



Daily Report

Tuesday, 4 February 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 4 February 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:55 P.M., 04 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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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Carbon Capture and Storage: Finance

Alan Brown:

[\[8365\]](#)

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 the spend profile is for the £800 million of funding allocated to the development of carbon capture, usage and storage.

Alan Brown:

[\[8366\]](#)

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, whether the £800 million of funding will be allocated to (a) one or (b) more than one carbon capture, usage and storage cluster.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is committed to deploying CCUS in the 2020s. We will provide further details on how the investment, outlined in the Conservative manifesto, will be progressed in due course.

Alan Brown:

[\[8367\]](#)

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 her Department plans to use to determine the eligibility of carbon capture, usage and storage clusters to receive preferred funding status.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is committed to deploying CCUS in the 2020s. We will provide further details on how CCUS investment, outlined in the Conservative manifesto, will be allocated in due course.

In addition, 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.

■ Carbon Emissions: Technology

Christian Matheson:

[\[8339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the potential economic effect on the green technology

sector of the withdrawal of research funding for innovative low-carbon technology programmes under the EU emissions trading system after the UK leaves the EU.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) does not provide research funding. The terms of the Withdrawal Agreement mean that the UK will continue to participate in EU Programmes financed by the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework until their closure.

The UK is the first major economy to legislate for net zero emissions by 2050. The Government's Clean Growth Strategy sets out how we want to make sure that the UK continues to reap the benefits from the transition to a low carbon economy.

The Government has been investing over £3 billion to support low carbon innovation in the UK over the period 2015 and 2021, to ensure that the UK continues to grasp the economic opportunities of the global shift to a low carbon future, and have committed to raise total research and development investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

This is already benefiting clean growth innovation – for example the £505 million BEIS Energy Innovation Programme, which aims to accelerate the commercialisation of innovative clean energy technologies and processes.

■ **Employment Tribunals Service: Females**

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[10459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of recording whether a women who is making a claim at employment tribunal for the purpose of (a) her Department being able to provide more support and (b) workplace equality is pregnant.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Cases of pregnancy and maternity discrimination are recorded. When submitting an Employment Tribunal Claim Form (ET1), a claimant is required to specify the details of the case. This involves stating whether they have been discriminated against, including on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity.

There are a number of sources of support for pregnant women seeking to take a claim to an employment tribunal.

Acas (Advisory, Conciliation, and Arbitration Service) provides free and impartial information and advice to employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law. It produces advice and guidance on discrimination, bullying and harassment and has specific content covering pregnancy and maternity.

In addition, anyone who believes that they may have suffered from discrimination or had their human rights infringed can access the EASS helpline, which offers bespoke advice to clients to help them understand their rights and the resolution options that are open to them.

Legal aid is available for legal advice and representation for cases alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation under the Equality Act 2010, or a previous discrimination enactment, which can arise in a variety of contexts – for example, consumer, education or employment matters. Legal aid for cases of this type must usually first be sought through the Civil Legal Advice (CLA) telephone gateway, before being referred onwards for face-to-face advice.

The Government is determined to do more to promote workplace equality. That is why we committed to introduce measures in an Employment Bill to extend redundancy protections to better prevent pregnancy and maternity discrimination.

■ **Employment: Endometriosis**

Vicky Foxcroft: **[9088]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps her Department is taking to support women with endometriosis in the workplace.

Kelly Tolhurst:

It is our priority to make the UK the best place in the world to work. The Government is determined to ensure employers are fully equipped to support those who are experiencing long term health conditions. We consulted for employees with long term health conditions last year on a range of measures to encourage early and supportive action by employers and on how to boost the support that Government provides. We will publish our response to that consultation in due course.

Flexible working can be key in helping people to manage long term health conditions and work. Subject to consultation, the Government will be bringing forward measures in an Employment Bill to make flexible working the default.

■ **Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund**

Alan Brown: **[8368]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2020 to Question 2480, to what projects she plans to allocate the £170 million Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, UK Research and Innovation will allocate up to £170 million to projects that will support the delivery of the Industrial Clusters Mission. There are three strands that the funding will cover: 1) projects to deliver or support the delivery of significant emissions reductions in industrial clusters; 2) the development of industrial cluster decarbonisation roadmaps; and 3) establishing an Industrial Decarbonisation Research and Innovation Centre.

■ Skilled Workers: Surrey

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[8268]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps her Department has taken to help businesses create higher skilled jobs in (a) Surrey and (b) the UK

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership, which covers Surrey, received £219 million through the local growth fund to drive regional development. Since 2018, the LEP has invested over half a million pounds to support the enhancement and refurbishment of Further Education colleges in Surrey. This investment is increasing the number of available apprenticeships in the sectors important to Surrey, providing local businesses with a workforce equipped with the right skills, whatever the specialism.

The Government understands that regions across the UK have different skills needs, so we will build on local strengths to deliver opportunities for people wherever they live. One way we will achieve this in Surrey is through the Enterprise M3 Skills Advisory Panel which bring together local employers and skills providers to pool knowledge on skills and labour market needs and work together to understand and address key local challenges.

Furthermore, business support for Surrey's small enterprises is available through the LEP's Growth Hub. The Growth Hub provides a free, impartial, 'single point of contact' to help businesses in the area identify and access the right support for them at the right time no matter their size or sector.

■ Small Businesses: Government Assistance

Sir David Evennett:

[8964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps her Department is taking to support small business growth in (a) Bexley Borough, (b) London and (c) the UK.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We want to make sure that the UK is the best place in the world to work and grow a business. That's why we are backing businesses right across the country, with 381,000 new businesses starting last year, and the government-owned British Business Bank currently supports more than £7bn to over 91,000 smaller businesses.

The British Business Bank's Start-Up Loans programme provides loans to entrepreneurs seeking to start and grow their own businesses. Since 2012 the programme has delivered more than 69,000 Start-Up Loans, providing more than £558m of funding, in every part of the United Kingdom. Since 2012:

- The constituency of Bexleyheath and Crayford received 72 loans worth over £661,000;
- In London 15,642 loans were issued worth over £126m.

In addition to its lending and investment activity, the British Business Bank's online Finance Hub helps business owners to find the right finance options for their needs.

Government has also taken a number of steps in recent years to support the growth of small businesses across the UK, including cutting corporation tax to 19 per cent and increasing the employment allowance from £2,000 to £3,000 to benefit around 1m businesses. Reforms and reliefs to business rates, since Budget 2016, are worth £13 billion over the next five years.

All businesses in England including your constituency and London, can access support through our Gov.uk website, the Business Support Helpline (0300 456 3565) and through their Local Growth Hubs.

As well as an online support, London has recently opened five main physical sites (that will be staffed) in Vauxhall, Woolwich, Tottenham, Hammersmith and Corydon, and 4 satellite sites (to ensure a wide coverage of the sub regions) in Harrow, Wood Green, Brixton and Ilford to deliver surgeries and workshops. These are led and governed by London's Local Enterprise Partnership, LEAP. Growth Hubs provide a free, impartial, 'single point of contact' to help businesses in these areas identify and access the right support for them at the right time no matter their size or sector. In 2018-2019 the London Growth Hub supported 4,651 businesses.

■ **Smart Export Guarantee**

Laura Farris:

[10482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment she has made of the appropriateness of the level of rates paid to residents under the Smart Export Guarantee scheme.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Smart Export Guarantee has been successful in bringing forward a range of competitive offerings to the market. Renewable generators now have a several tariffs to choose from, in some cases higher than the FIT export tariff.

Ofgem will prepare an annual report on the provisions made by suppliers for smaller scale exporters. The government will review this to monitor whether the market is delivering an effective and competitive range of options.

■ **Trains: Exhaust Emissions**

Alex Cunningham:

[9017]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Committee on Climate Change will make an assessment of the potential merits of battery trains as part of its work on the Sixth Carbon Budget.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Committee on Climate Change is an independent advisory body and so it is for the Committee to decide how to take into account any evidence it deems relevant in the development of its advice to Government on the sixth carbon budget.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Burglary****Sarah Owen:**[\[10474\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many burglaries have been recorded in (a) England and (b) Wales in each year since 2010.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [2020.02.03 - PQ 10474 - UKSA letter.pdf]

■ **Cabinet Office: Publicity****Deidre Brock:**[\[10393\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the subject matter was of the public information campaign for his Department and the Scotland Office in the contract that was published on the 25 February 2019, CCCO19A12; and for what reasons that contract was not awarded.

Deidre Brock:[\[9713\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what communications were required by the Scotland Office in the contract tendered and awarded by the Crown Commercial Service to World Headquarters Ltd on the 29th of March, 2019.

Jeremy Quin:

The Cabinet Office and Scotland Office campaign teams required a creative agency to support the early development of concepts and content for a public information campaign to support UK Government policies in Scotland.

The subject matter was the same for the CCCO19A12 contract, which was not awarded after assessing the bids. The contract was subsequently awarded following an open market procurement conducted by the Crown Commercial Service.

■ **Census****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[9107\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 15 January 2020 to Question 1394, on Census, on what date the ONS provided the draft Census Order to his Department.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Hon Member to the response which I gave to question 1394 on 15 January 2020.

■ Civil Servants: Average Earnings

Jon Trickett: [10296]

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

Jeremy Quin:

The Cabinet Office publishes data on civil servants' median pay by English region and grade. The relevant data, as of 31 March 2019, is available via the link below on table 26:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2019>

■ Civil Service: Gender

Siobhain McDonagh: [8939]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the gender split is at each civil service grade in each Government department.

