0
2016/17	15.0
2017/18	11.0
2018/19	12.5

■ Tree Felling: New Forest

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[8133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the cost to Forestry England has been of tree felling at Slap Bottom in the New Forest from 1 December 2019 to date; and what the projected cost is of the completed works at that location.

Rebecca Pow:

The cost of felling work to date has been £740 + VAT, so a total of £888. The estimated cost of completing the work will be £6,200 + VAT. The actual cost will depend on the contractor's assessment of the time involved to complete the work, modified following recent discussions with Burley Parish Council.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ British Overseas Territories: Seas and Oceans

Caroline Lucas:

[\[7611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September to Question 284655 on Cayman Islands: Passenger Ships, what assessment the Government has made of the effect on coral reef and other seabed of the Cruise Berthing Facility Project in the Cayman Islands; and what steps he is taking to protect the marine environment of UK Overseas Territories.

Christopher Pincher:

The Cruise Berthing Facility Project was raised during Lord Ahmad's visit to the Cayman Islands last year and the Governor maintains a regular dialogue with those on both sides of this debate. Environmental protection is an area of devolved responsibility in Overseas Territories. Cayman law requires that an environmental impact assessment be conducted before a development of this nature proceeds. An updated environmental impact assessment has been submitted to the Environmental Assessment Board for review; once this review is complete a period of public

consultation will commence before a final report is issued. Under the Blue Belt programme, United Kingdom funding has been provided to support the Overseas Territories protect and manage their marine environments. The programme is currently on course to protect 4 million square kilometres of ocean around the UKOTs. Further funding was announced in August for FY 2020/21 to continue this important programme.

■ **China: Coronavirus**

Cat Smith:

[\[9071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support his Department is providing to UK nationals in Wuhan who are unable to access medication.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

As the Foreign Secretary said on 30 January, the safety and security of British nationals will always be our top priority. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is in crisis mode to respond to those British Nationals effected by the outbreak of the Coronavirus. Our Embassy in Beijing and consular teams remain in close contact with British nationals in the region to ensure they have the latest information they need. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has also organised a repatriation flight for British Nationals and other entitled persons in Hubei Province which landed on 31 January at RAF Brize Norton.

■ **China: Minority Groups**

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[8986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports of long-term persecution of the Uyghur Muslims, Falun Gong practitioners and other ethnic and religious minority groups in China.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We remain concerned about the persecution of Uyghur Muslims, Falun Gong practitioners, as well as Christians, Buddhists and others, in China on the grounds of their religion or belief. 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”. This is underpinned by extensive evidence. We are also concerned about the systematic restrictions on Uyghur culture and the practice of Islam, and extensive and invasive surveillance targeting minorities outside of the “camps”.

■ **China: Uighurs**

Rosie Duffield:

[\[9122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Chinese counterpart to ensure that Uighurs detained in camps in western China will receive equitable standards of medical care should the coronavirus continue to spread.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Foreign Secretary spoke to State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi about the coronavirus outbreak on 28 January, including the extensive measures being taken by China to contain the virus, and the evacuation of British Nationals from Hubei province. The Foreign Secretary did not discuss the treatment of Uyghurs detained in Xinjiang during the call. However, we regularly raise our 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”, with the Chinese authorities at senior levels. Most recently, our Ambassador to China raised our concerns with Vice Foreign Minister Qin Gang on 24 December 2019.

■ Egypt: Diplomatic Relations**Mr Jonathan Lord:**[\[8264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve diplomatic relations with Egypt.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK-Egypt relationship is important and wide ranging, including security, foreign policy, trade and investment, economic reform, education, healthcare, and cultural cooperation. We work closely with the Egyptian authorities to counter shared threats from terrorism, to promote the safety and security of around 500,000 British citizens who visit Egypt each year, and to support longer-term reform.

Earlier this month, the Prime Minister welcomed President Sisi and seven of his Cabinet Ministers to London for the UK-Africa Investment Summit. During his visit, President Sisi delivered the key-note speech at the Summit, held talks with the Prime Minister and was received by HRH the Duke of Cambridge. The visit also included a Joint Statement on Economic Cooperation and deals worth over £3 billion.

■ Embassies: Official Hospitality**Jeremy Hunt:**[\[9623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the cost to the public purse was of diplomatic entertainment activities of British overseas embassies in the 2018-19 financial year.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) accounts for its hospitality expenditure under Representation of the FCO and Business Hospitality. The total overseas spend in the 2018-19 financial year was £10,990,314.80.

■ European Union: Diplomatic Relations

Wayne David:

[\[9599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his European counterparts on diplomatic relations after the UK leaves the EU.

Christopher Pincher:

All FCO ministers maintain regular, close contact with their European counterparts. This close contact will continue now that we have left the EU. Whilst we will have a different relationship with the EU now we are not a member, we are committed to championing free trade and shared European values and to maintaining our strong bilateral relations. The United Kingdom's outlook will always be global: standing up for our interests, and tackling injustices, together with our friends and allies. The FCO will play a key role through its network of Posts to engage EU Member States.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Apprentices

Mike Kane:

[\[9043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what proportion of staff employed by his Department are apprentices.

Christopher Pincher:

As of 31 December 2019, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) employed 112 apprentices, of whom 62 work for our Trading Fund, FCO Services. We expect a further 51 staff to enrol on an apprenticeship by 31 March 2020.

■ Iran: Aviation

Andrew Bowie:

[\[8424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if the Government will initiate discussions at the UN Security Council on the implications for global security of the shooting down of Ukrainian International Airlines flight 752 by Iran.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We were deeply saddened by the loss of life on Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752, and offer our condolences to the families who lost loved ones. We want to see a full, transparent and swift investigation into the tragedy that is in line with international standards. The UK is working closely with Canada, Ukraine and our other international partners affected by this accident to ensure this happens. We do not currently plan to raise this at the United Nations Security Council.

The UK continues to call on all sides to de-escalate and reduce tensions in the region.

Iran: Detainees**Tulip Siddiq:****[9093]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2020 to Question 6736 on Iran: Detainees, what steps he is taking to help ensure that non-Iranian dual-national UK citizens illegally imprisoned in Iran have (a) adequate food and (b) warm clothes.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

If a UK dual national is detained in a third country, the UK can, if requested, offer consular assistance to the individual, or liaise with their other country of nationality if they are better placed to provide assistance. Currently, the UK is not providing consular assistance to any non-Iranian dual-national British citizens in detention in Iran.

Tulip Siddiq:**[9094]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January to Question 6737, on Iran: Detainees, how many times (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have made representations to the Government of Iran on the adequacy of provisions for non-Iranian dual national British citizens illegally imprisoned in that country in the last 12 months.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

If a UK dual-national is detained in a third country, the UK can, if requested, offer consular assistance to the individual, or liaise with their other country of nationality if they are better placed to provide assistance. Currently, the UK is not providing consular assistance to any non-Iranian dual-national British citizens in detention in Iran. We remain extremely concerned about the welfare of all British dual nationals detained in Iran. The Prime Minister raised his concerns with President Rouhani on 9 January, and the Foreign Secretary did so with Foreign Minister Zarif on 6 January.

Iran: International Law**Mr Jonathan Lord:****[8265]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to help ensure Iran complies with international law.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The United Kingdom engages consistently, both in bilateral and multilateral settings, to encourage Iran to act in accordance with international rules and norms. We have made clear our long-standing concerns over Iran's nuclear programme, its missile proliferation activity and its support for proxy groups and militias across the region. Such support is in contravention of UN Security Council resolutions and in many cases against the wishes of the people and the governments of the states in which the proxies operate. We will continue to hold Iran to account for its actions, including by working with European partners to sanction Iranian entities that contravene international rules and norms; there are over 200 EU sanctions listings in place

against Iran. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is an important pillar of the wider global non-proliferation architecture and in all our security interests. The UK has consistently called on Iran to return immediately to compliance with its commitments and to now engage in good faith with the dispute resolution mechanism under the deal. We have also taken action at the UN, bilaterally and alongside our European partners to press Iran to fully uphold its obligations under international human rights law, in particular the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. We continue to call on Iran to respect international norms in relation to British dual nationals held in detention in Iran, and to release those held immediately.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[9764]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent steps has he taken to help promote peace between Palestinians and Israel.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution, including terrorism, anti-Semitic incitement, settlement expansion, and the demolition of Palestinian property in the West Bank. Steps to transform the situation in Gaza are also needed. We have a regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel at all levels. We are encouraging both sides to maintain calm and avoid taking unilateral actions that may make peace more difficult to achieve.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[9765]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the prospects for peace between Palestine and Israel.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We are concerned by the lack of progress in the Middle East Peace Process and note the UN Secretary-General's assessment that the situation on the ground has deteriorated over the last three years. The ongoing violence underlines that a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. We continue to believe the best way to achieve an end to this conflict is through substantive peace talks between the parties, but international action has a role in facilitating progress. We have a regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel at all levels. We are encouraging both sides to maintain calm and avoid taking unilateral actions that may make peace more difficult to achieve.

■ Lebanon: Politics and Government

Afzal Khan: [\[9781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) recent government formation in Lebanon and (b) stability of Lebanon following the ongoing protests.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Our Ambassador to Lebanon met Prime Minister Hassan Diab on 23 January to discuss the formation of the new Lebanese Government. I also spoke with new Lebanese Foreign Minister Dr. Nassif Hitti on 28 January. The formation of a new government in Lebanon is an important first step. The UK and other members of the International Support Group for Lebanon have consistently called for the urgent formation of an effective and capable government which reflects the aspirations of the Lebanese people, and stressed that the right of peaceful protest must continue to be respected. We stand ready to support Lebanon but look to this government to demonstrate its commitment to reform.

■ Nigeria: Religious Freedom

Sir Desmond Swayne: [\[9577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the level of religiously motivated violence in Nigeria; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Stephenson:

Communities of different religions live together peacefully across most of Nigeria. However, for many decades Nigeria has experienced episodes of serious religious conflict, including between Muslim and Christian communities. The drivers of violence are complex and rooted in ethnic and religious identities, politics and access to resources.

For more than a decade, Islamic insurgents including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa (ISWA), have caused immense suffering to both Muslim and Christian populations in the North East of the country. The groups seek to undermine the right to freedom of religion by attacking indiscriminately those who do not subscribe to their extremist views. We are appalled by and condemn these attacks, including a recent increase in attacks on Christians in December 2019.

The UK is firmly committed to promoting and protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief around the world. We are a strong voice internationally in defence of this fundamental right. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities, at the highest levels, the importance of protecting civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all Nigerians.

■ Overseas Aid

Chris Law:

[\[9712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2020 to Question 5457, how the decision to extend the Integrated Activity Fund budget for 2020-21 was reached; when that decision was authorised; and which Minister of his Department authorised that decision.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The budget for the Integrated Activity Fund for 2020-21 was agreed as part of the 2019 Spending Round which was presented to Parliament by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in September 2019.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs: Rehabilitation

Dan Jarvis:

[\[9675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to ring-fence funding for drug and alcohol treatment services.

Jo Churchill:

Local authorities are responsible for the commissioning of services and are supported in this through the provision of the Public Health Grant. The ring-fence which requires the grant to be spent on public health remains in place for 2020/21, as does the condition relating to substance misuse services. The grant will increase in real terms in 2020/21 meaning local authorities can continue to invest in prevention and essential frontline health services.

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Death

Dan Jarvis:

[\[R\] \[9677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce alcohol related deaths in South Yorkshire.

Dan Jarvis:

[\[R\] \[9678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce drug related deaths in South Yorkshire.

Jo Churchill:

Local authorities are responsible for assessing local needs and commissioning drug and alcohol prevention, treatment and harm reduction services to meet these needs. Public Health England (PHE) supports local authorities in this work by providing data, guidance and advice.

PHE's Yorkshire and Humber Centre has a work programme focused on addressing alcohol and drug-related harm in South Yorkshire. This programme includes:

- helping local areas, such as Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham, plan and improve their local alcohol systems, services and interventions to reduce alcohol harm using the CLearR (Challenge services, Leadership, and Results) evidence-based approach;
- supporting local areas to develop new specifications for their alcohol and drug treatment systems by providing advice, guidance and evidence to ensure that prevention, treatment and support is of consistent quality;
- supporting local areas, such as Barnsley, to develop their drug-related deaths processes in line with recent Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs recommendations;
- convening a homelessness and rough sleeping roundtable to bring partners together from across the region to share best practice; and
- supporting the formation and ongoing activities of Alcohol Alliances, which are local strategic partnership boards aimed at tackling the burden of alcohol harms on individuals and communities in Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham.

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse

Fiona Bruce:

[\[9647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle alcohol harm.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to tackling health harms from alcohol and supporting the most vulnerable at risk from alcohol misuse. We continue to support and deliver programmes at both national and local levels to address harms including establishing Alcohol Care Teams in the hospitals with the highest rates of alcohol related admissions, a commitment in the Prevention Green paper to encourage drinking habits towards low and no alcohol products, a £6 million investment to support children with alcohol dependent parents and the provision of capital Grant funding awarded to 23 projects enabling local authorities to invest in better meeting the needs of people that require alcohol treatment, including parents who are dependent drinkers.

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Sales

Dan Jarvis:

[\[9676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the (a) price, (b) availability and (c) promotion of alcohol with regards to tackling alcohol-related death and illness.

Jo Churchill:

No recent discussions have been held between the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs regarding the price, availability or promotion of alcohol.

■ Ambulance Services: Emergency Calls

Grahame Morris:

[\[9655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many long waits were recorded since the new system for measuring 999 response times was introduced for the two highest priority groups by (a) West Midlands Ambulance Service and (b) East of England Ambulance Service in 2018.

Edward Argar:

This information is not held in the format requested.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[9108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the outbreak of Coronavirus in the People's Republic of China, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of disease screening arrangements at UK airports.

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[9109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions officials in his Department have had with their counterparts in the Home Department on the (a) identification and (b) segregation of people entering the UK who are at risk of carrying the 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, 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.

These measures do not include the introduction of 'medical screening', such as temperature screening. Expert advice suggests that medical screening would be of very limited effectiveness and detect only a small minority of cases as symptomatic. This is because symptoms do not usually appear until five to seven days, and sometimes up to 14 days, after infection, meaning that only a very small proportion of people would be likely to present symptoms during a flight or immediate arrival to the United Kingdom and therefore be picked up by temperature screening.

Travellers who have arrived from Wuhan within the last 14 days are asked to stay indoors and self-isolate and contact NHS111 for further information – irrespective of whether they show signs of infection – while people in Northern Ireland should phone their general practitioners. Nobody who has returned from the area should leave home until they have received clinical advice that it is safe to do so.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Apprentices**Mike Kane:****[9042]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of staff employed by his Department are apprentices.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department started offering apprenticeships in 2015 (pre-Levy and the introduction of Government targets). We have taken a proactive approach to apprenticeships and are working to embed apprenticeships so that they are a core part of our learning and development offer. We continue to increase the take up of apprenticeships year on year and apprentices currently make up 3.8% of the Department's 1,743 workforce.

■ East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust: Maternity Services**Rosie Duffield:****[9123]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on 28 January 2020, whether the summary report requested from the Care Quality Commission will include an assessment of the applicability of its findings in respect of maternity cases at East Kent University Foundation Trust to other trusts.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The summary report I referred to on 28 January 2020 relates to the Care Quality Commission's (CQC's) recent inspection of East Kent University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust only.

A summary of the CQC's findings following this inspection will be made available to the Department within two weeks. The CQC will publish its full inspection report in due course, in line with the CQC's process for publishing inspection reports.

■ Electronic Cigarettes**Mr David Jones:****[8975]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the position taken by the World Health Organisation on electronic nicotine delivery systems.

Jo Churchill:

The World Health Organization recommends regulating e-cigarettes in order to protect non-smokers and youth from accessing these products. The United Kingdom regulatory framework recognises this.

Although not risk free, in the UK, e-cigarettes have helped some smokers to quit tobacco use who would not have quit through other means. We continue to keep the evidence base on e-cigarettes under review.

Mr David Jones:

[8976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the Government's policy on electronic nicotine delivery systems will be at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

At the 9th World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Conference of the Parties, officials will continue to communicate the United Kingdom Government's position on e-cigarettes. That is, although not risk free, e-cigarettes have helped some smokers to quit tobacco use who would not have quit through other means. We have introduced a proportionate regulatory framework and continue to keep the evidence base on e-cigarettes under review.

■ **Health Services: Homelessness**

Sarah Owen:

[9148]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of homelessness on (a) access to health services and (b) the health of (i) children, (ii) disabled people and (iii) the elderly.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

This Government is clear that no one should be without a roof over their head. It is widely recognised that being homeless or sleeping rough can have a significant impact on the mental and physical health of individuals, including children, disabled people and the elderly.

The Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in August 2018, set out actions to address the needs of all people sleeping rough, including disabled people and elderly people. NHS England has committed to spending up to £30 million over five years on mental health services for people sleeping rough and we have promoted guidance on care for homeless people at the end of their lives. We are providing £2 million in funding to test ways to improve access to health services for people with co-occurring mental ill-health and substance misuse problems who are currently, or at risk of returning to, sleeping rough.

This Government has committed to eliminating rough sleeping in the term of this parliament.

■ **Hospitals: Consultants**

Alex Davies-Jones:

[9800]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of consultants in hospitals.

Edward Argar:

In England, there are 49,068 full time equivalent (FTE) consultants employed in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups, up by 34.1% (12,475 FTE) since 2010.

It is the responsibility of National Health Service trusts to have staffing arrangements in place that deliver safe and effective care. This includes recruiting the appropriate professionals needed to support these levels and meet local needs.

The number of post-registration specialty training places that are available each year is set by Health Education England, based on its assessment of service gaps and predicted workforce needs.

Decisions about the NHS workforce in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are a matter for the devolved administrations of those countries.

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[9801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of a reduction in the recruitment of consultants on the rate of closures of A&E departments.

Edward Argar:

Overall, there are 49,068 full time equivalent (FTE) consultants employed in National Health Service trusts and clinical commissioning groups in England, up by 34.1% (12,475 FTE) since 2010.

It is the responsibility of NHS trusts to have staffing arrangements in place that deliver safe and effective care. This includes recruiting the appropriate professionals needed to support these levels and meet local needs.

■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[9132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of patients that have waited for more than 18 weeks for treatment.

Edward Argar:

Latest official statistics show that at the end of November 2019, 690,096 patients had been waiting more than 18 weeks for first definitive treatment.

■ In Vitro Fertilisation: Immigrants

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[8300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people seeking leave to remain in the UK are eligible for NHS IVF treatment.

Edward Argar:

Non-European Economic Area nationals seeking leave to remain in the United Kingdom are not eligible for National Health Service in vitro fertilisation services free of charge.

■ Mumps

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[9610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the increasing incidence of mumps.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement, the Department and Public Health England (PHE) are working with national and local stakeholders to raise awareness of the rise in mumps activity and promote uptake of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine, in particular to the age groups that are most affected - 15 to 25 year olds.

PHE is running a 'Value of Vaccines' campaign to help share messages and information on vaccination, which is available at the following link:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/94-value-of-vaccines/overview>

There have been targeted communications for university students and festival goers in collaboration with Universities and Colleges Admissions Service which will continue to be amplified in the coming weeks. PHE provides information on the benefits and risks of the MMR vaccine to the public using National Health Service branded leaflets. The leaflets address common questions about the MMR vaccine. This information is designed for use by schools, healthcare centres, accident and emergency departments, hospital wards, walk-in centres and general practices.

In addition, NHS England is running an MMR catch-up programme for 10 and 11-year olds through general practices.

■ National Institute for Health Research: Equality

Ian Murray:

[8996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will undertake an equality impact assessment of research funding spent by the National Institute for Health Research.

Caroline Dineneage:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is funded by the Department. As a public authority, the Department is required to adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty in line with the Equality Act 2010. The Department takes its obligations under the Equality Act very seriously, specifically in ensuring that we give due regard to the impacts on people with protected characteristics. The NIHR Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board is leading work on equality impact assessments and their applicability to the NIHR. A decision on whether and where to apply equality impact assessments will be made as a result of this work.

■ Neurology

Sir John Hayes:

[\[8142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to end the practice of placing people with neurological conditions in (a) nursing homes that do not meet their needs and (b) in non-neighbouring local authorities away from their family and support networks.

Caroline Dinenage:

The commissioning of social care services is a matter for local authorities who are best placed to understand the needs of local people and communities, and how to meet them.

The Care Act 2014 placed a new duty on councils to offer a meaningful choice of services, so that people have a range of high quality, appropriate care options to choose from and that they get the services that best meet their needs.

The Care Act 2014 guidance is clear that local authorities should ensure that where they arrange services, the assessed needs of a person with eligible care and support needs is translated into effective, appropriate commissioned services that are adequately resourced and meet the wellbeing principle of the Act. This includes people with neurological conditions.

■ NHS Trusts: Subsidiary Companies

Karin Smyth:

[\[8346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Minister for Health on 9 January, Official Report, Column 727, what guidance his Department plans to issue to hospital trusts in receipt of funding for new buildings under the health infrastructure plan on the creation of subsidiary companies that will take ownership of those new buildings.

Karin Smyth:

[\[8348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Minister for Health of 9 January 2020, Official Report, Column 728, if he will publish the names of the NHS trusts that have been able to employ staff on more generous terms and conditions as a consequence of forming a wholly-owned subsidiary.

Karin Smyth:

[\[8349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Health on 9 January 2020, Official Report, column 728, which NHS trusts have employed more staff from the local employment market since forming a wholly-owned subsidiary.

Karin Smyth:

[\[8350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Health on 9 January 2020, official report, column 728,

which NHS Trusts have provided more efficient services as a consequence of forming a wholly-owned subsidiary.

Karin Smyth:

[\[8351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish a revised Addendum to the transactions guidance for NHS trusts forming or changing a subsidiary.

Karin Smyth:

[\[8352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what organisations he will consult prior to the publication of a revised Addendum to the transactions guidance for NHS trusts forming or changing a subsidiary.

Edward Argar:

The Department wrote out to the finance directors of all National Health Service providers in September 2017 reminding them of their responsibilities around tax and advising that tax avoidance arrangements should not be entered into under any circumstances. We would expect all NHS providers to follow this guidance when considering any new arrangements or different ways of working.

The Department does not hold information on the decisions taken locally by NHS trusts and wholly owned subsidiary companies regarding the reward packages they offer to staff.

Staff who are compulsorily transferred from an NHS organisation to a wholly owned subsidiary retain their employment terms and conditions, in accordance with Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006, and access to the NHS Pension Scheme, in accordance with HM Treasury's New Fair Deal guidance.

NHS trusts with wholly owned subsidiaries can choose to offer terms and conditional of service that are different to those on national terms for new starters. Trusts can also apply for access to the NHS Pension Scheme for new starters.

As part of its subsidiary review process, NHS England and NHS Improvement considers businesses cases from hospital trusts at the planning stage only and does not hold any data with regard to the future performance of wholly owned subsidiaries.

NHS England and NHS Improvement carried out a formal consultation on the Addendum to the transactions guidance published in November 2018. It does not intend to carry out a further consultation as part of the planned update to the Addendum to the transactions guidance, but has been engaging with the Department, NHS Providers, provider trusts, trade unions and internal subject matter experts as part of the planned update. NHS England and NHS Improvement plans to publish an updated Addendum to the transactions guidance in spring 2020.

■ NHS: Vacancies**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[9133]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of vacancies in the NHS.

Edward Argar:

NHS Improvement collects vacancy data for three staff groups; doctors, nurses and 'other staff'. These vacancy statistics are published for England and at the regional level of North, Midlands and East, London and South.

NHS Digital published the latest NHS Improvement vacancy data which can be found in the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-vacancies-survey/february-2015---september-2019-provisional-experimental-statistics>

As at September 2019, the latest available data there were 105,518 vacancies in National Health Service trusts and clinical commissioning groups. A majority of vacancies are covered by bank and agency staff.

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

■ Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures: Regulation**Fiona Bruce:****[8994]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to regulate the provision of (a) the injection of Botox and cosmetic dermal fillers and (b) other non-surgical treatments by people operating in the aesthetic medical sector.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government is 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 is consulting 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**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[9135]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to reduce obesity rates among year six children.

Jo Churchill:

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.

Unicef's 'State of the World's Children' report, published in October 2019, recognised that "the United Kingdom is paving the way to ensure that all children grow up in a healthy food environment". The Unicef report is available at the following link:

www.unicef.org/media/61356/file/SOWC-2019.pdf

■ Plastic Surgery**Mr Kevan Jones:****[8164]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the term cosmetic surgeon is defined in law.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The term 'surgeon' is a protected title under the Medical Act 1983. Only doctors registered with the General Medical Council (GMC), which regulates doctors in the United Kingdom, may perform surgical procedures. In England any hospital or clinic offering cosmetic surgery that involves instruments or equipment being inserted into the body must be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Any provider of surgery must meet the CQC's fundamental standards of safety and quality – or risk enforcement action.

The Royal College of Surgeons also operates a voluntary cosmetic surgery certification scheme which provides recognition to surgeons who have the appropriate training, qualifications and experience to perform cosmetic surgery. In June 2019 the GMC Council approved the development of the certificate into a GMC-regulated credential in cosmetic surgery.

■ Plastic Surgery: Costs**Mr Kevan Jones:****[8165]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 5 September 2019 to Question 284642 on Plastic Surgery: Costs, whether the Government plans to collect data on the cost to the NHS in the last three years of correcting or ameliorating the effects of unregulated aesthetic surgery procedures.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department is working with stakeholders and NHSX to consider options to assess the incidence and cost to the National Health Service of patients seeking medical care following complications of cosmetic procedures.

■ Pregnancy: Smoking

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[9134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help reduce smoking rates among pregnant women.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to reducing the prevalence of women smoking during pregnancy to 6% or less by 2022. The NHS Long Term Plan makes provision for smoking cessation support to all pregnant women and their families in secondary care, and this includes a new smoke-free pregnancy pathway with focused sessions and treatments. In addition, Public Health England continues to work collaboratively with NHS England on the Maternity Transformation Programme to reduce the number of pregnant women who smoke.

■ Preventive Medicine

Jim Shannon: [\[8285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to take forward proposals in the Green Paper on prevention.

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.

■ Psychiatric Patients

Barbara Keeley: [\[9627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral contribution, of 28 January 2020, Official Report, column 665, if he will publish the number of people held under the Transforming Care programme by clinical commissioning group in (a) March 2015, (b) March 2017 and (c) December 2019.

Barbara Keeley: [\[9628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral contribution, of 28 January 2020, Official Report, Column 665, if he will publish the number of people held under the Transforming Care programme in units rated as (a) Requires Improvement and (b) Inadequate by clinical commissioning group in (i) March 2015, (ii) March 2017 and (iii) December 2019.

Caroline Dineneage:

The attached tables outline the number of people with a learning disability or autism who were inpatients in March 2015, March 2017 and December 2019 according to the Assuring Transformation dataset.

The data regarding the number of people held under the Transforming Care programme in units rated as requires improvement or inadequate by clinical commissioning group is not currently available in the format requested.

Attachments:

1. pq9627 628 tables [pq9627 628 tables.xlsx]

■ Queen's Hospital Romford: Accident and Emergency Departments**Andrew Rosindell:****[7595]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time was in A&E at Queen's Hospital, Romford in 2019.

Edward Argar:

This information is not held in the format requested.

■ Radiotherapy: Medical Equipment**Ms Angela Eagle:****[8960]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate NHS England has made of the number of linear accelerator radiotherapy machines in use at NHS hospitals in (a) the North West, (b) Merseyside and (c) Wirral that have exceeded the recommended 10 year lifespan.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England produced a stocktake, which included age, of linear accelerators in full clinical use in 2016 as part of the Equipment Modernisation programme, which enabled 80 machines to be replaced or upgraded. Further work to update this stocktake is underway to reflect both the impact of the Equipment Modernisation programme and any local changes.

■ Social Services**Afzal Khan:****[8468]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 9 January 2020 to Question 80 on Social Services, what the timetable is for cross-party talks on social care reform.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Government will seek to build cross-party consensus and will outline next steps shortly.

Putting social care on a sustainable footing, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, is one of the biggest challenges we face as a society. As the Prime Minister has said, the Government will bring forward a plan for social care this year.

■ Social Services: Expenditure**Debbie Abrahams:****[9027]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding from the public purse was allocated by local authorities for adult social care in each year since 2009-10, by local authority.

Caroline Dinenage:

The amount of expenditure for adult social care by local authority is not available in the format requested. Funding for adult social care comes from several sources, including central Government grants, council tax revenue, business rates, and National Health Service funding through the Better Care Fund. Local authorities are responsible for setting their own overall budgets for adult social care.

The attached table from the NHS Digital Activity and Finance Report 2018-19 provides an overview of expenditure in England on adult social care including a number of sources of funding. However, these are not available at the local authority level.

A local authority level timeseries breakdown is not compiled centrally. However, raw data for local authority level breakdowns of expenditure is available on the NHS Digital website in their social care collections. Not all sources of funding are available at local authority level, such as the Better Care Fund. Links to the reports are below and include 2009-10 to 2018-19.

2016/17 to 2018/19

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-social-care-activity-and-finance-report>

Before 2016/17

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/personal-social-services-expenditure-and-unit-costs>

Attachments:

1. pq9027 table [PQ 9027 Attached Table formatted.docx]

■ Speech and Language Therapy: Children**Steve McCabe:****[9586]**

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

Caroline Dinenage:

The information is not held in the format requested.

■ Speech and Language Therapy: Expenditure**Steve McCabe:****[9587]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the (a) Children's Commissioner's Office and (b) other partners on options for producing expenditure data on speech, language and communication services.

Caroline Dineneage:

Departmental officials met with the Children's Commissioner's office in October 2019 to discuss the issues raised in her report 'We need to talk: access to speech and language therapy'. The Department will continue to work with the Children's Commissioner's Office, the National Health Service and other stakeholders ahead of the intention to repeat a data gathering exercise within the next two years.

■ Transplant Surgery: Ethnic Groups**Dan Jarvis:**[\[9031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that waiting times for BAME patients for organ transplants are reduced after the introduction of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019.

Caroline Dineneage:

NHS Blood and Transplant works closely with black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities to encourage more people to register to donate and to address barriers to organ donation. Since its launch in April 2019, NHS Blood and Transplant's communication campaign has developed specific materials to resonate with diverse audiences and communities, including translating materials into different languages and taking into account different faith and beliefs. In addition, the BAME Community Investment Scheme provides small grants to community-led organisations to raise awareness of the law change and the Government has so far provided £200,000 of funding for 26 projects.

■ Vaccination**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[9110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the adequacy of the UK's vaccine (a) development and (b) production to respond effectively to emerging diseases.

Jo Churchill:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) continually reviews the United Kingdom's current vaccination programmes and carries out horizon-scanning of vaccines in development over the next 3-5 years. This ensures JCVI advice to the Government includes the best available vaccines to deal with current and emerging diseases.

To deal with rapidly emerging threats, the Department's Global Health Security Programme also provides core funding to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). For instance, regarding the current spread of novel coronavirus, CEPI are supporting three programmes developing vaccines against this disease.

Furthermore, our first dedicated Vaccines Manufacturing Innovation Centre was announced in December 2018 and has been awarded £66 million by the UK Government. It will act as a focal point for the establishment of a modern Vaccines Manufacturing Industry in the UK and is expected to be operational in 2022.

HOME OFFICE**■ Action Fraud****Catherine West:****[3275]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of Action Fraud; what the average investigation timeframe is for a case being handled by Action Fraud; what proportion of cases handled by Action Fraud are passed on to the Police for further investigation; and whether she plans to allocate additional funding to Action Fraud.

Brandon Lewis:

The government remains committed to improving the law enforcement response to fraud. In the year ending March 2019, Action Fraud recorded on average almost 26,000 calls and online reports of fraud and cyber-crimes every month (ONS, 2019). Official figures show reports of cyber crime and fraud have trebled since Action Fraud was set up in 2013.

The Government is undertaking a Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) review led by Sir Craig Mackey QPM. The review will cover the powers, capabilities, governance and effectiveness of funding across the policing and law enforcement landscape, and will make recommendations that should be delivered through the 2020 spending review to strengthen the SOC system.

All Action Fraud reports are passed on to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) within the City of London Police, who are responsible for reviewing and allocating intelligence packages to forces for investigation. Neither Action Fraud or NFIB have any investigatory powers and do not conduct fraud investigations themselves. The role of investigation and enforcement remains with local police forces

The Home Office does not hold information on the proportion of cases handled by Action Fraud that are disseminated to police forces for investigation. However, data on the number of fraud cases disseminated by the NFIB to police forces and also the number of fraud outcomes recorded by the police are published annually as part of the Home Office's 'Crime Outcomes in England and Wales' publication. The latest data can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817769/crime-outcomes-hosb1219.pdf.

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse**Fiona Bruce:****[9646]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps she has taken to tackle alcoholism.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is committed to tackling health harms from alcohol and supporting the most vulnerable at risk from alcohol misuse.

We continue to support and deliver programmes at both national and local levels to address harms including establishing Alcohol Care Teams (ACTS) in the hospitals with the highest rates of alcohol related admissions, a commitment in the Prevention Green paper to encourage drinking habits towards low and no alcohol products, a £6 million investment to support children with alcohol dependent parents and the provision of capital Grant funding awarded to 23 projects enabling local authorities to invest in better meeting the needs of people that require alcohol treatment, including parents who are dependent drinkers.