Siobhain McDonagh: [8940]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what targets the Government has set for gender representation in the civil service.

Siobhain McDonagh: [8941]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what targets the Government has for the number of women employed at each level in the civil service; and what the deadline is for each target.

Siobhain McDonagh: [8942]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress each Government department has made on reaching its targets on gender split within the civil service.

Jeremy Quin:

In the 2017 [Civil Service Diversity & Inclusion \(D&I\) Strategy](#) we committed to increasing transparency around our workforce composition by creating a D&I dashboard on GOV.UK, through which we publish quarterly updates on gender in the Civil Service.

The dashboard shows that overall, 53.9% of the Civil Service were women in 2019. This varies by grade from 45.0% in the Senior Civil Service (SCS), to 45.3% at G6, 47.5% at G7, 50% at HEO/SEO, 56.1% at EO and 57.2% at AA/AO level. The overall percentage of female civil servants has remained fairly stable since 2010 but for the SCS, the percentage of women has increased each year.

We currently publish individual department's gender data on the D&I dashboard but this does not currently include a breakdown by Civil Service grade.

Our data shows that we continue to make steady and positive progress on representation of women across the grades, therefore we have not set Civil Service-wide targets on gender.

■ Financial Services: Wales

Hywel Williams:

[\[9597\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2020 to Question 5387, if he will publish the top 10 export destinations for Welsh financial services.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ9597.pdf]

■ Homelessness: Death

Stephen McPartland:

[\[5585\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of homeless deaths in (a) the UK, (b) England, (c) Hertfordshire and (d) Stevenage in each year since 2010.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [2020.02.03 - PQ 5585 - UKSA letter.pdf]

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces

Jeremy Hunt:

[\[10340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the number of military personnel serving in the (a) Royal Navy, (b) Royal Marines, (c) RAF and (d) Army; and what assessment he has made of the trends in those numbers in the last five years.

Jeremy Hunt:

[\[10341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the number of military personnel serving in the (a) Maritime Reserves, (b) RAF reserves and (c) Army reserves; and what assessment he has made of the trends in those numbers in the last five years.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

While there has been a downward trend in strength over the last five years, the Government is committed to maintaining the overall size of the Armed Forces and is taking forward a range of measures to improve recruitment and retention. Importantly,

the Armed Forces continue to meet all their current commitments, keeping the country and its interests safe. The Armed Forces are fully funded to meet their target strength and we continue to increase funding to Defence year on year.

The Ministry of Defence keeps the numbers of military personnel under close review. On a quarterly basis we publish UK Service personnel statistics on strengths, requirements, intake, applications and outflow, by Service. The latest edition, with information as at 1 October 2019 and showing trends since 1 April 2012, can be found at the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/quarterly-service-personnel-statistics-2019>

■ Defence Equipment: Expenditure

Jeremy Hunt:

[10338]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much money from the public purse has been spent on (a) new equipment and (b) equipment support for the Armed Forces since 2015.

James Heappey:

The Department publishes detail on total equipment spend in the annual Defence Equipment Plan. We do not separate procurement and support spend. Total outturn for the Equipment Plan from 2015 can be found on page 21 of the Defence Equipment Plan 2018. The outturn for 2018-19 will be published shortly.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/788481/20190318-EP18_v3.pdf

■ Iran: International Military Services

Tulip Siddiq:

[10431]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the steps he has (a) identified and (b) taken to protect UK citizens from the risks of the unpaid debt by IMS Ltd to Iran's MODSAF agency.

James Heappey:

For the purpose of safeguarding national security, the Ministry of Defence does not comment publicly on the specifics of any potential risk assessments and associated activities.

Tulip Siddiq:

[9099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department monitors the costs to (a) International Military Services Limited and (b) his Department in the arbitration between IMS Ltd and Iran's MODSAF.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence routinely monitors any legal costs that it might incur.

■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft: Procurement

Jeremy Hunt:

[9625]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many maritime patrol aircraft his Department has purchased since 2015.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence has ordered nine P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft from the US Government by Foreign Military Sale. Of these, the purchase of one aircraft was completed in October 2019, with a second purchase due for completion imminently.

■ Military Aircraft: Ministers

Deidre Brock:

[10394]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many aircraft owned by his Department have carried Ministers on flights in each of the last five years; and how many of those flights were (a) scheduled flights and (b) flights arranged for Ministers.

Johnny Mercer:

Depending on the situation, the Ministry of Defence has a number of aircraft that could be used for Ministerial travel. This information is publicly available as part of the Government's commitment to publishing transparency information which includes Ministerial travel. The information is published every quarter and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/search/all?keywords=Ministerial+travel&order=relevance>

■ Ministry of Defence: Legal Costs

Tulip Siddiq:

[8408]

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

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence spent £71,325,802 in the 2018-19 financial year. This figure includes fees for legal advice, claims compensation costs, disbursements, costs for expert advice and other miscellaneous legal expenditure.

■ Ministry of Defence: Offshore Funds

Tulip Siddiq:

[8405]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he takes to monitor payments made by (a) his Department and (b) its subsidiaries to offshore accounts.

Tulip Siddiq:

[8406]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much was paid by his Department into offshore bank accounts in the 2018-19 financial year.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[8407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many offshore bank accounts are held by (a) his Department and (b) its subsidiaries.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) does not hold any offshore bank accounts.

The MOD does not collect information from its suppliers on whether their bank accounts are offshore. It is therefore not possible to state how much money was paid to offshore bank accounts in financial year 2018-19.

■ **Navy: Northern Ireland**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[10321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Naval asset visits there have been to Northern Ireland ports in (a) 2018 and (b) 2019.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

There were 11 visits to Northern Ireland ports by Naval Ships in 2018 and five visits in 2019.

■ **Unmanned Air Vehicles: France**

Jeremy Hunt: [\[10339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress has been made on the development of an unmanned combat air system programme with France; and if he will make a statement.

James Heappey:

The UK is continuing to work with France in the £65 million Future Combat Air Systems Technology Development Co-operation (FCAS TDC) programme. This programme is primarily aimed at improving the interoperability of current and future UK and French combat air platforms.

■ **Veterans: DNA**

Bob Stewart: [\[9633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 28 January 2020 to Question 6631, for what reasons his Department does not extract DNA from the remains of unidentified British soldiers found on former battlefields.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) does extract DNA from the remains of some unidentified British soldiers found on former battlefields. Due to the cost of DNA extraction and processing, MOD only recover DNA from historic casualties where it has been possible to draw up a list of potential candidates from other evidence, such as artefacts found with the remains, and analysis of casualty and unit records. The list of potential candidates makes it feasible to carry out the subsequent genealogical research to identify possible next of kin. Only where that subsequent research

reveals a potential donor with whom to compare the recovered sample, is DNA used as part of the identity confirmation process.

■ **Veterans: Railways**

Stephen Crabb:

[8981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Transport and (b) Welsh Ministers on the introduction of the Veterans' railcard in Wales.

Johnny Mercer:

The Department for Transport is the lead Government Department working on a railcard for veterans. While the Defence Secretary has discussed the new railcard with the Transport Secretary and is supportive, Defence Ministers have had no discussions with colleagues around the introduction of a railcard for veterans in Wales. However, we are aware that the Transport Secretary has written to his counterparts in Wales and Scotland, inviting them to work with him to ensure that a railcard for veterans is accepted on the services for which they are responsible.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **5G: Health Hazards**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[9105]

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he will take to mitigate health risks to the public from increased EMF/RF radiation resulting from the roll-out of the 5G network.

Matt Warman:

Exposure to radio waves is not new and health-related research has been conducted on this topic over several decades. Central to Public Health England's advice are the guidelines published by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). The ICNIRP is formally recognised by the World Health Organisation and its guidelines underpin health protection policies at UK and European levels.

Provided the ICNIRP guidelines are followed, there is no convincing evidence that 5G is dangerous. Government continues to be guided by Public Health England's advice on the matter. This states that while a small increase in overall exposure to radio waves under 5G is possible, such an increase would remain well within guidelines and can be expected to have no consequence on public health.

It is important to note that the ICNIRP guidelines apply up to 300 GHz, well beyond the maximum frequencies under discussion for 5G.

■ Bet365: China**Sir Iain Duncan Smith:** [\[8936\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment the Department has made of the Bet365's compliance with Chinese law in relation to its operations in that country.

Ronnie Cowan: [\[9080\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if operating legally in all jurisdictions is a condition of license for gambling companies to operate throughout the world.

Carolyn Harris: [\[9086\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of compliance Bet365 with its UK licence in relation to its operations in jurisdictions throughout the world.

Helen Whately:

All gambling companies providing gambling facilities to consumers in Great Britain must be licensed by the Gambling Commission and comply with the conditions and codes of practice of their operating licences. The Gambling Commission expects operators to obey the laws of other jurisdictions in which they operate, and requires operators to report any regulatory investigation or finding into their activities in any other jurisdiction.

Operators must inform the Gambling Commission if they have a substantial customer base outside of Britain. Where this is the case, the Gambling Commission asks operators why they do not consider themselves to be acting illegally by providing gambling facilities in these jurisdictions. This may be because they are licenced to operate in that jurisdiction, or because they have satisfied themselves in some other way that they are not breaking the law by providing gambling facilities. If operators are found to not to be acting in a lawful manner in other jurisdictions, the Gambling Commission will re-assess their suitability to hold a licence to offer gambling services in Britain.

■ Broadband**Chi Onwurah:** [\[10375\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department taking to ensure infrastructural competition in gigabit access to multi dwelling units.

Matt Warman:

The Government has made clear its ambition for nationwide gigabit broadband as quickly as possible.

The Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill, which has already entered the House, will support the delivery of gigabit access to multi-dwelling

buildings, by providing a faster, cheaper route through the courts for operators faced with a landlord who is repeatedly unresponsive to their access request notices and a resident is seeking a service.

The provisions in the Bill will provide telecoms operators with access to the common areas of the building (the stairwells, corridors and basements) for the purpose of installing digital infrastructure.

This process is available to operators to use for access to all multi-dwelling buildings, including where an existing broadband service is currently available, and where the landlord has repeatedly failed to respond to requests for access.

■ **Broadband: Bolton**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[9641]

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress he made in rolling out gigabit broadband to every home and business by 2025; and when it is planned to be rolled out in Bolton.

Matt Warman:

Full fibre coverage has doubled in the past year to 3 million premises or 10% of the country, according to the latest Ofcom figures. The Government is taking numerous steps to make it easier and cheaper for the private sector to deploy more gigabit capable broadband, for example, through the recently introduced Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill. This legislation supports telecoms operators to gain access to blocks of flats where a landlord repeatedly fails to respond to access notices and a resident is seeking a new service.

The precise timescales for the deployment of gigabit broadband in Bolton are primarily a matter for the commercial sector, as we believe that promoting commercial investment and network competition is the best way to deliver gigabit broadband at pace. However, this Government is also committed to subsidising deployment in harder to reach areas of the country with £5 billion of public funding, and are working up this programme at the moment. This intervention will ensure that no part of the country, including Bolton, is left behind in terms of broadband connectivity.

■ **Buildings: Telecommunications**

Chi Onwurah:

[10376]

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the adequacy of the right of access to buildings for telecoms providers.

Matt Warman:

The Electronic Communications Code, set out in Schedule 3A to the Communications Act 2003, provides rights for telecommunications operators to access buildings (and other land) to deploy, maintain and upgrade electronic communications apparatus.

Most access agreements are reached on a consensual basis. However, where parties are unable to reach a mutual agreement, the Code provides that either party may ask the Upper Tribunal to impose an agreement.

In response to concerns raised by industry about difficulties accessing multiple-dwelling buildings, the Department is bringing forward the Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill, which will amend the Code to create a new process for operators to gain access rights for multiple-dwelling buildings with unresponsive landlords.

■ Internet: Advertising

Chi Onwurah:

[10494]

To ask the Minister of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions has had with the Information Commissioner's Office on improving regulation of real time bidding.

Nigel Adams:

Data protection legislation in the UK requires organisations which collect and use personal data to do so lawfully and transparently. Organisations which fail to comply may be investigated by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the independent regulator.

The ICO is working with the advertising industry to improve compliance with the legislation, including in relation to real time bidding. More information on the actions they have taken can be viewed on the ICO's website at: <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/news-and-blogs/2020/01/blog-adtech-the-reform-of-real-time-bidding-has-started/>. They have also recently launched a public consultation on a draft direct marketing code of practice, governing the processing of personal data for direct marketing purposes.

Last year the government announced its intention to review how online advertising is regulated in the UK, looking at how well the current regime is equipped to tackle the challenges posed by developments in online advertising. This work will complement and supplement other reviews underway in this area, including work by the ICO.

■ Music: Licensed Premises

Louise Haigh:

[10407]

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate she has made of the number of music venues which have closed down in (a) Sheffield, (b) Yorkshire and the Humber and (c) England in each of the last four years.

Nigel Adams:

No such estimate has been made. Music venues play a vital role in giving artists the opportunity to hone their craft and enabling them to emerge and flourish. We believe these spaces must be allowed to prosper, which is why we have undertaken a number of measures to support the sector, including reforming licensing and planning

guidance and, this year, extending business rates relief to live music venues for the first time.

Arts Council England has recently confirmed an extension of its Supporting Grassroots Live Music Fund, making an additional £1.5 million available over two years from 2019-21. Sheffield's Abbeydale Picture House and The Wardrobe in Leeds are just two of the venues benefitting from this support so far.

UK Music published the Sheffield City Region Music Report in 2019 which showed that in 2017, £92m was generated by music tourism and 832,000 people (locals and music tourists) attended music events in the region.

■ Openreach

Chi Onwurah:

[\[10374\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Government response to the Ensuring tenants' access to gigabit-capable connections consultation, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) fiscal, (b) regulatory and (b) legislative requirements for BT to commit the Openreach funding necessary for full-fibre deployment.

Matt Warman:

The Government believes that encouraging a range of network builders, including BT/Openreach, to invest in faster broadband is the best way to deliver full fibre and gigabit connectivity at pace. To support this, the Government is implementing a number of legislative and non-legislative reforms to make it easier and cheaper for the private sector to deploy broadband. For example, we have recently introduced legislation to make it easier to connect tenanted properties, and the Chancellor has announced £5bn of funding to improve broadband in the hardest to reach areas of the country.

As the independent regulator, Ofcom has also taken action to promote commercial investment and network competition, and is currently consulting on its regulatory proposals for the 2021-26 period, including how to encourage BT/Openreach to build in harder to reach areas.

■ People's Postcode Lottery

Tracy Brabin:

[\[10433\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reasons the People's Postcode Lottery is not subject to the same regulations as the National Lottery.

Helen Whately:

The People's Postcode Lottery is an 'umbrella' lottery scheme, under which draws held by different societies are promoted under a single brand.

Society lotteries pre date the National Lottery, which has its own founding legislation. They are permitted as fundraising tools for charities, community groups, sports clubs

and other non-commercial organisations. Unlike the National Lottery they have limits on ticket sales and prizes, must return a minimum amount to good causes, and do not have to pay Lottery Duty. The distinction between society lotteries and the National Lottery ensures that the two are not in direct competition. This is an important principle to maintain, as direct competition between the two sectors risks reducing the level of sales overall, and therefore reducing the amount available for good causes.

EDUCATION

■ Adoption Support Fund

Rachael Maskell: [\[10403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what adoption support services will be available after March 2021.

Rachael Maskell: [\[10404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will allocate long-term funding to the Adoption Support Fund beyond 2021.

Rachael Maskell: [\[10405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to increase the awareness and understanding of the Adoption Support Fund among special guardians.

Rachael Maskell: [\[10406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the recommendations of the all-party Parliamentary group for Adoption and Permanence's report entitled Investing in Families, whether he will rename the Adoption Support Fund to signal that some special guardians are eligible to apply to the fund.

Michelle Donelan:

Improving adoption is a key priority for the government. I wrote to Directors of Children's Services on 16 January stating that we wanted to see a renewed focus on adoption and permanence by all local authorities. In particular, we wanted to ensure that adoptive families receive ongoing support from the moment that the child is placed with them and throughout their childhood.

Local authorities have an ongoing legal duty to provide support services that meet the needs of local adopted families. My letter asked them to identify where they were doing well, but also at areas where they think they could improve.

Last year, we announced that the Adoption Support Fund would continue with increased funding until 2021.

The Department for Education's spending after 2021 is subject to a future funding settlement with HM Treasury. We will consider the name, scope, eligibility and delivery requirements of the Adoption Support Fund as part of that.

We are taking action to increase awareness of the Adoption Support Fund amongst eligible special guardianship families. An information leaflet is being developed in partnership with Family Rights Group, Adoption UK and Home for Good. The leaflet will be promoted by relevant charities and will be made available to all local authorities so they can make the information available to the families who they are working with.

■ Children in Care

Fiona Bruce:

[8222]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education of 20 January 2020, Official Report, column 3, on Looked-after Children: Out-of-area Placements, stating that we have spent £70 million on supporting families and £84 million on strengthening families, if she will provide the budget headings for that spending.

Michelle Donelan:

The response in Hansard has been updated to reflect the below information.

We will invest approximately £17 million in the Supporting Families Investing in Practice programme to roll out 3 innovation models that have evidence of successfully keeping families together in a further 46 local authorities. These programme models are Family Group Conferencing, Family Drug and Alcohol Courts and the Mockingbird Family Model.

Up to £84 million will be spent on the Strengthening Families Protecting Children programme to roll out a further 3 innovation programme models that have the most promising evidence of safely reducing the number of children being taken into care. Leeds Family Valued, Hertfordshire Family Safeguarding and North Yorkshire's No Wrong Door models will be rolled out in 18 local authorities.

■ Children in Care: Mental Health Services

Jim Shannon:

[8278]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress his Department has made on improving access to mental health assessments for children in care.

Michelle Donelan:

The Department for Education jointly commissioned with the Department for Health and Social Care an Expert Working Group to look at how the mental health needs of looked-after children, previously looked-after children and care leavers could be better met.

In November 2017, the group made a set of recommendations, including on improving assessment of the mental health needs of looked-after children.

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

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

■ Children: Daycare

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[8390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the average per-hour cost of childcare (a) in a nursery and (b) with a childminder in (i) Lewisham, Deptford constituency, (ii) London and (iii) the UK in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The Government published data on the cost of delivering childcare in England for 2015 and 2018. The average hourly costs of delivery are shown in the attached table (with the respective publications from which the data is sourced).