The Licensing Act 2003 also continues to provide a robust framework for regulating the sale and supply of alcohol.

■ Antisemitism: Yorkshire and the Humber

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [8294]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many incidents of antisemitic hate crime took place in (a) South Yorkshire and (b) Yorkshire and the Humber in 2019.

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [8295]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many incidents of Islamophobic hate crime took place in (a) South Yorkshire and (b) Yorkshire and the Humber in 2019.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects data on the number of religious hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales by perceived religion of the victim.

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

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

The number of religious hate crimes for 2018/19, where the perceived religion of the victim was Jewish or Muslim, recorded by South Yorkshire Police and for the Yorkshire and Humber region are shown in the table.

■ Cannabis

Mr David Lammy:

[7109]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people received (a) police cautions and (b) criminal records for offences relating to cannabis in each of the last 10 years.

Kit Malthouse:

The Ministry of Justice publishes official statistics on the number of police cautions and court convictions issued for possession of cannabis offences. Data for the period 2008 and 2018 can be found here:

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

■ **Criminal Records: EU Nationals**

Louise Haigh: [5475]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timeframe is for solving the software glitch which led to 75,000 convictions failing to be passed on to EU member states.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office is working to support ACRO to resolve the issue and find a technical fix which will be implemented as soon as possible.

■ **Deportation: Jamaica**

Stuart C McDonald: [9709]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to ascertain the safety of individuals involuntarily removed on the charter flight to Jamaica, which took place on 6 February 2019, after they reached Jamaica.

Stuart C McDonald: [9710]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the safety of people involuntarily removed to Jamaica on charter flights.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not routinely monitor the treatment of people once they are removed from the UK. Returns are only undertaken when the Home Office and courts deem it is safe to do so.

All asylum and human rights claims from Jamaican nationals are carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations. Each individual assessment is made against the background of the latest available country of origin information and any relevant caselaw.

Country of origin information is based on evidence taken from a wide range of reliable sources, including reputable media outlets; local, national and international organisations, including human rights organisations; and information from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Where a person is found not to need protection, they usually have a right of appeal to the courts. The Home Office only seeks to return those whose asylum claim has been unsuccessful. By definition, they do not need protection and not at risk on return.

The UK is under no obligation to monitor the treatment of unsuccessful asylum seekers who have returned to their country of origin. They are, by definition, foreign nationals who have been found as a matter of law not to need the UK's protection, and who have no legal basis of stay in the UK. It would be inappropriate for the UK to assume any ongoing responsibility for them when they return to their own country.

Should the Home Office receive any specific allegations that a returnee has experienced ill-treatment on return to their country of origin, these would be investigated in partnership with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

■ European Arrest Warrants

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[3249]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many requests the UK made to EU member states under the European Arrest Warrant in the last 12 months.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office does not hold the information requested.

However, statistics on the European Arrest Warrant are published by the National Crime Agency each year. These figures include a breakdown of the numbers of requests made by the UK.

These figures are published at:

<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/european-arrest-warrant-statistics>

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[3250]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many requests under the European Arrest Warrant the UK received from EU member states in the last 12 months.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office does not hold the information requested.

However, statistics on the European Arrest Warrant are published by the National Crime Agency each year. These figures include a breakdown of the numbers of requests received from EU Member States.

These figures are published at:

<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/european-arrest-warrant-statistics>

■ Former Prime Ministers: Transport

Deidre Brock:

[6153]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost was of providing transport for former prime ministers in each of the last five years.

Brandon Lewis:

It is our long-standing policy not to provide detailed information on the security arrangements for protected individuals. To do so could compromise the integrity of those arrangements and affect the security of the individuals concerned

■ Hate Crime: LGBT People**Stephen Doughty:** [4344]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many instances of (a) serious violence, (b) hate crime, (c) malicious communications were recorded targeting the LGBT+ community in each of the last 24 months.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold all the information on the sexual orientation of victims of the offences listed in the question.

However, the Home Office does hold information of number of offences perceived to be hate crimes by sexual orientation for selected offence groups which are routinely released as official statistics with the most recently published found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/839172/hate-crime-1819-hosb2419.pdf

■ Home Office: Equal Pay**Chris Stephens:** [2626]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 22 October 2019 to Question 1729 on Home Office: Equal Pay, if she will place in the Library copies of the Policy Equality Statements for the pay rounds in (a) 2016, (b) 2017, (c) 2018 and (d) 2019.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office will place in the Library copies of the Policy Equality Statements (PES) for the pay rounds 2016, 2017 and 2018. The PES for pay round 2019 will be undertaken shortly.

■ Home Office: Pay**Chris Stephens:** [2625]

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

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office provides trade union representatives with a maximum facility time allocation which covers the time they request to undertake trade union duties, union learning representative duties and health and safety duties. This is in line with the legislative obligation, set out in the Trade Union Act (2016), that information relating to facility time for relevant union officials be published, with facility time defined by that Act as including time off taken by a relevant union official that is permitted by the official's employer, including under "regulations made under section 2(4) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974". The Home Office provisions do also include scope

for some approved health and safety duties, for example involving joint working with the employer, to not be set against the facility time allocation.

■ Home Office: Trade Unions

Chris Stephens:

[\[2627\]](#)

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

Victoria Atkins:

GDPR has not affected the rights of unions in the Home Office in relation to bargaining information provided under section 181 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, since personal information relating to individuals (which is protected by GDPR) is already excluded from the requirements under section 182 of the same Act.

■ Immigration Controls: France

Helen Hayes:

[\[9736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much UK Government funding has been provided for border security in northern France in each year since 2015.

Brandon Lewis:

The UK and France maintain a longstanding relationship on tackling illegal migration at the shared border; since 2015 the UK has committed several funding packages to supporting this work and to upholding security standards.

In 2015, both countries signed a Joint Declaration which committed £10 million towards security reviews of the juxtaposed controls and to moving migrants into reception centres across France. This was followed by payments in 2016 (£17 million) and 2017 (£36 million) to further strengthen the border and maintain the operation of the juxtaposed controls.

In January 2018 both countries signed the Sandhurst Treaty. As part of this package, the UK made a further commitment of €50 million (£45.5m), of which a significant portion was dedicated to improving border security infrastructure across Northern France.

Finally, in January 2019 the UK and France signed the Joint Action Plan on Combatting Illegal Migration Involving Small Boats. Under paragraph 11 of this plan, the UK committed €3.6m (approximately £3.25m) to tackling the issue and thereby further strengthening preventive security measures at the French coast. This funding has been spent over the course of the 19/20 Financial Year.

■ Immigration: EEA Nationals**Sir Alan Campbell:****[6022]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of EEA national children have applied for (a) pre-settled and (b) settled status as of December 2019.

Brandon Lewis:

Published information on EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) applications by the applicant's age and concluded applications by age and outcome type (including grants of settled and pre-settled status) to 30 September 2019, can be found in the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics', statistics tables, tables EUSS_02 and EUSS_04 respectively, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-september-2019>.

EUSS quarterly statistics to 31 December 2019, including updated tables by age group, are planned for publication on 6 February 2020.

The published figures refer specifically to applications made to the EUSS and cannot be directly compared with Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates of the resident population of EU/EEA nationals in the UK. The published EUSS figures include non-EEA family members, Irish nationals, and eligible EEA citizens not resident in the UK, none of whom are usually included in ONS estimates of the resident EU population. Furthermore, the population estimates do not take account of people's migration intentions and will include people who have come to the UK for a range of purposes, including some who have no intention to settle in the UK.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals**Stephen Doughty:****[1447]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department spent on advertising the EU Settlement Scheme by (a) channel and (b) region or nation in each of the last six months.

Brandon Lewis:

In October 2019, the Home Office launched [a new £1m wave of UK wide marketing campaign](#) to encourage EU citizens to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. Outdoor advertising, social media and search went live across the whole of the UK including in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

<http://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-launches-1-million-advertising-campaign-for-eu-settlement-scheme>.

All channels were paused in November due to the pre-election period. Activity will restart in February 2020.

A regional breakdown will be available at the conclusion of this wave of activity.

Jamie Stone:

[4774]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take in relation to EU citizens who have not been granted the right to remain in the UK by the end of June 2021.

Brandon Lewis:

We have been clear that, where someone has reasonable grounds for missing the deadline, they will be given a further opportunity to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. Meanwhile, we will continue to provide support to those who require assistance in applying to the scheme.

The EU Settlement Scheme is a free and easy process for EU citizens resident in the UK to obtain the immigration status they need to continue living in this country. There have already been over 2.8 million applications, with plenty of time until the deadline on 30 June 2021.

Shabana Mahmood:

[7607]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps she is taking to ensure that EU citizens living in the UK apply for settled status by 31 January 2020.

Brandon Lewis:

The EU Settlement scheme is free, there is plenty of support for applicants and EU citizens have until the end of June 2021 to apply.

The latest published information shows that more than 2.7 million (2,756,100) EU Settlement Scheme applications had been received up to 31 December 2019. The latest figures can be found in the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme monthly statistics' available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics-december-2019>

In order to ensure that resident EEA nationals and their family members understand how and by when to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme, the Home Office has put in place a comprehensive communications and engagement plan, using all available channels to reach our audiences – such as marketing, presentations, email updates, toolkits and webinars.

The Home Office has delivered a £4 million marketing campaign to encourage resident EEA nationals to apply and further campaign activity is planned. Alongside this campaign activity, we have also undertaken extensive engagement and outreach with stakeholder groups, including employers, local authorities and community organisations. No-one will be left behind, which is why we are working in partnership with representatives of vulnerable groups and other experts to make sure everyone knows what they need to do and has the right level of support.

Jo Stevens:

[9715]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking support EU nationals living in the UK that (a) lack mental capacity and (b) do not have a power of attorney with their application for settled status.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office has put in place a comprehensive vulnerability strategy to ensure that the EU Settlement Scheme is accessible to all.

A user group of external stakeholders who represent the needs of vulnerable individuals has been established to work with the Home Office to assess and understand relevant risks and issues and to ensure the right support arrangements are in place for applicants, including those who lack mental capacity.

The Home Office is working closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department for Health and Social Care, NHS England as well as with stakeholders including the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, the Care Provider Alliance and Local Government Association. This collaboration ensures local authorities and partners can work together to identify and support those without mental capacity to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Applicants who need additional support, or those who are assisting them, can call the Settlement Resolution Centre or contact one of the 57 voluntary and community grant funded organisations who can provide immigration advice to individual applicants.

Jo Stevens:**[9716]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the application process for settled status for EU nationals living in the UK that are homeless.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office has put in place measures to ensure that the EU Settlement Scheme is accessible to all vulnerable applicants, including those who are homeless.

A user group of external stakeholders who represent the needs of potentially vulnerable individuals, including those who are homeless, has been established to work with the Home Office to ensure the right support arrangements are in place.

There is provision in policy to allow for a wide range of evidence to be provided by applicants in order to prove their residence, including confirmation from a charity or support group. There is also provision for applicants to apply without the standard evidence of identity and nationality where they can not provide it due to compelling practical or compassionate reasons or circumstances beyond their control, which may include being homeless or destitute.

The Home Office has introduced a range of support including up to £9 million grant funding for 57 voluntary and community organisations, to ensure those that require the most support to apply to the scheme can access it. This includes funding allocated to charities that support the homeless.

■ Immigration: Fraud

Anneliese Dodds: [\[9137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many cases are on hold pending the drafting of the case-handling instructions since the conclusion of Immigration4U trial on 26 November 2018.

Anneliese Dodds: [\[9138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timeframe is for the conclusion of case-handling instructions following the conclusion of the Immigration4U trial.

Anneliese Dodds: [\[9139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take to ensure that immigration cases that are on hold as a result of the prosecution and conviction of Immigration4U immigration advisors are promptly concluded.

Kevin Foster:

There are currently 85 cases on hold pending the drafting of case handling instructions since the conclusion of the Immigration4U trial. Although the main trial ended on 26 November 2018, the second trial did not conclude until 2 June 2019. The Home Office is in the final stages of writing the guidance.

The Home Office will ensure decision makers will be provided with the requisite training and support to ensure that these applications are promptly concluded. The applications will be prioritised in date order.

■ Investigatory Powers Commissioner: Annual Reports

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [\[4316\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Home Department, whether the 2018 Annual Report of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner has been submitted to the Prime Minister; and what the timetable is for its publication.

Brandon Lewis:

The 2018 Annual Report of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner will be formally submitted to the Prime Minister shortly, and is expected to be published and laid before Parliament.

■ Knives: Crime

Sarah Owen: [\[9792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle the rising incidents of knife crime.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is determined to turn the tide on knife crime. That is why we are recruiting 20,000 more police officers over the next three years and increasing sentences for violent criminals. We have made it easier for the police to use

enhanced stop and search powers and we will introduce a new court order to make it easier for the police to stop and search those who have been convicted of knife crime.

We will ensure that anyone charged with knife possession will appear before magistrates within days and we are also making £10 million available to the police to equip more officers with tasers. We have also announced a targeted £20 million to tackle county lines drug gangs, we have launched the £200 million Youth Endowment Fund to support children and young people most vulnerable from becoming involved in crime and violence, including reoffending, and put in place a landmark review into drug misuse. The first grant round of the Youth Endowment Fund took place in 2019-20. 23 successful projects located across England and Wales will share £17.1m over 2 years.

Funding for policing is increasing by £1 billion this year, including council tax, and we have recently announced the amount of funding available to the policing system in 2020 to 2021 will increase by more than £1.1 billion. In addition, through the Serious Violence Fund we are providing £63.4 million this year to the 18 police forces worst affected by serious violence to pay for surge operational activity, such as increased patrols, which sees an additional £20.8 million for the Metropolitan Police.

The Serious Violence Fund is also providing £1.6 million to help improve the quality of data on serious violence, particularly knife crime, to support planning and operations. In addition, we are providing £35 million through the Fund to support Violence Reduction Units, which form a key component of our action to build capacity in local areas to tackle serious violence, and we have announced a further £35 million for Violence Reduction Units for 2020/21.

The Government will also change the law so that police, councils and health authorities are legally required to work together to prevent and tackle serious violence, and the Offensive Weapons Act introduces new laws which to give police extra powers to seize dangerous weapons and ensure knives are less likely to make their way onto the streets in the first place.

■ Musicians: EEA Nationals

Stephen Timms: [\[2410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the status will be of visiting musicians from EEA countries on 1 January 2021 in the event that the UK does not reach an agreement with the EU by the end of 2020.

Stephen Timms: [\[2411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the immigration arrangements for visiting musicians from EEA countries after the UK leaves the EU; and if she will make a statement.

Brandon Lewis:

The Government has announced that, at the end of the transition period, EEA and Swiss nationals will be able to continue to travel to the UK for holidays or short-term trips, without needing a visa.

The Home Office is currently engaging with other government departments, including DCMS, to ensure that the future immigration system continues to support the thriving cultural sector in the UK.

■ National Crime Agency: Finance**Alex Norris:****[2611]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has plans to allocate additional resources to the National Crime Agency to tackle (a) county lines gangs, (b) modern slavery and (c) people trafficking; and what progress she has made on the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, published in September 2018.

Victoria Atkins:

The National Crime Agency (NCA) leads the UK's whole-system response to serious and organised crime, including modern slavery and human trafficking. The NCA sets out its resourcing and operational priorities for the year ahead in its Annual Plan. The national response to county lines is jointly led by the NCA and police through the National County Lines Coordination Centre launched in September 2018. On 17 January, the Home Secretary announced uplifted £20m targeted investment to tackle county lines activity in 2020/21, which will include support for an expanded Centre. The Chancellor and Home Secretary announced a formal review of SOC as part of the 2019 Spending Round. The Review is assessing the SOC system, its available powers, structure and its funding arrangements.

On 9 July 2019, the Government published its [response](#) to the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act on and accepted majority of the recommendations. On the same day, the Home Office launched a public consultation to gather views on proposals to strengthen the transparency in supply chains provisions at section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act. The Home Office is currently analysing the responses received. In addition, the UK Government has now appointed an HMG Modern Slavery and Migration envoy, an Ambassador based in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, who will represent HMG interests on modern slavery.

■ Police National Computer: Disclosure of Information**Stephen Doughty:****[4346]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timeframe is for her Department to rectify the software error that has resulted in conviction alerts for foreign nationals on the police national computer not being shared with their home countries.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office is working to support ACRO to resolve the issue and find a technical fix which will be implemented as soon as possible.

■ Police: Equality

Dawn Butler: [8190]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to increase diversity in the police force.

Dawn Butler: [8191]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of whether institutional racism exists in the police force.

Dawn Butler: [8192]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the police introducing affirmative action to tackle failures on diversity in police forces.

Kit Malthouse:

Trust and legitimacy are vital elements of British policing by consent. The police have worked hard to improve equality and diversity in policing. The workforce is more representative than ever before and there is a Code of Ethics in place. While recognising these significant improvements, we are not complacent.

Our drive to recruit 20,000 officers over three years gives us a significant opportunity to attract a wide range of people into a career in policing and support the police to become even more representative of the communities they serve. Work is already underway by forces and key partners to ensure they can attract a more representative workforce as part of the uplift in officer numbers.

The College of Policing has delivered a major programme of work to support forces in their efforts to address under-representation in the recruitment, retention and progression of officers, including those from BAME backgrounds, and has published advice on the lawful use of positive action to address under-representation in policing. This work includes measures to improve diversity at the most senior levels in policing, where there is the greatest disparity.

The Government has also supported innovative schemes such as Police Now which are making the police workforce more diverse than ever before; showing that we can attract the brightest and best into policing, whilst introducing new perspectives into policing from some of the country's most challenging neighbourhoods.

The National Police Chiefs' Council published its first Diversity, Equality and Inclusion strategy in October 2018. This is complemented by a workforce representation toolkit which includes practical actions forces can take to increase the recruitment, retention and progression of officers from under-represented groups in policing. This is a welcome demonstration of policing taking the lead in implementing action to increase diversity and In addition, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire &

Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has agreed to focus more closely on how forces are performing on diversity and inclusion as part of its next round of Integrated Peel Assessments this year.

The Equality Act 2010 includes positive action provisions to enable employers to address identified under-representation of protected groups in the workplace, as is the case for BAME officers in the police. There is much greater scope than has been the case so far for the police to use the positive action provisions of equalities legislation to improve BAME recruitment and progression.

Some forces (such as the Metropolitan Police Service, Bedfordshire Police, West Midlands Police and Greater Manchester Police) have made significant improvements in the rate of BAME joiners through successful positive action measures. Other forces should be learning the lessons of the successful measures being used in these forces.

■ **Police: Pensions**

Louise Haigh:

[8370]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the additional cost is to police forces of changes resulting from the quadrennial valuations of the public service pension schemes in 2020-21.

Kit Malthouse:

The additional cost to policing in 2020-2021 of employer contributions to police pensions is currently estimated to be £316 million.

The proposed 2020/21 police funding settlement increases funding by £1.1 billion to £15.2 billion. This includes general Government grant funding, pensions grant, council tax precept and investment in national priorities. This substantial increase in funding will enable forces to meet their genuine financial pressures as well as to invest in the recruitment of additional officers.

Decisions on funding for future years are a matter for the next Spending Review.

■ **Police: Recruitment**

Louise Haigh:

[5471]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what quarterly targets her Department has set for each police force in order to recruit 6,000 additional officers by the end of 2020-21.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office has confirmed the recruitment targets for every force in England and Wales in the first year of the uplift. 6,000 additional officers will be recruited in England and Wales by March 2021 as part of the unprecedented drive to increase their ranks by 20,000 over the next three years. These numbers have been allocated to each force and can be found here:

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

■ Racial Discrimination

Sarah Owen: [9149]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many reported incidents of racism have occurred in each year since 2010.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects and publishes statistics annually on the number of hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales, broken down by monitored strand (including race) in the 'Hate Crime, England and Wales' statistical bulletin.

The latest available data, covering the period 2011/12 (when the data collection began) to 2018/19, can be found in 'Table 2' of the data tables, available here:

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

■ Refugees: Young People

Alex Norris: [7253]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits for the integration of refugees of changing the definition of family to include children aged over 18 in the refugee family reunion rules.

Victoria Atkins:

Family connections are an important enabler of integration. However, amending Government policy on family reunion without careful thought could significantly increase the numbers who could qualify to come here, not just from conflict regions but any country from which someone is granted protection. This risks reducing our capacity to assist the most vulnerable refugees.

Our policy makes clear that 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.

■ Schengen Agreement: ICT

Nick Thomas-Symonds: [3251]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on how many occasions did EU member states access information about UK citizens using the Second generation Schengen Information System in the last 12 months.

Brandon Lewis:

The annual statistics on the use of the Schengen Information System (SIS II) is published annually by EU-LISA (EU Agency ensuring 24/7 operational management of EU large-scale IT systems) and is usually made available in February each year.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:[\[3252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times UK law enforcement authorities accessed information on citizens of other EU member states using the Second generation Schengen Information System in the last 12 months.

Brandon Lewis:

The annual statistics on the use of the Schengen Information System (SIS II) is published annually by EU-LISA (EU Agency ensuring 24/7 operational management of EU large-scale IT systems) and is usually made available in February each year.

■ Slavery**Alex Norris:**[\[2613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what is the (a) maximum and (b) minimum penalty is for non-compliance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Alex Norris:[\[2614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to extend the requirements under section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to the public sector in line with the recommendation of the Independent review of that Act, published in September 2018.

Victoria Atkins:

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 made the UK the first country in the world to require large commercial organisations to report on how they prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains. The Act's transparency provisions were introduced to help civil society, consumers and investors hold businesses to account, galvanise action to address modern slavery risks and help create a level playing field for responsible businesses.

Under the current provisions, if a commercial organisation does not comply with the duty to provide a modern slavery statement, the Home Secretary can apply for a court injunction which mandates compliance.

Following the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act, the Government launched a public consultation on proposals to strengthen the transparency chains legislation, including extending transparency reporting to the public sector, mandating the areas which statements must cover and introducing a civil penalty scheme for non-compliance.

The Home Office is currently analysing responses to this consultation and will respond in due course.

■ UK Border Force: Recruitment

Hywel Williams: [\[8969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Border Force staff her Department is planning to recruit in the financial year 2020-21 in preparation for the UK leaving the EU.

Brandon Lewis:

Border Force have already delivered a largescale recruitment and training exercise, which has seen an uplift of permanent staff, bringing the number of full-time equivalent Border Force staff to over 8,700 from c7,700 in March 2018. This includes a multi-disciplinary Readiness Task Force (RTF) of c.300 officers, which is available to deploy across the UK at short notice to deal with emerging issues and peaks in demand.

Resource and staffing requirements are continually reviewed, and we deploy resources flexibly as and when they are required. Border Force will continue to build a pipeline of resource to flexibly respond to future requirements.

■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Mrs Natalie Elphicke: [\[1424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many suspected migrants have been detected entering the UK by small boat across the Dover straits in each year since 2015.

Brandon Lewis:

Small boats crossing the English Channel were an infrequent phenomenon prior to 2018. Incidences involving small boats, as a result, were not recorded with this level of granularity.

However, information was provided to the Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) on 5th March 2019 which gave the number of migrants detected entering the UK by small boats from January 2018 to February 2019 as 428.

On 22 July 2019 the then Home Secretary Sajid Javid provided an additional figure to Home Affairs Select Committee that up to 21 July 2019, 725 migrants had crossed the English Channel.

We anticipate publication of 2019/2020 data in the coming months.

Afzal Khan: [\[1927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons there was a sixfold increase in the number of migrants crossing the English Channel in 2019 compared to the previous year.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office works closely with partners in the UK and overseas to strike people smuggling at source – identifying and dismantling the organised crime groups that facilitate illegal immigration.

Last year, more than 35,000 attempts to cross the Channel illegally were prevented at our juxtaposed controls in northern France and Belgium.

It is an established principle that those seeking asylum should claim it in the first safe country they reach and, since January 2019, we have returned over 125 migrants who entered the UK illegally via small boat to Europe.

■ **Vandalism: Religious Buildings**

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to recent acts of vandalism on a Synagogue and a Mosque in London, if she will introduce further measures to protect religious buildings and congregations.

Victoria Atkins:

Attacks on places of worship are completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Through the Government's Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme, and the Jewish Communities Protective Security Grant, the Government provides reassurance and appropriate measures to better protect all faith groups from hate crime. Funding for the Places of Worship scheme has been increased in the current year to £1.6 million (double the amount awarded last year), and the Chancellor has announced a further increase to £3.2 million for 2020/21.

Tackling faith related hate crime is a key commitment in the Cross-Government Hate Crime Action Plan, and we regularly engage with faith representatives and organisations.

In addition, we have committed £5 million over three years for the provision of security training to places of worship, and we have committed to consult with communities on what more can and should be done to protect faith communities.

We have also asked the Law Commission to conduct a wide-ranging review into hate crime, looking at the breadth of hate crime legislation, and whether new strands should be introduced.

■ **Visas: Iraq**

Robert Halfon:

[\[6653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people from the Kurdistan Region in Iraq were refused an entry visa to the UK in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Robert Halfon:

[\[6654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to improve the visa application system in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not publish the information requested. Available information on entry clearance visa applications can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2019>.

Our commercial partner, TLS Contact, operates the User Pay application point in Erbil which operates five days a week (Sundays to Thursdays) between 0900 and 1600 and offers 42 appointment slots each day. The operating frequency of our outsourced operations are dictated by demand.

The UK keeps its visa system under regular review. Decisions on changes are always taken in the round and reflect key facets of the bilateral relationship with the country concerned. These will vary globally, but often include security, compliance, returns, reciprocal arrangements for UK nationals, logistics and prosperity.

■ **Windrush Generation: Compensation**

Sarah Owen: [9790]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many victims of the Windrush scandal have received compensation to date.

Sarah Owen: [9791]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much compensation has been awarded to the victims of the Windrush scandal to date.

Kevin Foster:

We will publish information on the total number of claims submitted, claims paid and the overall amount paid out by the scheme shortly, as noted in the Home Secretary's report to the [Home Affairs Select Committee](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/update-to-the-hasc-on-windrush-22-october-2019>.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ **Buildings: Fire Prevention**

Vicky Foxcroft: [8384]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance his Department has issued to mortgage lenders in respect of fire safety recommendations from the Independent Expert Advisory Panel on building safety.

Esther McVey:

The Independent Expert Advisory Panel provides advice for building owners. On 20 January the Department published consolidated and updated advice to Building Owners on fire safety, including fire doors.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-advice-for-building->

[owners-including-fire-doors](#) . The Department has not issued guidance on building safety specifically to mortgage lenders.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[8385]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of recommendations on fire safety from the Independent Expert Advisory Panel on building safety on Right to Buy applicants.

Esther McVey:

The Independent Expert Advisory Panel has provided clear advice for building owners on taking action regarding any fire safety concerns with their building's external walls. Potential buyers, including Right to Buy applicants, should consult the building owner for information about the fire safety of a building's external walls.

Steve Reed:

[9036]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2019 to Question 6702, on Buildings: Fires, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of these publications on fire safety in the construction sector.

Esther McVey:

This work is regularly commissioned by the Department as part of an ongoing contract relating to the investigation of fire incidents. Through this contract BRE Global investigate issues that may have implications for Building Regulations and the guidance that supports Building Regulations, such as the Approved Documents. An important element of this contract is to ensure that findings from fire investigations are made available to the fire community and other stakeholders. We always review the need for these type of publications before commissioning them.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Vicky Foxcroft:

[8381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an assessment of the effectiveness of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors' external wall fire review process in identifying combustible materials in buildings; and if he will make a statement.

Esther McVey:

The EWS1 form was developed by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and published on 16 December. It is designed to enable industry to manage valuations of properties in multi-occupancy buildings 18 metres and over. Given the short time in operation it is premature to make any assessment of its usage however Government is engaged with industry on this.

Steve Reed:

[9039]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2020, to Question 5437, on Buildings: Insulation, how many

groups of affected leaseholders (a) he and (b) his Ministers have met to discuss the remediation of unsafe cladding on their blocks.

Esther McVey:

Ministers and officials from the Department have had regular correspondence and engagement with numerous leaseholders living in buildings with unsafe cladding, and we are aware of the concerns they have. The Government's priority is to ensure that unsafe ACM cladding is removed and replaced swiftly so that residents may be and feel safe in their homes. My Department have engaged with a named contact for each building to ensure progress is being made.

■ **High Rise Flats: Insulation**

Hilary Benn:

[8958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has received advice from the National Fire Chiefs Council on the relative fire safety risk of high-rise buildings clad in (a) ACM, (b) HPL and (c) other types of external cladding.

Esther McVey:

The Department has published advice to building owners on external wall systems (including cladding) from the Independent Expert Advisory Panel, of which the Chair of National Fire Chiefs Council is a member. The advice can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-advice-for-building-owners-including-fire-doors.

■ **Homelessness**

Layla Moran:

[9771]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will repeal the Vagrancy Act 1824 before 2021.

Luke Hall:

The Government is clear that no-one should be criminalised simply for having nowhere to live and we are still committed to reviewing the Vagrancy Act.

This is a complex issue and we know from our engagement with stakeholders that there are diverging views about the necessity and relevance of the Vagrancy Act. That is why the Government believes that a review, rather than wholesale immediate repeal, is the right course of action and we are looking at all options including retention, repeal, replacement or amendment.

At the heart of the review will be the experiences and perceptions of a range of relevant stakeholders including the homelessness sector, the police, local authorities, business representatives, community groups and individuals with lived experience.

It is unacceptable that anyone should be sleeping on the streets in modern Britain. This does not reflect the country we should be and is why we have committed to ending rough sleeping by the end of this parliament.

■ Homelessness: Children

Sarah Owen:

[9145]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support he is providing to (a) homeless children and (b) children in temporary accommodation.

Luke Hall:

The use of temporary accommodation means people are getting help and ensures no family is without a roof over their head.

Any accommodation secured by a local authority for a homeless household must meet the standards in 'The homelessness code of guidance,' which sets out in detail what the authority must take into account when considering the accommodation's suitability for a homeless household.

The code of guidance can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities>.

Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation is a priority for this Government and we have allocated over £1.2 billion over the last three years to tackle all forms of homelessness. This includes:

- Implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act;
- Providing a Flexible Homelessness Support Grant for homelessness services; and
- The Private Rented Sector Access Fund that will enable thousands of households to be supported into long-term private rented accommodation; and
- Launching Capital Letters, a project which works with London Boroughs through a centralised procurement process to improve the supply of homes, reduce the cost to local authorities of procuring these homes and achieve better outcomes of homeless families.

Sarah Owen:

[9146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many homeless children there are in (a) Bedfordshire and (b) Luton; and what funding is available to tackle homelessness for families with children.

Luke Hall:

Figures as of 30 June 2019 for numbers of children in temporary accommodation by local authority are available in table TA1 in the Detailed Local Authority tables: April to June 2019, link below. In December 2019 we announced the allocation of £263 million in funding for 2020/21 to local authorities designed to support them to deliver services to tackle homelessness. The purpose of this funding is to give local authorities more control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who at risk of homelessness, including providing them with temporary accommodation. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

■ Homelessness: Finance

Sarah Owen:

[9147]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to allocate additional funding to areas with the highest levels of homelessness.

Luke Hall:

In 2020/2021 we are providing £437 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. This marks a £69 million increase in funding from the previous year. Funding given to local authorities seeks to address local homelessness and rough sleeping variation and is allocated according to demand in their area.

Examples of targeting funding in accordance with levels of homelessness for 2020/21 is evidenced through our three main funding streams:

- The Homelessness Reduction Grant. The £63 million fund provides an uplift on previous years' new burdens funding to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act and will enable local authorities to do more to prevent and relieve homelessness in their areas. The new burdens funding is allocated to take account of variation in relevant homelessness costs around the country.
- The Rough Sleeping initiative: £112 million fund for 2020/21 (an increase of £26 million on 2019/20 funding) which combines the Rough Sleeping Initiative and the Rapid Rehousing Pathway into a single, streamlined funding stream is designed to support the establishment or enhancement of coordinated local services for rough sleepers, or those at risk of sleeping rough. The fund was open to all local authorities who supplied bids to address local homelessness and rough sleeping levels.
- The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant of £200 million which seeks to help local authorities plan and respond to their local homelessness pressures. The formula for Flexible Homelessness Support Grant is designed to distribute the funding according to levels of homelessness, family size and housing costs in the area.

We are also funding:

- Housing First pilots to provide rough sleepers with the most complex needs stable and affordable accommodation with intensive wrap-around support to help them recover from complex issues and sustain their tenancies.
- London Collaboration Project which aims to become the main source of private rented sector accommodation to prevent and relieve homelessness in London.
- A number of smaller pilots/funding streams such as the Offender Accommodation Pilot and Rough Sleeping Social Impact Bond.

John Healey:

[9589]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the title is of the programme of £437 million in funding that will be allocated to tackling homelessness; and how much will be allocated to each part of that programme.

Luke Hall:

In 2020/2021 we are providing £437 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. This marks a £69 million increase in funding from the previous year.

Funding for 2020/21 is comprised of three main funding streams:

- The Homelessness Reduction Grant: The £63 million fund provides funding to local authorities to support them implement the Homelessness Reduction Act and will enable local authorities to do more to prevent and relieve homelessness in their areas.
- The Rough Sleeping Initiative: The £112 million fund is designed to support the establishment or enhancement of coordinated local services for rough sleepers, or those at risk of sleeping rough which would help prevent homelessness.
- The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant: The £200 million fund will help local authorities plan and respond to their local homelessness pressures.