The Government also published data on the cost of delivery childcare in London, by all provider types, for 2015 and 2018. The average hourly costs of delivery are shown in the attached table (with the respective publications from which the data is sourced).

Average hourly costs in both tables are based on different collection methodologies and from different sources, so comparability is limited.

The Government does not hold such data relating specifically to the Lewisham Deptford constituency or the UK, nor does it hold this data relating to 2016 and 2017.

Attachments:

1. 8390_table [8390_table_showing_childcare_delivery_costs.pdf]

■ Further Education: Special Educational Needs

Robert Halfon:

[\[8244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the £780 million of funding allocated to special educational needs in 2020-21 will be provided to further education colleges to help them support students with those needs.

Michelle Donelan:

Next year, we are providing a cash increase of £780 million in the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, an increase of 12% compared to this year, bringing the total amount for supporting those with the most complex special educational needs to £7.2 billion.

Although the Department for Education allocates a small amount of this funding directly to further education colleges, the vast majority of this funding is allocated to local authorities. Local authorities are then responsible for securing appropriate support for children and young people with complex special education needs, including support provided in further education colleges. In 2021 local authorities will report information about their spending on high needs in 2020-21, including how much they provided to further education colleges.

The latest available actual expenditure data reported by local authorities, for 2018-19, shows that they spent £373 million on special educational needs provision in further education.

■ Further Education: Teachers

Robert Halfon:

[\[8243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to attract further education college teachers in subject areas where there are skill deficits.

Michelle Donelan:

Since 2013-14, we have invested over £140 million in further education (FE) teachers and leaders, including for workforce development, through the independent Education and Training Foundation.

In the 2 years to March 2020, we will have invested up to £20 million to support providers as they prepare for the introduction of T levels. This investment includes £5 million for Taking Teaching Further, a national programme that tests how best to attract experienced industry professionals into teaching in FE and how best to support an ongoing exchange between FE and industry. The programme focusses on supporting priority sectors, including the technical routes that will be taught first.

As part of our £400 million 16-19 funding increase in the 2020-21 financial year, we are investing a further £20 million in FE workforce development to help boost teacher recruitment and retention, for which we will announce more details soon.

■ Music: GCSE

Louise Haigh:

[\[10409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils were entered for GCSE music in (a) Sheffield City Council area, (b) Yorkshire and the Humber and (c) England in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The number of pupils[1] entered for GCSE music[2] in Sheffield, Yorkshire and the Humber and England from 2014/15 – 2018/19 is shown in the table below:

REGION/LOCAL AUTHORITY [3]	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19 [4]
England	38,851	37,218	34,557	30,926	30,655
Yorkshire and The Humber	3,354	3,268	2,955	2,446	2,334
Sheffield	239	251	250	224	226

Please note, any trends observed in the above figures should be treated with caution and considered against changes in methodology over the five year period, changes in

cohort and more recently, changes in entry behaviour from schools following the introduction of 9-1 reformed GCSEs across all GCSE subjects including music in 2018. Since 2014/15, the percentage of the GCSE cohort in state funded schools who take music GCSE has fluctuated but remained broadly stable at between 6 and 7%. It currently stands at 6%.

For more information on GCSE reform and changes in key stage 4 performance tables, please see the secondary accountability measures guidance here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/840275/Secondary_accountability_measures_guidance_-_October_2019_final_with_ref.pdf.

We want all pupils to have a high quality music education. The Department is proud of and will be refreshing its National Plan for Music Education, which sets an ambitious vision for music education for every child, regardless of their background. The subject is compulsory in the national curriculum and this government is providing funding of over £300 million for Music Education Hubs between 2016 and 2020. In January we announced a further £80 million investment in Hubs for 2020-21. Music Education Hubs support schools to drive up the quality and consistency of music education and our national funding formula for Hubs, based on local pupil numbers means extra weighting for pupils in receipt of free school meals. Music Education Hubs have done excellent work to ensure there is more equitable access to music education. We also provide £500,000 per year to In Harmony, a national music programme that aims to inspire and transform the lives of children in deprived communities through ensemble music-making.

This Government supports exceptionally talented young musicians from low-income families to fulfil their potential through the £30 million per annum Music and Dance Scheme. The scheme helps ensure that all children and young people with exceptional ability can benefit from world-class, specialist training, regardless of their personal circumstances.

[1] Includes attempts and achievements by these pupils in previous academic years.

[2] In line with discounting rules, only one attempt is counted.

[3] Local Authority and Region figures cover achievements in state-funded schools only. They do not include pupils recently arrived from overseas and so will not match with state-funded figures in the published data. The 'England' line is a sum of Local authority figures and will differ from the national totals published.

[4] Data for 2014/15 – 2017/18 is final, data for 2018/19 is provisional.

■ Music: Secondary Education

Louise Haigh:

[10410]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many secondary school music teachers there were in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The number of music teachers in service at state funded secondary schools from November 2014 to November 2018 is provided in the table below:

YEAR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Headcount of music teachers	7,109	6,862	6,720	6,480	6,525

Source: School Workforce Census

The percentage of all hours taught which were spent on music in state funded secondary schools in England from November 2014 to 2018 is provided in the table below:

YEAR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
% of hours spent on teaching music	2.4%	2.4%	2.3%	2.3%	2.2%

Source: School Workforce Census

■ Overseas Territories: Education**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[8175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of making the study of the Overseas Territories a mandatory part of the primary school curriculum.

Nick Gibb:

The history curriculum gives teachers and schools the freedom and flexibility to use specific examples from history to teach pupils about the history of Britain and the wider world. Schools and teachers can determine which examples and resources to use to stimulate and challenge pupils, and reflect key points in history.

There are opportunities within the themes and eras of the history curriculum for teachers and schools to teach about the Overseas Territories at Key Stages 1-2. At Key Stage 1, pupils should be taught about changes within living memory and events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally. At Key Stage 2, the curriculum requires pupils to be taught about aspects or themes in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066.

No specific resource or cost was dedicated to the promotion of the new National Funding Formula website, which formed part of wider communications work that the Department carries out on an ongoing basis.

Layla Moran:

[10463]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many of his officials were involved in the (a) design and (b) promotion of the View national funding formula for schools web page on his Department's website.

Nick Gibb:

5.5 full time equivalent digital staff were involved in the design of the 'View national funding formula for schools webpage', with support from a policy official.

No specific resource or cost was dedicated to the promotion of the new National Funding Formula website, which formed part of wider communications work that the Department carries out on an ongoing basis.

■ **Schools: Luton**

Rachel Hopkins:

[8479]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will increase funding for schools in Luton schools in 2020.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is increasing school funding nationally by £14 billion over the next three years. Funding will increase by £2.6 billion in 2020-21, followed by increases of £4.8 billion and £7.1 billion in 2021-22 and 2022-23 respectively, compared to 2019-20.

The Department will continue to distribute this funding through the National Funding Formula, which ensures that funding is based on schools' and pupils' needs and characteristics. This will ensure that per pupil funding for every school can at least rise in line with inflation next year and faster than inflation for most.

In 2020-21, Luton will attract an additional £5.5 million in total cash funding in its schools block – a 3.1% increase compared to this year. This will take Luton's total cash funding up to £181.4 million. In addition, Luton will receive £33 million in its high needs block to help support children with complex special educational needs – a cash increase of £4.5 million.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Air Pollution: Railway Stations**

Alex Cunningham:

[9019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether air quality targets for enclosed train stations will be included in proposals combined in the Environment Bill.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[9021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will include proposals for air quality targets for train stations in the forthcoming environment Bill.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government considers air pollution on the railway to be an important issue. The Department for Transport is working closely with Network Rail and industry to improve air quality for railway users, workers, and neighbours.

The Environment Bill introduces measures to improve the natural environment, including outdoor air quality. The Bill establishes a duty to set a legally binding target on fine particulate matter (PM2.5) concentrations in outdoor air as this is the most damaging pollutant to human health. An additional legally binding air quality target will also be set through the target framework. Setting ambitious air quality targets will drive comprehensive action across all parts of Government and society to reduce emissions and will deliver health benefits in all locations including stations.

■ **Animal Experiments: Chemicals**

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[7152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what her Department is taking to reduce toxicity tests performed on animals for new chemical substances.

George Eustice:

The UK has been in the forefront in opposing animal tests where alternative approaches could be used – the “last-resort principle” - and we will retain that principle moving forward, enshrining it in the Environment Bill

We are working collaboratively with partner countries at the OECD as part of their test guidelines programme to develop new methods aimed at reducing the need for performing tests on animals for new chemical substances.

■ **Animal Welfare**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[9640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has plans to reintroduce the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill.

George Eustice:

In line with the manifesto commitment to introduce tougher sentences for animal cruelty, we remain fully committed to increasing the maximum custodial sentences for animal cruelty offences from six months to five years. This will enable courts to take a firmer approach to cases such as dog fighting, abuse of puppies and kittens, or gross neglect of farm animals. The necessary legislation will be introduced as soon as Parliamentary time permits.

■ **Busking: Animal Welfare**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[8173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the animal welfare implications of the use of dogs by buskers.

George Eustice:

There are already laws and regulations in place to protect animals used by buskers. Dogs often act as companions for vulnerable members of the homeless community, aiding their rehabilitation to overcome many mental health issues.