We are also funding:

- Housing First pilots to provide rough sleepers with the most complex needs stable and affordable accommodation with intensive wrap-around support to help them recover from complex issues and sustain their tenancies.
- London Collaboration Project which aims to become the main source of private rented sector accommodation to prevent and relieve homelessness in London.
- A number of smaller pilots/funding streams such as the Offender Accommodation Pilot and Rough Sleeping Social Impact Bond.

■ **Housing: Construction**

Helen Hayes:

[9739]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress his Department has made on ensuring that new properties are built with accessibility standards to reflect the needs of (a) older and (b) disabled people.

Esther McVey:

The Department published planning guidance on housing for older and disabled people last summer and Government will consult shortly on options of how to raise standards of accessibility in new homes.

Housing: Disability

Helen Hayes: [\[9740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to improve the provision of wheelchair accessible housing.

Esther McVey:

Government will consult shortly on options of how to raise standards of accessibility in new homes. The consultation will ask for views on the standard M4(3), set out in Approved Document M to the Building Regulations, for new wheelchair user housing and the levels of M4(3) provision in local plan policies.

Mayors: Finance

Liam Byrne: [\[7119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding has been devolved to each (a) metro mayor and (b) metro mayor region in each of the last four financial years.

Jake Berry:

[Holding answer 29 January 2020]: The core funds devolved to the Metro Mayors and their combined authorities are listed in the attached table. Further details can be found in the Annual Reports of Devolution, laid before Parliament each year by the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and in the devolution deal agreements.

Attachments:

1. PQ 7119 attachment - core funds [PQ UIN 7119 The core funds devolved to the Metro Mayors and their combined authorities table.docx]

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Apprentices

Mike Kane: [\[9045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what proportion of staff employed by his Department are apprentices.

Jake Berry:

As of 31 December 2019, there were 53 apprentices in The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This is 2.3 per cent of the total staff employed within the Department.

Parking: Codes of Practice

Neil Parish: [\[9659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress has been made towards establishing a code of practice under the Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019.

Luke Hall:

On 3 November 2019, we announced we were contracting with the British Standards Institution (BSI) to develop the Code of Practice as British Standard, to ensure the new regulation will be robust and of the highest quality.

The government's choice of BSI delivers on our promise to listen to industry and consumers and involve them in the design of the new regulation.

Work with BSI commenced in December 2019, and they are now convening a group of key stakeholders to write the Code. The stakeholder group will comprise representatives from the parking industry, consumer groups, standards bodies and, recognising the key role that parking plays in supporting our high streets, the retail sector.

A full public consultation will take place within six months, to give the parking industry, the public, and other interested parties the opportunity to have a say.

We have committed to developing the final Code this year.

■ Playgrounds: Disability**Carla Lockhart:**[\[6146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to support local authorities to provide accessible play parks for people with disabilities.

Jake Berry:

In October 2019 my Department announced a £1.35 million grant scheme for local communities, working with local authorities to apply for funding to create new pocket parks or renovate existing parks. Identifying a local need such as accessibility or supporting those with disability issues is one of the key criteria against which applications will be assessed. The application window closed on 31 December and a total of 375 applications were received with 3 per cent specifically addressing issues of disability. Results will be announced in early February.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Africa: Overseas Aid****Hywel Williams:**[\[9598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what oversight his Department plans to provide for partnerships between the City of London and African partners with reference to UK aid.

Andrew Stephenson:

As one of the world's largest capital markets and a global centre of financial expertise, the UK has a central role to play in channelling private capital to developing economies. We want to ensure that the City of London is a leading

financial centre for the developing world, supporting economic growth, job creation and an exit from aid.

That is why at the UK-Africa Investment Summit we announced almost £400 million in UK aid support for initiatives that will improve financial systems and regulations of 45 developing nations in Africa, make it easier for global investors to invest in Africa at scale, and help African governments and companies to raise international capital in their own currencies.

■ **Angola: Droughts**

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[9717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what discussions his Department has had with the Angolan Government on the recent droughts in that country.

Andrew Stephenson:

Southern Africa is facing an urgent humanitarian crisis due to drought and other climate-related and economic factors. In southern Angola over 500,000 people are experiencing crisis-level food insecurity. The UK is pushing to put this crisis on the international agenda. On a recent visit to the country, I met with Angola's Minister for Environment and discussed the drought and more broadly the humanitarian situation facing the wider region.

DFID is supporting the regional response through our contributions to multilaterals, notably the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The CERF has so far allocated just over £4.8 million to the response in Angola. Through Regional Vulnerability Analysis and Assessment (RVAA) programme, led by the Southern Africa Development Community, the UK is supporting assessments to inform humanitarian and resilience responses, including in Angola.

■ **Developing Countries: Children**

Dan Jarvis:

[\[9034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment he has made of the role of (a) Gavi and (b) Nutrition for Growth in helping to end preventable child deaths by 2030.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK's ambition to end the preventable deaths of mothers, new-borns and children by 2030 is supported by our commitment to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and addressing malnutrition through Nutrition for Growth.

The UK's £1.44 billion of support to Gavi between 2016-2020 has saved 1.4 million lives from vaccine-preventable diseases in 68 of the world's poorest countries. The UK hosted pledging conference for Gavi on 3-4th June 2020, is an opportunity for the UK to use its global leadership to secure Gavi the funds it needs to reach 300 million more children and save at least 7 million lives between 2021 and 2025.

The 2020 Nutrition for Growth Summit will be an important opportunity to secure new commitments to nutrition, to set the world on a better track to achieve the Global Goals and to help achieve our ambition of ending preventable deaths by 2030.

■ **Developing Countries: Climate Change**

Helen Hayes:

[9092]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of her Departments's role in promoting climate dependency; and what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for International Trade on UK Export Finance's investments in carbon intensive industries abroad.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Prime Minister announced in July that the UK Government will align all future UK Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) spending with the Paris Agreement. This means ensuring we assess all programming for the impact they have on climate change, and that any investment support for fossil fuels affecting emissions is in line with the Paris Agreement temperature goals and transition plans. We are working closely with departments across Government to agree how this commitment will be implemented.

As the UK's export credit agency, UKEF is responsive to the evolving export financing needs of UK companies as they transition away from fossil fuels. The Prime Minister announced at the Africa Investment Summit that the government will provide no new direct ODA, investment, export credit or trade support for coal power and thermal coal mining overseas.

■ **Developing Countries: Overseas Companies**

Andrew Rosindell:

[8186]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what weighting is given to bids made by British companies tendering for contracts from his Department for projects overseas.

Andrew Stephenson:

DFID complies with the UK's Public Contracts Regulations (2015), which impose a legal obligation on contracting authorities to treat all suppliers equally and not to discriminate by, amongst other things, favouring national suppliers.

Opening up DFID contracts to competition from across the world means that UK Aid can draw on a bigger pool of expertise and experience and negotiate better value for money for the British taxpayer. UK-registered firms win on average around 85% of DFID contracts by value.

■ Developing Countries: Sustainable Development

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[8185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent discussions he has had with the Minister for the Cabinet Office on a cross-governmental approach to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department for International Development and the Cabinet Office work closely to support cross-government implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Cabinet Office supports domestic coordination on the SDGs and ensures that progress on the Government's priorities, including the SDGs, is maximised.

There is ongoing engagement with Cabinet Office Ministers on a wide range of issues.

■ Developing Countries: Water

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[8189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, in which countries her Department has awarded contracts for the drilling of water wells; and how many of those contracts were awarded in each country.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

DFID delivers a range of water supply activities, through partners in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia all of which use proven approaches that deliver affordable and sustainable services.

In countries such as Mozambique and Nepal, these approaches include, but are not limited to, drilling for water wells.

Aid reporting codes do not allow for a detailed breakdown of the specific techniques for delivering water supply.

■ Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

Dan Jarvis:

[\[9033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent discussions he has held with his international counterparts to ensure that universal health coverage is central to the replenishment period and strategy review with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Achieving universal health coverage is a UK priority and an overarching goal for DFID's contribution to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. The UK's £1.44 billion of support to Gavi between 2016-2020 has saved 1.4 million lives from vaccine-preventable diseases in 68 of the world's poorest countries.

The UK is proud to be hosting the Gavi Replenishment Conference on 3-4th June, to secure Gavi the funds it needs to immunise 300 million more children and save at

least 7 million lives between 2021 and 2025. The UK's commitment to Gavi is central to our work to end preventable deaths of mothers, new-borns and children by 2030.

In its next strategic period, Gavi is committed to reaching every child with essential vaccines, to improve intra-country equity and coverage. Immunisation is often a child's first point of contact with their health service. By extending routine immunisation to reach the underserved, particularly zero-dose children who have never been vaccinated, Gavi is building a foundation for universal health coverage.

■ **Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance: Finance**

Dan Jarvis:

[9032]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if he will make it his policy to allocate funding from the public purse to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance's work is critical to the delivery of the UK's objective to end preventable deaths, having helped save 13 million lives since its inception in 2000.

The UK remains deeply committed to supporting this vital work, including through the provision of significant funding to Gavi and hosting the upcoming replenishment event in June 2020.

■ **Syria: Humanitarian Situation**

Afzal Khan:

[9780]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment he has made of the effect of the humanitarian situation in Syria on (a) neighbouring countries, and (b) Lebanon.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Syria conflict has had a significant impact on neighbouring countries, including Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq. The UN estimates that since the conflict began in 2011, over 5.5 million Syrians have fled and taken refuge abroad.

The UK recognises the strain this has placed on these countries, and has committed £2.81 billion since the start of the Syria crisis to support both Syria and its neighbours. Our aid provides life-saving support to millions of Syrians, but also supports refugees to remain in countries in the region, whilst supporting these host communities to accommodate them.

Whilst we hope that Syrian refugees will, ultimately, be able to return home, we agree with the UN judgement that conditions in Syria do not currently allow this. It is essential that international law is respected, and that any refugee returns are safe, dignified and voluntary.

■ UK-Africa Investment Summit

Zarah Sultana: [\[9153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether representatives of (a) Shell International, (b) BP and (c) other oil and gas companies were invited to the UK-Africa Investment Summit.

Andrew Stephenson:

More than 1,700 people attended the UK-Africa Investment Summit on 20 January 2020. This included Leaders and Ministers from African Governments, CEOs and senior representatives from African and British businesses, institutional investors, international organisations, financial institutions and civil society. Businesses from a wide range of sectors were invited, including the oil and gas sector.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Department for International Trade: Apprentices**

Mike Kane: [\[9702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what proportion of staff employed by her Department are apprentices.

Conor Burns:

As of 31st January, there are 75 apprentices employed by the Department for International Trade (DIT) and UK Export Finance (UKEF). This is 3.2% of the total staff employed by DIT and UKEF.

■ Export Credit Guarantees: Iran

Tulip Siddiq: [\[9096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether UK Export Finance or its agents have had discussions with the Iranian authorities on the outstanding sovereign debt, including those debts relating to IMS Ltd export credit guarantees, owed by the UK to Iran in the last 12 months.

Conor Burns:

UK Export Finance has not had any discussions with the Iranian authorities in respect of sovereign debt in the last 12 months.

■ Fossil Fuels: Export Credit Guarantees

Helen Hayes: [\[9090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate her Department has made of the amount of Government investment provided to (a) oil and (b) gas projects through UK Export Finance in each year since 2015.

Conor Burns:

UK Export Finance (UKEF) provides support through loans, guarantees and insurance.

UKEF has provided the following amount of support for oil and gas projects since 2015.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Oil	£556m	£355m	£17m	£1.36bn
Gas	£25m	£375m	£277m	£635m
Oil & Gas*	£16m	£287m	£0.7m	0

*This category represents projects which comprise a combination of oil and gas and the figures are in addition to the separate oil and gas numbers.

The main reason for the increase in figures for 2018/19 is due to support for Petrobras' oil exploration and the construction of two power stations in Iraq.

Helen Hayes:[\[9091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of UK Export Finance investments on trends in the level of global fossil fuel emissions; and whether her Department has plans to limit UK Export Finance investments to environmentally sustainable projects.

Conor Burns:

The value of UK Export Finance's (UKEF) support for fossil fuel-related exports represents around 0.2% of global investment in the sector.

As the world transitions to a low carbon economy, there remains a need for a mix of energy sources and technologies. UK companies have an important role to play in the transition away from fossil fuels and UKEF will remain responsive to the evolving export financing needs of UK companies during this transition. The Government continues to develop strategies to combat climate change and UKEF is an important part of this Government-wide effort.

■ **UK-Africa Investment Summit****Jim Shannon:**[\[8291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the outcomes of the UK-Africa Investment Summit 2020 were in respect to the consolidation of trading partnerships.

Graham Stuart:

The UK-Africa Investment Summit brought together businesses, governments and international institutions to showcase and promote the breadth and quality of investment opportunities across Africa.

At the Summit, we announced the Trade Connect programme, which will help developing countries, benefit from the UK's post-Brexit preferential trade arrangements by providing £20 million over 5 years to assist businesses to export more.

Through the Taxation (Cross-border Trade) Act 2018, the UK intends to put in place a trade preference scheme that maintains the preferential market access we currently offer to 35 African developing countries trading under the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP).

We are also rolling over the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and Association Agreements (AAs). We have signed trade agreements with eleven African countries and are seeking to conclude agreements with a further seven countries.

We will work with African partners to deepen and widen our existing trade agreements and make the UK's preference scheme work better for them.

JUSTICE

■ Coroners: Legal Aid Scheme

Afzal Khan:

[7671]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has plans to bring forward legislative proposals for non means tested legal aid funding for families in relation to state-related deaths.

Wendy Morton:

The Government's Review of Legal Aid for Inquests was published on 7 February 2019.

Legal aid for representation at inquests is not generally available, because the inquest process is an inquisitorial, fact finding process. Having considered the impact on bereaved families of additional representatives, and the impact of a possible expansion on the wider legal aid scheme, we decided not to introduce non-means tested legal aid for inquests.

However, the Government realises that there may be some instances where legal representation is required at inquests and funding may be available through the Exceptional Case Funding scheme (ECF). The decision to provide funding under ECF is taken by the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) who make their decisions independently from political and Government influence. The Legal Support Action Plan published following the post implementation review of LASPO, includes a commitment to simplify the ECF scheme to ensure it works as effectively as possible for those who need it.

The evidence that we gathered as part of our Review for Legal Aid for Inquests will also be considered as part of the Legal Aid Means Test Review, which is looking at the thresholds for legal aid entitlement. This Review is assessing the effectiveness

with which the means test protects access to justice, particularly for those who are vulnerable, and is currently scheduled for publication in Summer 2020.

■ Courts: Repairs and Maintenance

Andy Slaughter:

[8979]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the cost to the public purse was of the maintenance of the court estate in each year since 2015.

Chris Philp:

HM Courts and Tribunals Service expenditure on maintenance each year since 2016 is provided below:

£000s	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 ₂
Maintenance and repairs ₁	71,274	80,478	90,890	48,600

¹ Maintenance and repairs expenditure includes fixed maintenance, variable and planned works.

² 2019-20 figures are actual costs until December 2019 and are not full year maintenance costs for 2019-20.

Information relating to annual maintenance costs for 2015/16 financial year is not available on our current systems and we are unable to extract on a similar basis. Therefore we have not provided here due to the disproportionate cost of doing so.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service seeks to make sure that the court and tribunal estate is in the best possible condition to provide appropriate court and hearing room facilities.

■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service

Andy Slaughter:

[8977]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much HM Courts and Tribunals Service has received for the sale of the court estate.

Chris Philp:

Since the start of the reform programme in 2015/16, approximately £130m has been raised from the sales of surplus buildings. We are reinvesting every penny into modernising the justice system to provide swifter and easier access to justice for all.

The closure of any court is not taken lightly – it only happens following full public consultation and when communities have reasonable access to alternative courts. Courts that have closed were either underused, dilapidated or too close to one another.

Andy Slaughter:

[8978]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much money from the public purse HM Courts & Tribunals Service spent on (a) the common platform and (b) other digital projects in relation to the Crown Court in the financial year 2018-19.

Chris Philp:

I can confirm that Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service spend on (a) the development of the Common Platform was £37.3m (this includes both Crown and Magistrates systems) and (b) £5.2m on other digital projects in relation to the Crown Court in the financial year 2018-19. This excludes ongoing support charges.

The Common Platform is intended to deliver a unified way of digital working for HMCTS and CPS staff and the wider participants in the criminal case management process. Through digital working, we will improve the experience for court users and those working within the criminal justice system, whilst reducing cost and maintaining transparency.

■ **HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Standards**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[9634]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether HM Courts and Tribunals Service conducts comparative assessments of the time from cases first being listed in the Crown court to first hearing dates for each court centre.