However, there is an important distinction between these companion animals and dogs being exploited for money. Support and protection for these animals is further provided by charities including Dogs on the Streets, county borough animal warden services, busking regulators and city inspectors.

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, local authorities and the police have the power to seize animals that they suspect have been subjected to mistreatment. It is also an offence under the Act to cause any unnecessary suffering to an animal or fail to provide for its welfare.

If anyone has concerns about the welfare of a particular animal, the Government encourages them to contact the RSPCA or the relevant local authority who can investigate the matter further.

■ **Chemicals: Regulation**

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[7151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that UK chemicals regulations conform with the EU-REACH standards in the (a) short-, (b) medium- and (c) long-term.

Rebecca Pow:

As the UK left the EU on 31 January 2020, the UK has now entered into the transition period. During this period, the UK will remain within the EU Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) regulatory framework.

At the end of the transition period we will bring EU REACH in to UK law. This will mean that any decision we take as an independent regime will be consistent with the fundamental aims and principles of REACH and based on rigorous assessment of the scientific evidence. We will not change what REACH sets out to achieve, including a high level of protection of human health and the environment.

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

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[10299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will publish the titles of the reviews that her Department is undertaking.

George Eustice:

Defra is currently supporting 5 independent reviews.

These are:

- Gamebirds Release
- Highly Protected Marine Areas
- Reservoirs Review
- Surface Water
- National Food Strategy Review

The reports for which are due over the course of this year.

■ Fisheries: Finance**Andrew Bowie:****[9103]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress he has made on introducing a replacement to the European Maritime and Fisheries Funding after December 2020.

George Eustice:

We made a commitment in our manifesto to maintain funding for fisheries across the UK's nations throughout the Parliament and to support the regeneration of our coastal communities.

Last year, the Government provided an extra £37 million of domestic funding for the sector, which will be available until 2022. England's share of this funding is available via the Maritime and Fisheries Fund, which was opened in October 2019. Scotland was allocated £16.7 million, and delivery will be managed by Marine Scotland.

The Fisheries Bill will provide England and the devolved administrations with new domestic grant making powers that will ensure we have sufficient powers to support our future priorities. Fisheries is a devolved matter and, in future, grant schemes will be developed by each of the devolved administrations targeted towards their own national priorities.

We have been evaluating the current EMFF scheme and the needs of the sector. We have conducted social, environmental and economic evaluations to better understand the sector's needs and where funding should be targeted.

We plan to hold a formal consultation exercise on the design of a future scheme in 2020.

■ Food: Public Sector**Preet Kaur Gill:****[8426]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she plans to take to ensure the provision of a nutritionally balanced plant-based meal on each public sector menu.

George Eustice:

Defra mandates certain food and catering standards to encourage the provision of higher quality and nutritious foods, accounting for dietary advice from Public Health England (PHE). Defra continues to support other departments and institutions, such as NHS trusts and schools, in their efforts to provide the relevant information and mechanisms to inform appropriate arrangements regarding dietary choices.

Whilst Defra offer advice on food procurement standards, we do not stipulate the content of public sector organisation menus; we believe that food procurers and caterers are best placed to make decisions about their menus.

■ Fracking: Water**Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[9769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of regulatory protections for people handling fracking waste water contents (brine) from the effects of radium.

Rebecca Pow:

The current regulatory framework covering dangers posed by radioactive substances such as radium includes the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Ionising Radiations Regulations 2017 (IRR17). The regulatory provisions to protect workers were recently reviewed as part of the process of introducing IRR17, which replaced the previous version of the Ionising Radiations Regulations.

The Health and Safety Executive is therefore satisfied that these arrangements are sufficient and has no current plans to make any further assessment of their adequacy.

More widely, through the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016, the Environment Agency (EA) consider the radiological impact of exposure to the public from radioactive waste as part of its assessment of applications for environmental permits at disposal sites. The EA will not issue a permit unless a company can demonstrate how it will provide a high level of protection to people and the environment.

■ Recycling: Birmingham**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**[\[8966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the recycling rates in Birmingham in each year since 2015.

Rebecca Pow:

YEAR	PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE SENT FOR REUSE, RECYCLING OR COMPOSTING BY BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
2014/15	26.6%
2015/16:	22.9%
2016/17:	24.4%
2017/18:	20.7%
2018/19	22.0%

■ South West Water

Luke Pollard:

[\[10466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she plans to continue the £50 payment to South West Water customers for each year of this Parliament.

Rebecca Pow:

We have committed to extend the rebate of £50 for South West Water's customers until 31 March 2021.

It is important that the Government reviews the future of the subsidy beyond 2020-2021. This will allow us to take account of the 2019 Price Review and ensure that its continuation is appropriate.

■ Textiles: Sustainable Development

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[9064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to promote sustainable practices in the clothing and textiles industry.

Rebecca Pow:

In the Resources and Waste Strategy for England (2018), the Government committed to develop policy measures to promote sustainable practices in the clothing and textiles industry. We are currently working with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and industry to develop an ambitious new phase of the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan, which has to date delivered significant reductions in signatories' carbon and water footprints. The recently introduced Environment Bill also seeks powers to develop ecodesign and consumer information requirements subject to consultation to support durable, repairable, and recyclable textiles. We have also identified textiles as a priority area in which to consult on an Extended Producer Responsibility scheme. We are seeking to support closed loop recycling through the WRAP-administered Resource Action Fund. Our plans to promote

sustainable practices in the textiles sector will be developed and enhanced in a new Waste Prevention Programme on which we will consult this year.

■ Waste Disposal: Crime

Henry Smith:

[8995]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to tackle (a) organised waste crime and (b) fly-tipping.

Rebecca Pow:

Waste crime damages the environment, is a blight on local communities and the Government is committed to tackling this criminal activity. We have given the Environment Agency (EA) an extra £60 million to tackle waste crime since 2014 and have also made a range of legislative changes. In addition, the Resource and Waste Strategy sets out an ambitious package of further reforms to modernise the way waste is regulated, clamping down on illegal operators and improving performance across the sector. Some of these commitments are being taken forward in the Environment Bill, including measures to further strengthen EA powers when dealing with criminal operators.

The new Joint Unit for Waste Crime (JUWC), a taskforce dedicated to tackling serious and organised criminality in the waste sector was launched last month. The JUWC will tackle criminal activity including the large-scale illegal dumping, or false labelling of waste so it can be exported abroad to unsuspecting countries. It brings together the EA, the National Crime Agency, the police, HMRC, Natural Resources Wales and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency in a concerted UK-wide effort to share intelligence and resources to tackle crime which costs the economy at least £600 million every year.

Fly-tipping is unacceptable whether it occurs on public or private land and tackling this crime is a priority for the Government. In recent years we have bolstered local authorities' powers to tackle fly-tipping. As well as enhanced powers to search and seize vehicles of suspected fly-tippers, we have given them the power to issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) of up to £400 for fly-tipping offences, including to those caught fly-tipping and householders who pass their waste to a fly-tipper. FPNs provide local authorities with an efficient mechanism to hold fly-tipping perpetrators to account without having to go to court, which can be a time consuming, resource-intensive and expensive process.

If a prosecution is taken, then a fly-tipper can receive a fine of up to £50,000, or 12 months imprisonment if convicted in a Magistrates' Court. The offence can attract an unlimited fine and up to 5 years imprisonment if convicted in a Crown Court. Defra has worked with the Sentencing Council to amend sentencing guidance for magistrates to ensure that they are aware of local fixed penalty levels for these offences, but will continue this work to help to secure tougher penalties in line with our manifesto commitment.

We have also committed to the development of a fly-tipping toolkit, hosted by the National Fly Tipping Prevention Group (NFTPG). This will be a web-based tool to help local authorities and others work in partnership to tackle fly-tipping. It will cover, for example, the use of new technology to report fly-tipping, sharing of intelligence within and between partnerships, dealing with unauthorised encampments and promoting the duty of care to individuals and businesses. The Government is also consulting at the moment about strengthening police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments. The NFTPG has also published a Fly-tipping Partnership Framework outlining best practice for the prevention, reporting, investigation and clearance of fly-tipping and a series of fly-tipping prevention guides for householders, businesses and landowners.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Bangladesh: Christianity

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[9061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the level of risk of religious persecution faced by Christians in Bangladesh.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The UK is committed to defending Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and promoting respect between communities of different religions and those of no religion. While Bangladesh is a secular people's republic with formal guarantees of religious freedom, we regularly assess the risk of religious persecution faced by Christians and other groups in Bangladesh, and actively engage with minority communities to understand their concerns. We will continue to monitor this closely and advocate for FoRB as well as other human rights.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[8181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the safety of British citizens abroad at risk of coming into contact with the coronavirus.

Andrew Stephenson:

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.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Repatriation

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[\[10414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to repatriate UK citizens from China in response to the Coronavirus.

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 affected 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 organised a repatriation flight for British Nationals and other entitled persons in Hubei Province which landed on 31 January at RAF Brize Norton, carrying 83 British nationals, including some Government staff and medics, and 41 foreign nationals. On 2 February, we successfully evacuated a further 11 people – 7 British nationals and 4 dependents. They landed at RAF Brize Norton and were transferred to an isolation facility upon arrival. These figures were correct as of 4 February. We remain in close contact with the Chinese authorities and are working with international partners to provide other ways for British nationals still in Hubei to return home.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[\[10415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Chinese counterpart on allowing spouses of UK citizens, that are Chinese citizens to be repatriated to the UK from China.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Foreign Secretary has spoken directly to his Chinese counterpart about the evacuation of British nationals from Hubei Province, and he raised the issue of dual-nationals and dependents, emphasising the importance of keeping families together. Contact with the Chinese authorities continued at Senior Official level. The Chinese Government did make a last-minute decision to allow dual nationals and dependents to board the UK flight which arrived at RAF Brize Norton on 31 January. At 1945 on 2 February, we successfully evacuated a further 11 people – 7 British nationals and 4 dependents. These figures were correct as of 4 February. We remain in close contact with the Chinese authorities and are working with international partners to provide other ways for British nationals who remain in Hubei to return home.

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[\[10416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Chinese counterpart on allowing non-spouse family members of UK citizens, that are Chinese citizens to be repatriated to the UK from China.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Foreign Secretary has spoken directly to his Chinese counterpart about the evacuation of British nationals from Hubei Province, and he raised the issue of dual-

nationals and dependents, emphasising the importance of keeping families together. Contact with the Chinese authorities continued at Senior Official level. The Chinese Government did make a last-minute decision to allow dual nationals and dependents to board the UK flight which arrived at RAF Brize Norton on 31 January. At 1945 on 2 February, we successfully evacuated a further 11 people – 7 British nationals and 4 dependents. These figures were correct as of 4 February. We remain in close contact with the Chinese authorities and are working with international partners to provide other ways for British nationals who remain in Hubei to return home.

■ Eritrea: Christianity

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[9063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the risks to Christian communities in Eritrea.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Government of Eritrea permits and regulates the practice of three Christian religions: Orthodox, Catholic, and Lutheran, as well as Sunni Islam. The majority of worshippers from these permitted religions are able to practice their religion freely. I am concerned that those from minority unregistered religions, such as the Pentecostal Church and the Jehovah's Witnesses, face regular persecution and detention without trial, as well some practising permitted religions, who face occasional censorship.

We regularly raise our concerns about human rights in Eritrea with the Government, as my predecessor did with the Eritrean President's senior adviser when she saw him in July 2019. Our Ambassador in Asmara raised arbitrary detentions of members of the Christian community with the Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 20 May 2019 and with the President's senior adviser on 14 August 2019. At the 41st session of the Human Rights Council in 2019 the UK reiterated calls for Eritrea to respect freedom of religion or belief. Eritrea remains a priority country for the FCO under our annual human rights reporting and we will continue to monitor the situation.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Reviews

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[10302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will publish the titles of the reviews that his Department is undertaking.

Christopher Pincher:

The titles of the reviews currently being undertaken by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are not held centrally and to compile this information would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Hong Kong: Demonstrations

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown:

[8943]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to reports of abuse and arrest of medics treating people involved in protests in Hong Kong, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law are complied with; and what representations he has made to the (a) Chinese Government, and b) the Government of Hong Kong on compliance with that law.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We take any allegations relating to the arrest of medics treating protesters at demonstrations in Hong Kong extremely seriously. We expect the Hong Kong authorities to abide by international humanitarian norms and laws. We continue to be concerned about the situation in Hong Kong and have called consistently for a robust, independent inquiry into recent events as a step towards resolution of the situation. We have also made our concerns to the Chinese government about human rights clear. The Foreign Secretary has set out our concerns about the situation in Hong Kong directly to both the Hong Kong Chief Executive, Carrie Lam and to the Chinese Foreign Minister, State Councillor Wang Yi.

■ Hong Kong: Embassies

Sarah Champion:

[8308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support the Government has offered to the 15-year-old girl arrested on UK consulate land in Hong Kong on 11 January 2020.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The UK has repeatedly made clear that we support the right to peaceful and lawful protest. As the Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the UN and South Asia stated on 15 January, any arrests and judicial processes should be conducted in a fair and transparent manner. We have made clear that we expect the Hong Kong authorities abide by international humanitarian laws and practices.

■ International Seabed Authority

Kerry McCarthy:

[7148]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on how many occasions Ministers in his Department have met with Michael Lodge, Secretary General of the International Seabed Authority in the last four years.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Minister for the Commonwealth, UN and South Asia [Lord Ahmad] met Michael Lodge at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for an introductory call about the work of the International Seabed Authority in 2018. He also met him briefly in the

margins of a workshop co-sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Royal Society in the same year.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[7149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much funding has been (a) allocated to and (b) spent on promotional materials for the re-election of Michael Lodge, Secretary General of the International Seabed Authority.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

No funding has been specifically allocated to the re-election of Michael Lodge, Secretary General of the International Seabed Authority.

■ Iran: Detainees

Tulip Siddiq: [\[10428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2020 to Question 6739, what steps he has taken to protect from torture non-Iranian dual-national British citizens who have been illegally imprisoned in Iran.

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, the Foreign Secretary did so with Foreign Minister Zarif on 6 January and I did so with the Iranian Ambassador on 13 January.

■ Iran: Prisoners

Tulip Siddiq: [\[10427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2020 to Question 6738 on Iran: Prisoners, how many non-Iranian dual-national British citizens imprisoned in Iran (a) he and (b) representatives of his Department have visited 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, the Foreign Secretary did so with Foreign Minister Zarif on 6 January and I did so with the Iranian Ambassador on 13 January.

■ Iran: Torture

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[10429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2020 to Question 6740, what representations he has made to his Iranian counterpart on the torture of non-Iranian dual-national British citizens who have been 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 the Foreign Secretary did so with Foreign Minister Zarif on 6 January and I did so with the Iranian Ambassador on 13 January.

■ Iraq: Foreign Relations

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[8183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with (a) the Iraqi business community and (b) other Iraqi citizens living in the UK on Iraqi attitudes towards the West.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The British Government is in regular dialogue with the Iraqi business community, and with Iraqi citizens living in the UK, about our common wish to deepen the UK-Iraq relationship and promote closer ties between British and Iraqi businesses. As part of this engagement, in December 2019, Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for the Middle East participated in the Iraq Britain Business Council Conference in Dubai to discuss opportunities in Iraq's energy, infrastructure, water and transport sectors.

■ Israel: Human Rights

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[10457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions has he had with his counterpart in the Israeli Government on allegations of human rights abuses committed by Israeli military forces.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We have repeatedly made clear to Israel our longstanding concerns about the manner in which the Israel Defense Forces police non-violent protests and the border areas, including the use of live ammunition and excessive force. We call on Israel to adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interest and to investigate allegations of use of excessive force. We have also stressed the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. We will continue to do so.

■ Israel: Occupied Territories**Afzal Khan:**[\[10465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the statement made by the Israeli Prime Minister on 28 January 2020 on applying Israeli sovereignty to the Jordan Valley, the northern Dead Sea, and Israeli settlements in the West Bank, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the legality under international law of those proposals.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK position is clear. Any move to unilaterally annex territory, without an agreement negotiated by the parties, would be contrary to international law and damaging to peace efforts.

■ Israel: Palestinians**Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[10456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions has he had with his counterpart in the Israeli Government on allegations of torture committed by Israeli government interrogators against journalism student Mays Abu Ghosh.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We have not made representations to the Government of Israel about the case of Mays Abu Ghosh. We have concerns about mistreatment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons, and about Israel's respect of its obligations as an occupying power, under applicable international law. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have raised the treatment of Palestinians in Israeli prisons with the Israeli authorities. We emphasise the importance of treating prisoners and detainees humanely and in accordance with international law.

■ Kashmir: Overseas Aid**Sarah Owen:**[\[10477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what (a) assistance and (b) aid his Department plans to allocate to the people of Kashmir.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Our longstanding position is that it is for India and Pakistan to find a lasting political resolution on Kashmir, taking into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people. We encourage India and Pakistan to open channels of communication and engage in dialogue as a means to resolving differences. We have welcomed India's commitment to economic and social development in India administered Kashmir and have asked the Indian Government to provide more detail on how their plans will be realised. We do not currently have any aid programmes in India administered Kashmir or Pakistan administered Kashmir. The UK seeks to reduce poverty, foster

prosperity and build sustainable inclusive markets in India and Pakistan, while generating a return for the UK and creating trade, investment, and partnership opportunities.

■ Mexico: Immigrants

Afzal Khan:

[8469]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Mexican counterpart on the treatment of the caravan of Central American migrants that entered Mexico on 23 January 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

The British Government is aware of reports of a caravan of Central American migrants that first attempted to enter Mexico from Guatemala on 18 January. Our Embassy in Mexico City is monitoring the situation closely. British Embassy officials visit migration shelters on Mexico's southern and northern borders, and remain in close contact with Mexican authorities. During her visit to Mexico in September 2019, Baroness Williams discussed migration and human rights with Interior Minister, Olga Sanchez Cordero.

Afzal Khan:

[8470]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports of violence by Mexican authorities against the caravan of Central American migrants that entered Mexico on 23 January 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The British Government is aware of reports of a caravan of Central American migrants that first attempted to enter Mexico from Guatemala on 18 January. Our Embassy in Mexico City is monitoring the situation closely. British Embassy officials visit migration shelters on Mexico's southern and northern borders, and remain in close contact with Mexican authorities. During her visit to Mexico in September 2019, Baroness Williams discussed migration and human rights with Interior Minister, Olga Sanchez Cordero.