Chris Philp:

At court house level, HM Courts and Tribunals Service conducts comparative assessments of the time from offence to charge, charge to first listing, first listing to completion. These are published national statistics and the latest data can be found within the Criminal Court Case Timeliness Tool at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2019>

■ **Legal Aid Scheme: Asylum**

Bambos Charalambous:

[9116]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many requests for legal assistance were made by asylum applicants during the first instance procedure in 2019.

Bambos Charalambous:

[9117]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many requests were made for legal assistance by asylum applicants during the first instance procedure by (a) regular, (b) accelerated, (c) border and (d) Dublin procedures in 2019.

Bambos Charalambous:

[9118]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many requests for legal assistance by asylum applicants during the first instance procedure were granted in 2019.

Wendy Morton:

Information on the total number requests for this type of legal assistance is not held. Such assistance when provided by legal aid is funded under the 'Legal Help' scheme, where the decision on whether or not to grant funding is taken by the legal aid provider, and hence refusals are not reported to the Legal Aid Agency.

The data on the number of grants of this type of legal aid in 2019 is not available, as this is not broken down to the level of detail required until a claim for payment is submitted.

Ministry of Justice: Apprentices**Angela Rayner:**[\[9049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of staff employed by his Department are apprentices.

Chris Philp:

As of 10 January 2020, there were 1126 apprentices in the Ministry of Justice. This is approximately 1.5% of the total staff employed within the department. There are also 955 applications pending from staff wanting to complete an apprenticeship programme. MoJ will continue to deliver both high volume and niche apprenticeship programmes throughout the coming financial year in line with organisational demand.

Trials: Administrative Delays**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[9635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average length of time was between a three day trial being listed and the first hearing of that case at (a) Hove Crown Court and (b) Southwark Court Court in each of the last three years.

Chris Philp:

This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Yasmin Qureshi:[\[9636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases had to be rescheduled on the day of a hearing in that case as a result of insufficient availability of court space in each month of 2019.

Yasmin Qureshi:[\[9637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases had to be rescheduled on the day of a hearing in that case due to insufficient availability of court space in each month of 2018.

Yasmin Qureshi:[\[9638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases had to be rescheduled on the day of a hearing in that case due to insufficient availability of court space in each month of 2017.

Chris Philp:

This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ **Wills**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[9607]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Law Commission plans to publish a response to its consultation on wills, which closed on 10 November 2017.

Chris Philp:

The Law Commission remains committed to completing its work on wills, the timetable for which remains under review. The next step will be publication of its final report rather than a response to the consultation undertaken in 2017.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ **Leader of the House: Apprentices**

Tulip Siddiq:

[9744]

To ask the Leader of the House, what proportion of staff employed by her Department are apprentices.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons is staffed by Cabinet Office employees. Data regarding the number of apprentices in each Government department is published yearly as part of routine Government transparency. The most recent report was published in September 2019, covering the 2018-2019 financial year, and can be found on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-apprenticeship-data-2018-to-2019>

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Northern Ireland Office: Apprentices**

Tulip Siddiq:

[9743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what proportion of the staff employed by her Department are apprentices.

Julian Smith:

The Government expects to train up hundreds of thousands more highly skilled apprentices during this Parliament and government departments all have a role to play in this.

Data regarding the number of apprentices in each Government Department is published yearly as part of routine Government transparency. The most recent report

was published in September, covering the 2018-2019 financial year, and can be found on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-apprenticeship-data-2018-to-2019>

■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[8944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent estimate he has made of the annual cost to the public purse of the Historical Investigations Unit from its establishment until the conclusion of that unit's work; and if he will make a statement.

Julian Smith:

The Government is committed to reforming the current legacy system in Northern Ireland in a way that provides reconciliation for victims and certainty for veterans. The Government will be working to develop proposals in the coming weeks.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Intelligence and Security Committee: Public Appointments

Daisy Cooper:

[9144]

To ask the Prime Minister, on what date he plans to nominate members of the Intelligence and Security Committee for approval by Parliament.

Boris Johnson:

The Committee is being formed in the normal way and in line with practice in previous Parliaments.

SCOTLAND

■ Scotland Office: Apprentices

Tulip Siddiq:

[9746]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what proportion of staff employed by his Department are apprentices.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland does not employ staff directly. All staff that join - including apprentices - do so on an assignment, loan or secondment from other Government bodies. Due to the number involved, an estimate of apprentices working at the Department cannot be provided to protect the privacy and identity of those concerned.

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland remains committed to apprenticeships as part of a modern employment route into the Civil Service and across the wider economy.

TRANSPORT■ **A619: A6192****Mr Toby Perkins:**[\[8217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a Chesterfield to Staveley A619-A6192 link road.

George Freeman:

This scheme proposal has been submitted for consideration under the Major Road Network and Large Local Majors programme.

My officials are working with the Local Authority to support them as they develop the scheme. A decision regarding the scheme's further development will be made in due course.

■ **Blue Badge Scheme****Alberto Costa:**[\[8344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the 2019 guidance on hidden disabilities and blue badge parking.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Department for Transport will review the impact of the expanded criteria on the Blue Badge scheme 12 months after implementation.

In the first 3 months of the new criteria being in operation, 12,299 people in England who had applied using the non-visible condition criteria were awarded a badge.

■ **Boats: River Thames****Sarah Olney:**[\[9756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his policy is on (a) low carbon river transport in London and (b) the role of older passenger boats on the River Thames in transporting tourists to attractions at (a) Kew, (b) Richmond and (c) Hampton Court.

George Freeman:

Transport in London is devolved and the responsibility of the Mayor and Transport for London. It is for the Mayor to take decisions relating to River Thames operations and transport services.

■ **Bus Services: North West****Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[9592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to increase bus use in (a) the North West, (b) Merseyside, (c) Wirral and (d) Wallasey constituency.

George Freeman:

The bus market outside London is deregulated and decisions regarding service provision are primarily a commercial matter for bus operators. The Bus Services Act 2017 provides the tools local authorities need to improve local bus services and increase passenger numbers.

The Government wants to see a long term, sustained improvement in bus services. On 30 September last year, the Government announced that it will develop a national bus strategy for England, to underpin that ambition. Further details on this will be announced in due course. Alongside the commitment to a national strategy, we announced a package of measures worth £220 million, to transform bus services across the country. Those measures include creating 'Superbus' networks with higher frequencies and lower fares, trialling demand-responsive transport solutions in rural and suburban areas, and creating an all-electric bus town or city. We will shortly seek expressions of interest for those funds. We will also provide an extra £30 million in 2020/21 for local authorities, including the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, to improve current supported bus services and to restore lost bus services where most needed.

The Government also continues to support bus services through the Bus Service Operator's Grant (BSOG). £250m of BSOG payments are made to bus operators and local authorities. Bus operators and community transport organisations in the North West were paid a total of £28,029,122 BSOG in 2018-19 to help meet some of their fuel costs in running local bus services. Local authorities within the North West received a total of £7,896,387 in BSOG during 2018-19 to support subsidised local bus services. In addition to this a further £13,150,811 was devolved to Great Manchester Combined Authority for services running within the Greater Manchester area.

BSOG spend figures are published on Gov.uk and can be found via this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bus-services-grants-and-funding>. There are no specific figures for Wallasey, which is within the [Metropolitan Borough of Wirral](#).

■ Cycling**Mike Kane:****[9041]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimates were made in his Department's 2018 road traffic forecasts for the volumes of cycle traffic in England and Wales in (a) 2015, (b) 2020 and (c) in future years modelled, under each of the scenarios modelled; and what the corresponding proportion changes in miles cycled were compared with 2015 levels.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The focus of Road Traffic Forecasts 2018 (RTF18) was to forecast road traffic by motorised modes and does not include forecasts of cycling traffic.

To produce the forecasts, the National Transport Model (NTM) does takes account of the travel choice between walking, cycling, rail and bus as well as car. However, the NTM is not designed to forecast cycling levels, which will be influenced by a range of factors not included in the model.

The Department has a dedicated model which has been designed to account for the specific factors which influence cycling. We plan to include a forecast of cycling demand using this model in an upcoming call for engagement document to be published as part of the Department's work to develop a transport decarbonisation plan.

In relation to the proportion changes in miles cycled, the Department produces estimates of actual volumes of cycle traffic in Great Britain, the latest estimates for which are 2018. These show that cycling levels on roads in England and Wales increased 3.3% between 2015 and 2018. 2019 estimates are due to be published in June 2020 [Source: 2018 Road Traffic Estimates, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-traffic-statistics/>].

■ **Cycling and Walking: Infrastructure**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[9609]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on implementing local cycling and walking infrastructure plans.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department has provided support to 46 local authorities to help them develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans (LCWIPs). To date, the Department has received 36 draft plans. Authorities are at different stages of development, with many plans requiring local consultation and cabinet clearances. The Department is also working with the sector to develop further support for authorities on scheme development. Decisions on future funding for cycling and walking infrastructure will be a matter for the Budget and forthcoming Spending Review.

■ **Department for Transport: Apprentices**

Mike Kane:

[9703]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion staff employed by his Department are apprentices.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As of 31st December 2019, there were 219 apprentices in the Department for Transport, this is across our central department and four executive agencies (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Vehicle Certification Agency). This is 1.43% of the total staff employed within the department.

This figure is made up of apprentices who have been externally recruited, and existing employees currently undertaking an apprenticeship. This figure does not

include apprentices employed or recently recruited by the Department waiting to start their apprenticeship.

■ Driving Tests

Grahame Morris:

[9653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency will conduct a customer insight survey to ask if candidates would like to take their driving test from their home address.

George Freeman:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) regularly conducts research and insight with its customers about the services it provides. That helps ensure the best possible service is provided, now and in the future. The DVSA will continue to seek customer feedback, including with driving test candidates, about how its services might be best delivered in the future.

■ Driving Tests: Fees and Charges

Grahame Morris:

[9652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to increase driving test fees this year.

George Freeman:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency keeps the fees it charges for all of its statutory services, including driving tests, under continuous review. Any proposals to change any fees would be subject to HM Treasury approval and public consultation.

■ East Coast Rail Franchise

Luke Pollard:

[9783]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has requested that retired East Coast High Speed Trains are not scrapped by the franchise owners; and whether he has concluded discussions with franchisees on the redeployment of East Coast High Speed trains to the CrossCountry franchise.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The future deployment of High Speed Trains (HSTs) previously leased by London North Eastern Railway (LNER) is a matter for the rolling stock owners to determine. This may include agreeing a lease with another party.

■ Electric Vehicles: Sales

Giles Watling:

[7674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to introduce incentives to increase the number of electric vehicles purchased by consumers.

George Freeman:

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

As the Manifesto set out, and the Secretary of State spoke about in October, the Government intends to consult on the earliest date that we can phase out the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars, while minimising the impact on drivers and businesses.

Government is supporting further growth of the public network through the launch of the Chargepoint Infrastructure Investment Fund. £200 million of Government funding is matched-funded by private investment to install chargepoints. The first investment round, worth a total of £70 million, will ensure the delivery of a further 3,000 rapid charging devices by 2024, more than doubling the current number of rapid charging devices

Our Manifesto last year stated that, along with the private sector, the Government will invest £1 billion in charging infrastructure – making sure that everyone is within 30 miles of a rapid charging station for electric vehicles.

Large Goods Vehicles: Testing**Grahame Morris:**[\[9654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to privatise heavy goods vehicle testing stations.

George Freeman:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency puts its customers at the heart of all the services it provides. The agency keeps its operational estate under continuous review to ensure it delivers the highest level of service most efficiently.

Lifeboats: Finance**Jonathan Edwards:**[\[8987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2020 to Question 1713 on the Rescue Boat Grant Fund, when his Department plans to make an announcement on the future of the Rescue Boat Grant Fund.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Rescue Boat Grant Fund has already provided £4.7 million of grants from 2014 - 2018.

We are continuing to review the impact of the Rescue Boat Grant Fund and expect to make a decision on its future shortly.

■ M11: Accidents**Robert Halfon:**[\[8241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many fatal accidents have occurred on the Junction 7a section of the M11 in each year since 2010.

George Freeman:

The number of reported fatal road accidents between junctions 7 and 8 of the M11 from 2010 to 2018 can be found in the table below.

REPORTED FATAL ROAD ACCIDENTS BETWEEN JUNCTIONS 7 AND 8 OF THE M11¹, 2010 - 2018

Year	Fatal accidents
2010	0
2011	0
2012	0
2013	0
2014	1
2015	0
2016	0
2017	0
2018	0

Source: DfT, STATS19

1. Not including slip roads or roundabouts

■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance**Cat Smith:**[\[7638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of uninsured drivers.

George Freeman:

The Department remains committed to ensuring that motorists comply with motoring laws, including the compulsory requirement for motor insurance.

Since 2011 Continuous Insurance Enforcement (CIE) has enabled action to be taken against those who keep a vehicle without insurance. The scheme allows uninsured vehicles to be identified from a comparison of the DVLA's vehicle register and the Motor Insurance Database managed by the Motor Insurers' Bureau.

Keepers of vehicles which appear uninsured are sent advisory letters. Those who take no action receive a fixed penalty of £100, followed by enforcement action including prosecution if they remain uninsured.

CIE supplements police powers to seize an uninsured vehicle being used on the road. Police records show that 133,000 vehicles were seized in 2018. Since 2010, Motor Insurers' Bureau figures show uninsured vehicles had fallen from 1.4 million in 2010 to 1 million by 2016.

Motor Vehicles: Testing**Paul Girvan:**[\[9763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the DVLA officially recognises Temporary Exemption Certificates issued by the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland.

George Freeman:

Motorists who have been issued with a Temporary Exemption Certificate by the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland will be able to license their vehicles as normal.

Network Rail: Debts**Andy McDonald:**[\[8313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the sustainability of the level of Network Rail debt.

Andy McDonald:[\[8314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the level of debt sustained by Network Rail.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As reported in their Annual Report and Accounts 2019, Network Rail has £54.1bn of historical debt, of which £30.6bn has resulted from loan funding from the Department for Transport over the course of Railway Control Period 5.

Network Rail have been restricted from raising any further commercial debt since they were reclassified to the public sector in 2014. Since the start of Railway Control Period 6 in April 2019, the Department has chosen to provide funding for operating,

maintaining and enhancing the railway through grant rather than loan funding. The level of debt is therefore not expected to rise from its current level.

■ **Passenger Ships: Impact Assessments**

Sarah Olney:

[9753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the updated impact assessment from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency on its proposals for older passenger boats.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The updated Impact Assessment will be published when the Regulations are laid in Parliament in accordance with the Government's usual legislative process.

The earlier version of the Impact Assessment was published for comment during public consultation between 6 November 2018 and 29 January 2019.

■ **Railways: Expenditure**

Hywel Williams:

[8970]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the new spending on re-opening historic railway lines announced on 28 January will (a) apply to England only and (b) result in Barnett consequential for the devolved administrations.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The UK Government's announcement is for £500m funding to support railway re-openings within the territory for which it has funding responsibility (England and Wales). It has no immediate implications for DfT's spending limits, and therefore none for funding of railways in the Devolved Administrations.

The final profile and exact funding arrangements for the reversing Beeching Fund have not yet been agreed. Final decisions on funding will be made at the Spending Review in the usual way.

Her Majesty's Government is clear about the benefit of pan UK connections. For example, elsewhere in the United Kingdom the Government is supporting the examination of the potential reopening of the Edinburgh- Carlisle 'Waverley line' as part of the Borders Growth Deal.

■ **Railways: Ipswich**

Tom Hunt:

[8477]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps Network Rail plans to take to ensure that disruption is minimised for rail users in Ipswich when closing sections of track from Ipswich to London at weekends to carry out engineering works.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Carrying out engineering works is essential to ensure that the railway remains safe for passengers and staff and changes can be made to improve passenger journeys, for example to prevent infrastructure failures that cause delays. Network Rail seeks to

minimise the impact this essential work has on passengers. This includes planning to carry out as much work as possible overnight or while trains are running during the day. Where possible, Network Rail also divert trains from their usual routes (as was done through Colchester area while track improvements to improve reliability were delivered over Christmas and New Year). Where sections of the railway have to be closed, Network Rail seeks to maximise the amount of work undertaken to reduce the number of times an area needs to be closed. They also work with operators to provide passengers with advance notice so they know how their journeys will be affected and what alternatives are available.

■ Railways: North West

Ms Angela Eagle:

[9593]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve rail services in (a) the North West, (b) Merseyside, (c) Wirral and (d) Wallasey constituency.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In response to passengers' needs, Northern introduced, in the December 2019 timetable, an extension of the Alderley Edge to Southport route which now takes customers into Manchester Piccadilly. It also secured a recent agreement with ASLEF to improve the reliability of Sunday services which will significantly reduce cancellations in the North West. Also, in December, Trans-Pennine Express (TPE) introduced a brand new service between Liverpool and Glasgow with three services running in each direction every day.

The introduction of new trains by both TPE and Northern also means an improved customer experience and faster journey times, connecting passengers to cities across the network.

Trains services in the Wirral and Wallasey are provided by Merseyrail, the management of which is a devolved responsibility of Liverpool City Region.

■ Railways: Overcrowding

Jessica Morden:

[9622]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to introduce statutory targets to reduce levels of overcrowding on rail services.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department expects all its operators to provide sufficient levels of service to meet passenger demand. We are taking steps to increase capacity wherever possible and many operators are introducing new trains this year. The Williams Rail Review will shortly propose comprehensive measures to improve how the railway works for passengers.

■ Railways: Wales

Jessica Morden:

[\[9621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of the £500 million Restoring Railways, Connecting Communities funding he plans to allocate to (a) Wales and (b) cross-border services between Wales and England.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We have announced £500m funding for reopening railway lines and stations closed in the Beeching era, but it is too early to say how much of this will be spent within Wales or on cross-border services. This depends on the schemes put forward for consideration and I have invited the Hon. Member to our briefing on 4th February where she can learn more about this. A new £20m round of funding is allocated to support new stations on the network. In the previous round a new station at Bow Street, Ceredigion, was one of five in England and Wales that secured funding.

■ Roads: Safety

Alberto Costa:

[\[8345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve road safety for guide dog users.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Department provides guidance to local authorities on how to make streets safe and accessible for all users, including those with visual impairments. It has been carrying out research to inform possible revisions of two of its key guidance documents: Inclusive Mobility and Guidance on the use of Tactile Paving Surfaces. A collaborative project with the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland on inclusive street design is also underway. The Department will be providing further updates when the results of this research are available later this year.

Additionally, the Department's two-year cycling and walking safety action plan, published in November 2018, included a commitment to review certain elements of The Highway Code to improve safety for vulnerable road users. The Department will consult on proposed changes to The Highway Code later this year.

TREASURY

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Taxation

Ben Lake:

[\[9124\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a distinct classification in the taxation system for alcoholic drinks created by fermenting honey with water.

Ben Lake:

[9125]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the tax classification of mead as made-wine on makers of alcoholic drinks from fermented honey.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government is committed to review our alcohol duty structures. Further announcements about the review will be made in due course. Any changes will be considered by the Chancellor and announced at fiscal events.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Hilary Benn:

[8957]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many cases of the replacement of unsafe cladding following the Grenfell Tower fire have not had VAT applied to the cost of the works.

Jesse Norman:

The details that HM Revenue and Customs collect from taxpayers on their VAT returns are not specific enough to identify costs relating to cladding. The cost of replacing cladding would be zero rated if it was tied to the initial construction and shown to be defective.

On 9 May 2019, the Government announced that it would fully fund the removal and replacement of certain types of unsafe cladding on private sector residential buildings 18 metres or taller. Where a zero rate does not apply, the cost of the VAT charge would be covered by that fund.

■ Child Trust Fund: Tax Allowances

Anneliese Dodds:

[9773]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the oral contribution of the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, of 13 March 2019, Official Report, column 179WH, when the Government plans to lay the draft regulations that will ensure that investments held in Child Trust Fund accounts will retain their tax-free status after maturity.

Anneliese Dodds:

[9774]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the oral contribution of the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, of 13 March 2019, Official Report, column 177WH, whether any changes have been made to the letter that his sent to young people informing them of their national insurance number when they reach 16 years old.

John Glen:

The Child Trust Funds (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI2020/29) were laid on 15 January 2020 - www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2020/29/contents/made

Child Trust Funds (CTF) accounts will start to mature in September 2020 when the first children reach 18. These regulations ensure maturing CTF will retain their tax-

free status and also provide that funds in a mature CTF may be transferred to an ISA without counting towards the individual's annual ISA subscription limit.

HMRC has improved the National Insurance number notification letter, which is sent out prior to a child's 16th birthday, to raise awareness of the Child Trust Funds scheme. The letter informs young people that they may have money in a Child Trust Fund and signposts them to HMRC's guidance on accessing and managing the account.

■ Children: Day Care

Sarah Olney:

[7655]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the introduction of Tax Free Childcare on trends in the level of parents returning to work.

Rishi Sunak:

Tax-Free Childcare is available to all parents that earn above the equivalent of 16 hours per week at minimum wage and below £100k. It is therefore available to working parents regardless of where they work and includes the self-employed, making it fairer and more accessible than the offer it replaces – childcare vouchers. It is also paid per child rather than per parent, so lone parents can access the same support as couples, and parents get more support as their childcare costs rise.

The Government has committed to carry out a post-implementation review, two years after the implementation of Tax-Free Childcare to evaluate the impact of the scheme, including on the labour market.

Details on Tax-Free Childcare usage up to September 2019 can be found in the official statistics publication. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tax-free-childcare-statistics-september-2019>

■ Devolution: Finance

Alan Brown:

[9731]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department plans to publish an updated Statement of funding policy: funding the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly document.

Rishi Sunak:

The Statement of Funding Policy is typically updated at each multi-year Spending Review, so the eighth edition is due to be published in 2020 alongside the Comprehensive Spending Review.

At Spending Round 2019, HM Treasury published a Statement of Funding Policy addendum to reflect the creation of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the reclassification of Network Rail spending from AME to DEL since Spending Review 2015.

■ Financial Services: Regulation

Ben Lake:

[9762]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to strengthen financial regulations in response to the case of Isabel dos Santos.

John Glen:

HM Treasury is responsible for the Money Laundering Regulations 2017 ('the Regulations'). The Regulations set out the high-level requirements on regulated firms to combat money laundering and ensure that key professionals identify their customers and understand the purpose behind transactions, including the source of funds. The Regulations are designed to combat illicit finance, while minimising the burden on legitimate customers.

The Regulations include requirements for firms in scope to have in place appropriate risk-management systems and procedures to determine whether a customer is a Politically Exposed Person (PEP), and conduct an appropriate range of Enhanced Due Diligence (EDD) measures. PEPs can pose a high money laundering risk because they may be able to abuse their position for private gain.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is the anti-money laundering supervisor for financial services firms in the UK; it regularly takes action against firms who fail to meet their obligations under the Regulations. In 2015, the FCA fined Barclays Bank £72,069,400 for failing to conduct enhanced due diligence on a £1.88 billion transaction involving PEPs.

The UK has been recognised as world leading in its response to economic crime. In 2018, the Financial Action Task Force found that the UK had one of the strongest systems for combatting money laundering and terrorist financing of over 60 countries it has assessed to date.

■ Pensions: Public Sector

Alex Sobel:

[9777]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) monetary value of public sector pension pots due to be paid on retirement to people who have previously worked in the public sector for (i) fewer than five years and (ii) between five and 10 years.

Rishi Sunak:

There are approximately 5 million active members of public service pension schemes, which are usually unfunded defined benefit schemes. There are multiple public service pension schemes, managed by different government departments and devolved administrations. The value of an individual's pension can depend on a number of factors, including career length, accrual rate, pay progression and what age they choose to retire. The precise information requested is not readily available as it is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Public Houses: Non-domestic Rates

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[9136\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many pubs have a rateable value of under £100,000.

Jesse Norman:

As at 31 March 2019, there were 38,790 non-domestic properties in the Rating List in England and Wales with a Rateable Value of under £100,000 that are classified as public houses.

■ Revenue and Customs: Redundancy Pay

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[9140\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many times HMRC has been required to refund tax paid by former employees as a function of termination payments as a result of an incorrect decision in relation to injury to feelings being classified as connected to the termination in each of the last five years.

Jesse Norman:

Payments made to an individual as compensation for injury to feelings can be paid tax free where they are not connected with the termination of an employment. HM Revenue and Customs have recently updated guidance that sets out the circumstances in which compensation payments are, or are not, connected with the termination of an employment.

The information requested is not available as HMRC do not hold data relating to tax refunds for incorrect decisions regarding payments made for injury to feelings connected to the termination of employment.

■ Sanitary Protection: VAT

Dawn Butler:

[\[9616\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has for the future of the Tampon Tax Fund.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has committed to continuing the Tampon Tax Fund until the UK is legally able to apply a zero rate of VAT to women's sanitary products. During the transition period, the UK's VAT regime will continue to exist within a framework set by EU legislation.

■ Social Services: Finance

Caroline Lucas:

[\[7612\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to allocate £8 billion to the social care system; whether he has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on forthcoming plans to tackle dementia care costs; and if he will make a statement.

Rishi Sunak:

We have committed to urgently seek a cross-party consensus to bring forward proposals and legislation for long-term reform of social care.

We have been clear that putting social care on a sustainable footing is one of the biggest challenges we face as a society, and as such I continue to have regular discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and other Ministerial colleagues on this important issue.

■ **Taxation: Self-assessment****Mr Gregory Campbell:****[9608]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 1 July 2019 to Question 268996 on taxation: self-assessment, how much was paid in fines by people who submitted tax returns after the deadline of 31 January in each year since 2018.

Jesse Norman:

The 2016-17 Self-Assessment (SA) tax return typically has an online filing deadline of 31 January 2018, and correspondingly, the 2017-18 Self-Assessment tax return typically has an online filing deadline of 31 January 2019.

The value of payments attributed to late filing penalties for people filing late and after 31 January for these two tax years has been provided below.

TAX YEAR PENALTY RELATES TO	PENALTY PAYMENTS
2016-17	£106,244,000
2017-18	£63,956,000

Note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand. These figures have been produced using an extract of the data provided for analytical purposes, and there may be small differences between this and the live SA system.

This analysis is based on penalties created and payments received to 3 January 2020. The 2017-18 figures cover a period of 11 months. The 2016-17 figures cover a period of 23 months. HMRC anticipate that more penalties will be issued and paid in relation to 2017-18, so it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons between the two sets of figures.

The above figures include both full and part-payments for the initial £100 late filing penalty, daily penalties, 6 month and 12 month late filing penalties. Late payment penalties have not been included.

These late filing penalties relate to:

- Individuals who filed online after 31 January after the end of the corresponding tax year and at least 3 months after they were issued with a notice to file
- Individuals who have missed the 31 January deadline and who have not yet filed their SA return for the corresponding tax year

- Individuals who did not need to file an SA return for that tax year but received late filing penalties due to late notification

As with the answer to PQ268996, the figures may include some penalty payments relating to Trust returns as they receive the same penalty code. Penalty payments relating to partnership returns are not included.

Penalties are not used as a means of generating revenue. HMRC want taxpayers to comply with their obligations and to file their returns on time.

HMRC charge penalties to encourage taxpayers to meet their tax obligations and to act as a sanction for those who do not, so the majority who do are not disadvantaged.

Not all taxpayers who fail to submit their return on time will have to pay a penalty. A penalty will not be payable if a taxpayer had a reasonable excuse for not filing their return on time or if they no longer need to file a return.

HMRC will not know if a taxpayer has a reasonable excuse or no longer needs to file a return until they inform HMRC.

■ Treasury: Apprentices

Steve Reed:

[\[9693\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of staff employed by his Department are apprentices.

Mr Simon Clarke:

3.8% of staff employed by HM Treasury as at 31st December 2019 are apprentices. (based on headcount)

WALES

■ Wales Office: Apprentices

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[9745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what proportion of staff employed by his Department are apprentices.

David T C Davies:

As of 31 December 2019, there was one apprentice in the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales. This is 2.22% of the total staff employed within the Department.

The Government expects to train up hundreds of thousands more highly skilled apprentices during this Parliament and government departments all have a role to play in this.

Data regarding the number of apprentices in each Government Department is published yearly as part of routine Government transparency. The most recent report was published in September, covering the 2018-2019 financial year, and can be found on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-apprenticeship-data-2018-to-2019>

■ **Wales Office: Reviews**

Ms Angela Eagle: [10314]

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, if he will publish the titles of the reviews that his Department is undertaking.

David T C Davies:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales is not currently undertaking any reviews.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ **Candidates: Disability**

Dr Lisa Cameron: [9069]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she plans to put permanent support arrangements in place to enable disabled people, who require reasonable adjustments, to stand in all Local, National and Police Crime Commissioner Elections.

Victoria Atkins:

It is the Government's ambition to see more disabled people in public office. While financial support for candidates in elections is also a matter for political parties, the Government is considering what support it might provide to succeed the current EnAble fund. We are considering options in connection with the National Strategy for Disabled People, which is due to be published in 2020.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **Buildings: Disability**

Jonathan Edwards: [8988]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints the Health and Disability Assessments centres in (a) Carmarthen and (b) Swansea have received on disabled access in buildings in each of the last five years.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not available.

Jonathan Edwards: [8989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department has issued to staff at Health and Disability Assessment centres in (a) Carmarthen and (b) Swansea on disabled access at appointments for claimants.

Justin Tomlinson:

Guidance requires Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA) personnel to consider the needs of individuals when arranging assessment appointments. If an individual believes they will have any difficulties attending their appointment they should discuss this with CHDA as soon as possible, using the contact details on their appointment letter.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Staff**Ms Angela Eagle:****[8961]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons jobs are being transferred from Great Western House, Birkenhead to Blackpool, Sunderland and Cardiff.

Mims Davies:

I can confirm that jobs are not being transferred from Great Western House, Birkenhead to other locations.

Ms Angela Eagle:**[8962]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with officials at Great Western House, Birkenhead on the potential loss of staff jobs.

Mims Davies:

Currently there are no job losses of permanent colleagues planned at Great Western House Birkenhead. Therefore, no discussions have taken place.

■ Employment and Support Allowance**Marion Fellows:****[9073]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claims of employment and support allowance where the claimant was a member of (a) the support group and (b) the work related activity group were closed due to the death of the claimant in each of the last three years.

Justin Tomlinson:

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

Marion Fellows:**[9074]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claims of employment and support allowance where the claimant was a member of (a) the support group and (b) the work related activity group were active in each of the last three years.

Justin Tomlinson:

Statistics on the number of people who have been awarded Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), by phase of claim, can be found at:

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

Guidance for users is available at:

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

■ Employment: Chronic Illnesses

Cat Smith:

[9722]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what specialist training Work Coaches receive to help people with hidden and fluctuating health conditions (a) find and (b) stay in work.

Mims Davies:

Training and guidance is provided for work coaches to support customers with fluctuating health conditions to find and stay in work.

They receive health and complex needs learning that provides them with the skills and knowledge to:

- coach claimants to equip them with the tools and skills they need to progress towards or into work
- invest in knowing the claimants they coach by asking the right questions to establish their needs
- know how they can support claimants with complex needs in specific areas
- state where they can find assistance and refer claimants to personalised provision for themselves with regard to their health condition
- challenge claimants by setting and agreeing personalised, achievable steps that are reviewed at every attendance.

In addition, support is also provided for the work coach by the 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 in Scotland).

Work Coaches have access to further learning in the form of 'bitesize' learning and guidance spotlights to refresh and support them. For example:

- Health and Work Conversation Techniques 'bitesize' – this provides learning on how to keep claimants engaged with the world of work and to keep thinking about the work they could do now or in the future, if not possible now. The Health and Work Conversation techniques have been specifically designed to enable the work coach to support a claimant who has:
 - a health condition
 - become disengaged with the labour market, perhaps, because they have been long term unemployed
- Spotlight: Work and Health Programme (WHP) published November 2019

- Spotlight: Universal Credit Health Offer published April 2019 – This provides guidance on what is available for customers to support them to and in work. For example, Access to Work, Specialist Employability Support

■ Employment: Disability

Cat Smith:

[\[9725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that employers signed up to the Disability Confident Scheme are actively supporting disabled employees.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department for Work and Pensions is working at a district, regional and national level with Disability Confident employers, encouraging them to pro-actively attract, recruit and retain disabled people, offering help and support at every stage of the journey. The department provides employers with a range of material, videos and toolkits, to help them to develop best practice.

We are working closely with our stakeholders, including all main government departments, the Local Government Association, and Councils. The DWP Business Leaders Group, consisting of corporate influencers, is also helping to promote the benefits of employing a diverse range of employees, including disabled people.

Last year, we made a number of improvements to the scheme, including adding the requirement for Disability Confident Leader employers to use the Voluntary Reporting Framework (VRF) to publicly report on how they encourage and support disabled staff. Although there is flexibility in how employers can use the VRF, we expect that most would choose to combine it with their annual report and accounts.

In November 2018, we published the results of survey research commissioned from Ipsos MORI, which explored the effect that signing up to the Disability Confident scheme had on recruitment and retention attitudes towards disabled people. Half of all employers interviewed for the study said they had recruited at least one person with a disability, long-term health or mental health condition as a result of joining the scheme. Among larger employers, nearly two thirds reported the same. Eight in ten (80%) of employers interviewed had adopted at least one disability-related retention practice as a result of joining the scheme.