■ Nigeria: Religious Freedom

Andrew Rosindell:

[8188]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of religious freedom and tolerance in Nigeria.

Andrew Stephenson:

Nigeria is a secular state and the right to freedom of religion is protected by the Constitution. 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.

■ **Pakistan: Human Rights**

Andrew Rosindell:

[8184]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Pakistani counterpart on (a) the human rights situation in Pakistan and (b) the arrest of Manzoor Ahmad Pashteen.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We remain concerned about the human rights situation across Pakistan, including on freedom of expression. We are aware of the arrest of Mr Pashteen on 27 January and are monitoring the case. We remain concerned by restrictions on the freedom of expression in Pakistan. The freedom to hold and express views without censorship, intimidation or unnecessary restriction is a cornerstone of democracy. We regularly raise at a senior level our concerns about the human rights situation with the Government of Pakistan. The previous Foreign Secretary discussed the human rights situation in Pakistan with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Qureshi during his visit to the UK in June 2019. The Minister for South Asia Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon raised our concerns about the human rights situation in Pakistan, including the protection of minority communities, with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister in November 2019.

■ **Palestinians: Politics and Government**

Andrew Rosindell:

[8172]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority's pledge to renounce violence.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The British Government strongly condemns all forms of violence. Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership

to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and actions that could incite violence or hatred.

■ **Sudan: South Sudan**

Harriett Baldwin:

[8271]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping in the disputed Abyei region on the Sudan-South Sudan border.

Andrew Stephenson:

The UK commends the vital role that the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) plays in the protection of civilians and assisting to bring stability to the region. However, we remain concerned that a final agreement on the situation in Abyei has not been reached and by ongoing impediments which prevent UN peacekeepers from fully implementing their mandate. The UN Security Council made clear in a press statement of 29 January that the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan must provide their full support to UNISFA, including by removing any obstacles that hinder UNISFA's work to protect civilians.

We are also concerned by increasing intercommunal tensions and by the attack on Kolom in Abyei on Wednesday 22 January. We offer sympathies to all those affected. We welcome the commitment of the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to de-escalate tensions and jointly investigate and urge any investigation to be conducted swiftly and transparently. Our Minister of State for the Commonwealth, UN and South Asia reinforced this message with the Sudanese Ambassador on 28 January. We will also raise in New York the reports of UN peacekeepers' failure to act in order to establish the facts of this tragic incident.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Brain: Injuries**

Sir John Hayes:

[8141]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of people living with acquired brain injury receive neuro-rehabilitation; and what plans his Department has to increase that proportion.

Caroline Dinanage:

This information is not collected. However, the majority of patients with acquired brain injury can access the services they need routinely through secondary care and community services which are commissioned locally.

In 2015, NHS England published 'The Principles and Expectations for Good Adult Rehabilitation' to support commissioners on delivering rehabilitation care locally. Building on this, in 2016, NHS England published further rehabilitation guidance,

setting out a commissioning model and the evidence base for delivering high quality rehabilitation services. The guidance can be found at the following link:

www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/rehabilitation-comms-guid-16-17.pdf

For those with the most serious brain injuries and rehabilitation needs, NHS England commissions specialised rehabilitation services at a national level to an agreed service specification.

■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

Hilary Benn: [8146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many prescriptions for medicinal cannabis have been issued in the last 12 months.

Jo Churchill:

There have been 2,655 items for licensed and unlicensed cannabis-based medicines issued on a National Health Service prescription, dispensed in the community and submitted to the NHS Business Services Authority for reimbursement for the period December 2018 to November 2019, the latest data available.

There have been 234 items for licensed and unlicensed cannabis-based medicines issued on a private prescription that have been submitted to the NHS Business Services Authority for reporting and monitoring purposes only for the period December 2018 to November 2019.

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

Ronnie Cowan: [8359]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions officials of his Department has had with officials of the Home Office to ensure there are no undue delays in granting import licences for cannabis-based products for medicinal use; and if he will make a statement.

Ronnie Cowan: [8360]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what meetings (a) he, (b) Special Advisers to ministers of his Department, and (c) officials of his Department have attended with representatives of patient groups on the import of cannabis-based products for medicinal use since 1 January 2018.

Ronnie Cowan: [8361]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the guidance document entitled, The supply, manufacture, importation and distribution of unlicensed

cannabis-based products for medicinal use in humans special, published by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, whether his Department has plans to update that guidance.

Jo Churchill:

We are aware that some wholesalers and pharmacies have reported challenges in importing a range of unlicensed cannabis-based products for medicinal use. It is clear that for some products, long lead times and delays in receiving export licences from the authorities in the country of manufacture, have led to delays in the supply against prescriptions and pose a potential risk to patients receiving their medicines on time.

The Department, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), the Home Office, NHS England and NHS Improvement are in the process of agreeing what action can be taken to help alleviate these delays, including exploring mechanisms to allow licensed wholesalers to hold a small reserve stock linked to an evidenced demand by specialist prescribers; and ensuring that the United Kingdom meets its obligations under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. Any changes will be reflected in the guidance published by the MHRA.

In the meantime, the Home Office and the MHRA are treating all import requests for cannabis-based products for medicinal use as emergency supplies and on receipt of the correct documentation, applicants can expect a decision within a few working days.

No meetings have taken place with representatives of patient groups concerning the reported delays to imports of cannabis-based products for medicinal use. Officials did meet with patient groups in the development of this policy when the previous Government rescheduled cannabis-based products for medicinal use under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001.

■ **Carers**

Jim Shannon:

[8279]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Government's Carers action plan 2018 to 2020, published on 5 June 2018; and whether that plan will be extended.

Caroline Dineneage:

In July 2019 we published the 'Carers action plan 2018 to 2020: 1-year progress review' to demonstrate the progress the Carers Action Plan (CAP) had made so far and plan to publish a final report this summer following the conclusion of the CAP.

We are committed to continuing to work with all our stakeholders to consider the next steps after the publication of the final report.

■ Carers: Young People**Jim Shannon:****[8280]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the extent of take up by GP practices of NHS England's Care for young carers recommendations.

Caroline Dinenage:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Cervical Cancer: Screening**Tracey Crouch:****[8216]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has in place to enable people who are housebound due to (a) a physical and (b) a mental health condition to access smear tests.

Jo Churchill:

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

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

Professor Sir Mike Richards' review of Adult Screening programmes was published on 16 October 2019 and recognised that people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or mental health conditions tend to have lower uptake of screening programmes than the general population. Professor Richards' report included recommendations on improving access to services for and sharing good practice on physical and learning disabilities. The Department is considering the report with NHS England and Public Health England and will publish an implementation plan in the spring.

Christian Matheson:**[8338]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that women under the age of 25 with a history of cervical cancer can request a smear test.

Jo Churchill:

A cervical smear may not be the most appropriate test for patients presenting with symptoms. The UK National Screening Committee encourages all women who have concerns about their health or who present with symptoms to contact their general

practitioner, who will then decide on the most appropriate next steps and diagnostic tests.

Women who have a history of cancer are invited to attend regular appointments for testing, which will usually consist of a physical examination. These examinations will look for signs of cancer returning and are recommended for every three to six months for the first two years, and then every six to 12 months for a further three years.

■ **Dementia: Health Services**

Debbie Abrahams:

[10385]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress the Government has made in response to the review of the Challenge on Dementia.

Caroline Dinenage:

In 2018 we undertook a review of the progress made in implementing the Challenge on Dementia 2020. This was informed by a call for evidence. Respondents told us that we were largely on track to meet our commitments. In a small number of areas additional or refined actions were identified to help ensure that commitments could be met. The report of the review was published on 22 February 2019 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dementia-2020-challenge-progress-review>

Implementation of the Challenge on Dementia 2020 actions is overseen by the Department's Dementia Programme Board which brings together all Delivery Partners and is chaired by myself.

We continue to make significant progress in meeting the commitments made in the Challenge.

■ **Epilepsy: Cannabis**

Hilary Benn:

[8147]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his policy is on the availability of medicinal cannabis prescriptions for children with epilepsy; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

On 1 November 2018, the law was changed to allow clinicians on the General Medical Council's (GMC) Specialist Register to prescribe cannabis-based products for medicinal use, where clinically appropriate and in the best interests of patients.

On 20 December 2019 a letter was published on the NHS England and NHS Improvement website reminding prescribers of the GMC's guidance on the prescribing and use of unlicensed medicines – and to clarify the procedure for prescribing and supplying cannabis-based products for medicinal use. Licensed cannabis-based products indicated for epilepsy, such as Epidyolex, may be

prescribed in-line with the condition of the marketing authorisation. The letter is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/guidance-prescribing-cannabis-based-products-medicinal-use.pdf>

■ Flour: Folic Acid

Jessica Morden: [10331]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for a decision on proposals on the mandatory fortification of flour and gluten-free products with folic acid.

Jo Churchill:

The Department published a United Kingdom-wide consultation on the mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid which ran from 13 June to 9 September 2019. A post consultation update was made available on the Gov.UK website. We received 1,442 responses from a wide range of stakeholders. Due to the pre-election period, preparation of the Government response was put on hold. This is now being prepared and further information will be announced in due course. Any decisions will be made in conjunction with the devolved administrations.