■ Jobcentres: Disability

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[8990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether disabled claimants have access to face-to-face support in Jobcentres when Health and Disability Assessments centres are not accessible to those claimants.

Justin Tomlinson:

Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA) is advised to consider the needs of individuals when arranging assessment appointments. If an individual believes they will have any difficulties attending their appointment they should

discuss this with CHDA as soon as possible, using the contact details on their appointment letter.

There are a range of provisions in place to ensure assessments are accessible to individuals, in line with the standards under the Equality Act 2010. If a particular Assessment Centre is not accessible to an individual, CHDA can make alternative arrangements for them to visit a different Assessment Centre or arrange for them to be assessed at home. Each case is assessed on the individual merits of the case. Travel expenses to the Assessment Centre will be paid.

■ Pension Credit

Kevin Brennan: [9605]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how her Department has promoted Pension Credit since June 2019.

Kevin Brennan: [9606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much money from the public purse has been spent on raising awareness of the availability of pension credit since June 2019.

Guy Opperman:

The Government wants to ensure that older people receive the support and help available to them. It is important to highlight that there are already 1.6 million people claiming some £5.4 billion in Pension Credit but some people may be missing out.

We want to make sure that all pensioners eligible can claim the Pension Credit to which they are rightly entitled. That is why we are currently considering options for raising awareness of Pension Credit, including working with our stakeholders, to help dispel some of the misconceptions that people might have about Pension Credit eligibility. For example, we want to make it clear that having savings, a pension or owning a home are not automatic barriers to receiving Pension Credit.

Of course DWP continues to use a wide range of channels including information on www.gov.uk, in leaflets and by telephone to communicate information about benefits including Pension Credit to potential claimants. We target activity on engaging with people who may be eligible to benefits at pivotal stages, such as when they claim State Pension or Attendance Allowance or report a change in their circumstances which may mean that they could be eligible for Pension Credit. In addition, the Pension Credit calculator <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator> enables potential claimants to check if they are likely to be eligible and get an estimate of what they may receive

We know that often the best ways to reach eligible pensioners is through trusted stakeholders working in the community. The Pension Credit toolkit contains resources for anyone working with pensioners and includes guides to Pension Credit. It also contains publicity material and guidance designed to help older people understand how they could get Pension Credit and help organisations support

someone applying for Pension Credit as well as ideas for encouraging take-up. It can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pension-credit-toolkit>

Information on how much has been spent on raising awareness of the availability of pension credit since June 2019 is not available.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations

Hywel Williams:

[9971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made an assessment of the adequacy of the (a) services provided by and (b) number of Capita PIP assessment centres in (i) each local authority in Wales and (ii) each parliamentary constituency in Wales.

Justin Tomlinson:

We set our assessment providers challenging targets, we monitor performance closely and manage contracts robustly. As part of the specification for the PIP assessment service assessment providers must provide sufficient suitable accommodation for face-to-face consultations. The department has set clear requirements in terms of geography/travel, security and claimant experience in relation to the sites used for PIP consultations. No claimant will be asked to travel more than 90 minutes to an assessment centre. Claimants can also make a request for a home assessment.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Telephone Services

Stephanie Peacock:

[9111]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in (a) Barnsley East constituency, (b) Yorkshire and Humber and (c) England have contacted the personal independence payment helpline in the latest period for which figures are available.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information is not available

Stephanie Peacock:

[9112]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how long the average wait-time is for a caller to be put through to a phone operator on the personal independence payment helpline.

Justin Tomlinson:

The average wait time for calls to the Personal Independence Payment helplines in December 2019 is shown in the table below in the format of hours:minutes:seconds.

DECEMBER 2019

AVERAGE SPEED OF ANSWER

PIP Enquiries

00:12:58

DECEMBER 2019	AVERAGE SPEED OF ANSWER
PIP Reassessment Enquiries	00:11:39
PIP New Claims	00:01:53
PIP New Claims Special Rules for Terminally Ill	00:02:47

Ms Angela Eagle:

[9595]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have contacted the personal independence payments helpline in (a) Wallasey, (b) Wirral and (c) the North West in the latest period for which figures are available.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information is not available.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations**

Ruth Jones:

[7679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the (a) accuracy and (b) efficiency of contracted out health assessments for (i) employment and support allowance and (ii) personal independence payment.

Justin Tomlinson:

The department is committed to ensuring individuals receive an efficient and quality service from our Assessment Providers. We work extensively with Providers to improve guidance, training and quality assurance procedures, ensuring quality is continuously improving. All Assessment Providers are exceeding their Claimant Satisfaction targets set by the department.

■ **Universal Credit**

Darren Jones:

[6774]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to reform calculation of monthly equivalents for universal credit claimants with weekly rent liabilities by multiplying the weekly rent by the (a) number of rent weeks in the year, and dividing that figure by 12 or (b) average number of weeks in a year.

Will Quince:

Neither tenants or landlords lose a week's rent in a 53 weekly rent payment year as has been alleged; no year contains 53 weeks. The problem is alignment between weekly and monthly cycles. Each month the UC housing element is a constant figure but claimants with weekly tenancy agreements will be required to make either four or five rent payments within this period. When rent is always paid on time, in five payment months they are effectively making payment for part of the following month.

That month will always be a four rent payment month, so the combination of the advance payment and the 'overpayment' of housing support during that month will result in the correct amount of housing element being paid.

Where a landlord charges rent weekly on a Monday, because of the way the calendar falls every 5 or 6 years, they will seek 53 rent payments in a year, with the 53rd payment in part covering the tenancy for the first few days of the following year. The effect of this is that, over the course of the next housing association rental year, a tenant's UC payments will accurately reflect their liability, irrespective of the 53 payment weeks.

There is a separate issue with respect to the way the calculation in the Universal Credit regulations converts a weekly liability into a monthly allowance. The conversion is achieved by multiplying the weekly rent by 52 and then dividing by 12. This effectively means one day's rent a year (two days in a leap years) are not covered by UC. We are currently considering whether this formulation around weekly rents, and potentially other weekly amounts in the UC calculation, should be amended.

Ian Lavery:

[7208]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to make changes to universal credit.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit is a modern, flexible and personalised benefit reflecting the rapidly changing world of work. It replaces six outdated and complex benefits with one, simplifying the benefits system and making work pay.

The Department regularly gathers and analyses feedback from our stakeholders which helps drive improvement to the service we deliver; ensuring welfare payments reach those who need them most, and effectively supporting those with insecure or fluctuating incomes.

Anneliese Dodds:

[9775]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance has been provided to (a) work coaches and (b) staff of her Department on measures to increase earnings for in-work claimants, including sanctioning for failure to increase earnings beyond the (i) the Administrative Earnings Threshold and (ii) Conditionality Earnings Threshold.

Mims Davies:

We are developing our understanding of how best to support people to progress in work, through a programme of research and testing. There is currently no active in-work support offer for in-work claimants in Universal Credit and no work related requirements, meaning there would be no sanctions resulting if these are not completed, and no guidance provided.

Those who are earning very small amounts, below the level of the Administrative Earnings Threshold, are treated as out of work and placed in the intensive regime.

Anneliese Dodds:**[9776]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department has issued to (a) work coaches and (b) staff in her Department on assessing whether claimants are reaching (i) the Administrative Earnings Threshold and (ii) the Conditionality Earnings Threshold if the claimant is part of a cohabiting couple.

Mims Davies:

Comprehensive guidance on assessing the Administrative Earnings Threshold and the Conditionality Earnings Threshold is available to all staff. This guidance is published in the Commons library and the Department is committed to refreshing this at regular intervals.

<http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2019-0980/2. Administrative and Conditionality Earnings Thresholds v3.0.pdf>

<http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2019-0980/71. Labour Market regimes v11.0.pdf>

■ Universal Credit: Jarrow

Kate Osborne:**[9796]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claimants live in Jarrow constituency.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit is now the main system of working age welfare support across the country. It is available in every Jobcentre, with a caseload of over 2.8 million claimants, growing every month, now able to access the additional support and flexibilities it offers.

Most people only move to Universal Credit because they have had a significant change in their circumstances which would previously have led them to make a new claim to a legacy benefit.

Data surrounding the number of households on Universal Credit in the parliamentary constituency of Jarrow is published online and can be found at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

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

■ Universal Credit: Scotland

Martyn Day:**[6722]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department to provide additional funding to Citizens Advice Scotland to assist universal credit claimants to maintain their online claim.

Will Quince:

Comprehensive support is available to claimants to use our digital service, however we recognise there will be occasions when people are unable to maintain their claim online, so telephone support is available. In these instances, information normally available through a claimant's online account will be communicated in an alternative format, which is best suited to an individual's circumstances.

The Department is committed to providing the best possible support for all our claimants, including the most vulnerable in society, in both making and maintaining their claim. Help to Claim delivered through Citizens Advice Scotland offers tailored, practical support to help people make a Universal Credit claim up to receiving their first full correct payment on time.

The Department is assessing the performance and outcomes of the support delivered by Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland through the Help to Claim pilot. We will share the decision about the future of Help to Claim beyond March 2020 in due course.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

PRIME MINISTER

■ Structures following the closure of the Department for Exiting the European Union

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):

[\[HCWS85\]](#)

I am making this statement to confirm that the Department for Exiting the EU closed on 31 January. Those of its functions which are still required have been transferred to relevant government departments. The administration of the closure of DExEU is being carried out by the Cabinet Office.

■ UK / EU relations

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):

[\[HCWS86\]](#)

This statement sets out the Government's proposed approach to the negotiations with the EU about our future relationship. Further details on this and other trade negotiations will be made available to Parliament as the process develops.

The Government wishes to see a future relationship based on friendly cooperation between sovereign equals for the benefit of all our peoples. There is complete certainty that at the end of 2020 the process of transition to that relationship will be complete and that the UK will have recovered in full its economic and political independence. The Government remains committed in all circumstances to securing all those benefits for the whole of the UK and to strengthening our Union.

The question for the rest of 2020 is whether the UK and the EU can agree a deeper trading relationship on the lines of the free trade agreement the EU has with Canada, or whether the relationship will be based simply on the Withdrawal Agreement deal agreed in October 2019, including the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland. In either event the UK will be leaving the single market and the customs union at the end of this year and stakeholders should prepare for that reality.

The Government will work hard to achieve a balanced agreement that is in the interests of both sides, reflecting the wide range of shared interests. Any agreement must respect the sovereignty of both parties and the autonomy of our legal orders. It cannot therefore include any regulatory alignment, any jurisdiction for the CJEU over the UK's laws, or any supranational control in any area, including the UK's borders and immigration policy.

This points to a suite of agreements of which the main elements would be a comprehensive free trade agreement covering substantially all trade, an agreement on fisheries, and an agreement to cooperate in the area of internal security, together with a number of more technical agreements covering areas such as aviation or civil nuclear cooperation. These should all have governance and dispute settlement arrangements appropriate to a relationship of sovereign equals.

Future cooperation in other areas does not need to be managed through an international Treaty, still less through shared institutions. The UK will in future develop separate and

independent policies in areas such as (but not limited to) the points-based immigration system, competition and subsidy policy, the environment, social policy, procurement, and data protection, maintaining high standards as we do so. Cooperation on foreign affairs and related issues is of course likely to be substantial, but does not in itself require a joint institutional framework.

In its negotiations with the EU, the Government will be acting on behalf of the UK Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories: the whole UK family.

The UK proposes to agree similar arrangements with the EFTA states.

Further information is set out below. Unless otherwise stated, it should be assumed that the UK's aspiration and level of ambition is to reach agreement on provisions which are at least as good as those in the EU's recent trade agreements, such as those with Canada or Japan.

1. Free Trade Agreement

A free trade agreement between the UK and EU should reflect, and develop where necessary, existing international best practice as set out, inter alia, in FTAs already agreed by the EU.

It should cover the following areas:

National Treatment and Market Access for Goods

There should be no tariffs, fees, charges or quantitative restrictions between the UK and the EU. There should be a protocol setting out appropriate and modern rules of origin, in order to facilitate trade between the parties to the greatest extent possible.

Trade Remedies

The agreement should enable the UK to protect its industry from harm caused by unexpected surges in imports of goods or by unfair trading practices, while making the appropriate commitments to transparency, due process and proportionate use of trade remedies.

Technical Barriers to Trade

There should be provisions to address regulatory barriers to trade in goods, providing for cooperation on technical regulation, standards, conformity assessment procedures and market surveillance, building on the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement. Annexes to the agreement could include provisions facilitating trade in specific sectors, such as organic products, motor vehicles, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, as well as mutual recognition agreements focusing on conformity assessment, with full coverage of the relevant sectors.

Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

The UK will maintain its own autonomous sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regime to protect human, animal and plant life and health and the environment, reflecting its existing high standards. In certain areas it may be possible to agree equivalence provisions to reduce practical barriers to trade at the border.

Customs and Trade Facilitation

Facilitative customs arrangements, covering all trade in goods, should be put in place in order to smooth trade between the UK and the EU. These should ensure that both customs authorities are able to protect their regulatory, security and financial interests.

Cross-Border Trade in Services and Investment

Significant provisions on trade in services are an essential component of a comprehensive FTA. Accordingly, the Agreement should include measures to minimise barriers to the cross-border supply of services and investment, on the basis of each side's commitments in existing FTAs. In areas of key interest, such as professional and business services, there may be scope to go beyond these commitments.

There should be measures to support digital trade, building on the most recent precedents.

Temporary Entry for Business Purposes (Mode 4)

As is normal in a Free Trade Agreement, the agreement should include significant reciprocal commitments on the temporary entry and stay of individuals, so that both EU and UK nationals can undertake short-term business trips to supply services. This is of course without prejudice to the future points-based immigration system.

Regulatory Framework

There should be measures that reduce unnecessary barriers to trade in services, streamlining practical processes and providing for appropriate regulatory cooperation.

Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications

The Agreement should provide a pathway for the mutual recognition of UK and EU qualifications, underpinned by regulatory cooperation, so that qualification requirements do not become an unnecessary barrier to trade.

Financial Services

The Agreement should require both sides to provide a predictable, transparent, and business-friendly environment for financial services firms, ensuring financial stability and providing certainty for both business and regulatory authorities, and with obligations on market access and fair competition. Given the depth of the relationship in this area, there should also be enhanced provision for regulatory and supervisory cooperation arrangements with the EU, and for the structured withdrawal of equivalence findings.

Road Transport

There should be reciprocal commitments to allow EU and UK road transport operators to provide services to, from and through each other's territories, with associated rights, underpinned by relevant international agreements and commitments, and ensuring the necessary cooperation on monitoring and enforcement.

Competition Policy, Subsidies, Environment and Climate, Labour, Tax

The Government will not agree to measures in these areas which go beyond those typically included in a comprehensive free trade agreement. The Government believes therefore that both Parties should recognise their respective commitments to maintaining high standards in these areas; confirm that they will uphold their international obligations; and agree to avoid using measures in these areas to distort trade.

1. Agreement on Fisheries

The UK will become an independent coastal state at the end of 2020 and any agreement must reflect this reality. The UK will, like Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, have annual negotiations with the EU on access to waters and fishing opportunities, and will consider a mechanism for cooperation on fisheries matters.

1. Agreement on Internal Security Cooperation

Protection of citizens is the highest duty of any Government. The UK believes it is in the UK's and EU's mutual interest to reach a pragmatic agreement to provide a framework for law enforcement and judicial cooperation in criminal matters between the UK and the EU, delivering strong operational capabilities that help protect the public. The detail of such an agreement must be consistent with the Government's position that the CJEU and the EU legal order must not constrain the autonomy of the UK's legal system in any way.

1. Other Areas of Cooperation

The Government believes there is mutual benefit in an air transport agreement covering market access for air services, aviation safety and security, and collaboration on air traffic management.

The UK is ready to work to establish practical provisions to facilitate smooth border crossing arrangements, as part of independent border and immigration systems, and on social security coordination. All such arrangements should be reciprocal and of mutual benefit. The UK is ready to discuss cooperation on asylum, including family reunion, and illegal migration.

The UK is ready to consider participation in certain EU programmes, once the EU has agreed the baseline in its 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework, and taking into account the overall value to the UK of doing so.

Finally, there are certain areas where the UK considers agreement is self-evidently in the interest of both sides, and where early progress is a test of the constructive nature of the negotiating process. For example, there should be rapid agreement that the UK and the EU would list each other for trade in live animals, animal products, seeds and other plant-propagating material. There should be rapid progress towards a Civil Nuclear Agreement, given the implications for both sides of not doing so and the clear benefits of cooperation. Similarly, the UK would see the EU's assessment processes on financial services equivalence and data adequacy as technical and confirmatory of the reality that the UK will be operating exactly the same regulatory frameworks as the EU at the point of exit. The UK intends to approach its own technical assessment processes in this spirit.

A copy of this statement will be placed in the Library.