■ Gambling

Jim Shannon: [8283]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on tackling gambling addiction.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Long Term Plan includes a commitment to expand the geographical coverage of NHS services for people with serious gambling problems, and to work with partners to tackle the problem at source. Up to 15 such National Health Service clinics will be open by 2023/24.

In accordance with the NHS mental health implementation framework, the NHS will have opened three new clinics during this financial year. These are The National Problem Gambling Clinic, in London, which has opened a Children and Young People clinic; a clinic in Sunderland; and – due to be launched in March – a clinic in Manchester.

The Government also announced a new United Kingdom-wide cross-Government addiction strategy, which includes gambling within its remit. This is due to be published by the end of 2020.

■ General Practitioners

Mr Jonathan Lord: [8262]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve access to GPs in England.

Jo Churchill:

We recognise general practice is under pressure nationally and that is why we have committed to growing the workforce by 6,000 more doctors in general practice and 6,000 more primary care professionals. This is in addition to the 20,000 primary care professionals NHS England will provide funding towards through Primary Care Networks.

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

Evening and weekend general practice appointments are routinely available across the country to enable patients to find appointments at a time convenient to them. NHS England, working with stakeholders, is undertaking a national review of access to general practice services. The review's main objective is to improve patient access both in hours and at evenings and weekends and reduce unwarranted variation in experience.

■ General Practitioners: Postnatal Care**Jonathan Ashworth:****[8299]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of GPs conducting a routine postnatal physical and mental health check for all new mothers.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Post-natal care can be delivered by a number of different providers, including midwives, health visitors and general practitioners. NHS England and NHS Improvement expect commissioners and providers of maternity care to pay due regard to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. NICE guidance on 'Postnatal care up to eight weeks after birth' states that at each postnatal contact, women should be asked about their emotional wellbeing, what family and social support they have and their usual coping strategies for dealing with day-to-day matters. At the end of the postnatal period, the coordinating healthcare professional should ensure that the woman's physical, emotional and social wellbeing is reviewed. NHS England and NHS Improvement are reviewing the available evidence to establish a clearer picture of current practice in this area.

A decision on whether to specifically include a six-week postnatal maternal health check in negotiations for changes to the 2020-21 contract has not yet been taken.

■ General Practitioners: Surrey**Mr Jonathan Lord:****[8261]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to GPs in Surrey.

Jo Churchill:

We recognise general practice is under pressure nationally and we have committed to growing the workforce by 6,000 more doctors in general practice and 6,000 more primary care professionals, to create a further 50 million appointments in general practice a year by 2024/25.

Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (ICS) has advised that through Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership, there are a number of initiatives to improve access to general practice services. Significant investment is planned over a five-year period to support the recruitment of new roles working across groups of general practices within Primary Care Networks. Growing the workforce will mean larger teams of staff providing a wide range of care options for patients and will free up more time for doctors to focus on those with more complex needs.

The ICS has further advised Surrey Heartlands has commissioned local federations to provide additional access to appointments to general practice services from 8am to 8pm. These appointments are provided either face to face or through digital consultations. Patients are able to access general practice appointments across hubs in Surrey Heartlands 365 days a year, including Bank Holidays. During the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019, Surrey Heartlands offered an additional 90,082 appointments, on top of those offered during general practitioner practice core hours.

■ GP Surgeries: Students**Dame Diana Johnson:****[8200]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of enabling students to register with a GP at home and at university.

Jo Churchill:

Anyone who requires treatment that a general practitioner (GP) or healthcare professional regards as an emergency, or as immediately necessary, should be provided that treatment free of charge, regardless of whether they are registered with a GP.

It is not possible for patients to register with two GP practices at the same time. However, we recognise that students registered with a university GP practice may wish to access treatment from another GP when returning home or when away from university. Students can therefore register as a temporary resident at another GP practice. Temporary residence applies where a person intends to be in an area for more than 24 hours but less than three months. Once registered, patients can receive treatment in the same way as other patients. Details of a patient's treatment whilst at their temporary practice will be passed to their permanent practice.

■ Health Professions: Training

Dame Diana Johnson:

[8199]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to provide additional financial assistance to student nurses, midwives and allied health professionals to help with the costs of childcare.

Edward Argar:

As part of our new financial support package, our announcement on 19 January 2020¹ stated that new and continuing nursing, midwifery and many allied health students on eligible pre-registration undergraduate and post graduate courses at English Universities from September 2020 could receive £1,000 towards childcare costs.

This is in addition to the £5,000 annual maintenance grant that we have already announced.

This new funding is in addition to the funding we already provide eligible students through the Learning Support Fund where students can access a £1,000 child dependents allowance. The Learning Support Fund also allows students to access reimbursement of all travel and accommodation expenses more than their usual daily travel and exceptional hardship funding of up to £3,000 per year.

None of this funding has to be repaid.

Students may also be able to access additional grant support from Student Finance England which is available for all full-time students with adult or child dependants².

Notes:

¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/paramedic-students-will-get-5000-support-payment-each-year>

²<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/extra-help>

■ Health Services and Social Services

Scott Benton:

[10480]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the potential annual savings of fully integrating health and social care provision.

Caroline Dinanage:

Government continues to support the integrated provision of health and social care because of the improvements it brings to the quality of care people receive. Integrated provision has been found to improve health, quality of life and patient satisfaction.

Integration across health and social care commissioning also enables improved co-operation and joint decision-making between health and social care partners in delivering shared outcomes. A number of local areas have reported improved outcomes through the adoption of integrated approaches.

At the national level, evidence of savings due to integrated provision is limited, therefore, the department does not have an estimate of the annual savings of integration.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Disclosure of Information

Fiona Bruce:

[\[8224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to facilitate the sharing of data between different health and social care services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

High quality data needs to be securely available to inform decisions about care. The Government has supported five Local Health and Care Record Exemplars which are a partnership of health and social care organisations that come together to create a shared care record, allowing clinicians and professionals real-time access to their patients' records. These five areas are leading the way but it is our aim that local shared records will be the norm across the country.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Expenditure

Fiona Bruce:

[\[8226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department allocated to local authorities to facilitate the integration of health and social care services in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018 and (e) 2019.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Better Care Fund (BCF) is the Government's national policy to drive forward integration by enabling greater cooperation between health and social care partners at a local level. It brings together ring-fenced budgets from National Health Service clinical commissioning group (CCG) allocations, and funding paid directly to local government, including the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), and the improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) into a single pooled budget for health and social care services in local areas to work more closely together, based on a plan agreed between the NHS and local government.

The breakdown of funding in the BCF since 2015 is set out in the following table.

The 2019 Spending Round announced that the BCF (NHS CCG minimum allocations) would continue into 2020-21 with a real-terms increase of 3.4%, and that the iBCF would be maintained at flat cash.

BCF Breakdown 2015-16 to 2019-20

SOURCE	2015/16 (£ BILLION)	2016/17 (£ BILLION)	2017/18 (£ BILLION)	2018/19 (£ BILLION)	2019/20 (£ BILLION)
NHS funding (Minimum CCG Contribution)	£3.46	£3.519	£3.582	£3.650	£3.840
DFG	£0.22	£0.394	£0.431	£0.468	£0.505
iBCF	-	-	£1.115	£1.499	£1.837
Social care capital grant	£0.134	-	-	-	-
Winter pressure grant funding	-				£0.240
Total minimum contribution	£3.8	£3.9	£5.128	£5.617	£6.422
Local voluntary contribution from CCGs	£0.7	£1.0	£1.1	£1.108	Tbc
Local voluntary contribution from local authorities	£0.8	£1.0	£1.1	£1.009	Tbc
Total voluntary contribution	£1.5	£2.0	£2.2	£2.117	Tbc
Total	£5.3	£5.9	£7.3	£7.734 ¹	Tbc
DFG top-up ²	-	-	£0.042	£0.055	-

Notes:

¹ From BCF Planning Data 2018-19: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/better-care-fund-2018-19-planning-data/>

² Autumn Budget 2017 has provided an additional £42 million for the rest of the 2017-18 financial year. This additional funding was not subject to the BCF requirements, for example, the need for local authorities and CCGs to jointly agree how to spend the funding as part of their local BCF plan.

■ Health: Children

Jim Shannon: [\[8281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to review the range of services offered through the Healthy Child Programme in 2020.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England is undertaking a systematic review of the Healthy Child Programme in England bringing together health, education and other main partners to deliver an effective programme for prevention and support covering pre-conception to age 24 years.

■ HIV Infection: Drugs

Peter Kyle: [\[10423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what budget the non-drug additional funding will come from to fully roll-out PrEP.

Peter Kyle: [\[10424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to announce on what date in April routine commissioning of PrEP will begin.

Peter Kyle: [\[10425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish information on how (a) routine commissioning of PrEP will be implemented, (b) PrEP will be funded and (c) local authority commissioners will be supported.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is continuing to work closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement, Public Health England and local authorities to plan for routine commissioning of Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) from April 2020. NHS England and NHS Improvement have already agreed to fund the on-going costs of drugs for PrEP going forward. We will provide information on how other elements of the programme will be funded and how commissioners will be supported very shortly.

■ Hospices: Standards

Fiona Bruce: [\[8227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of hospices are rated as outstanding.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

There are currently 61 of 200 hospices rated outstanding (30.5%) registered in England with the Care Quality Commission.

■ Hospitals: Harlow

Robert Halfon: [\[8240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on funding for the development of the proposed new hospital in Harlow.

Robert Halfon: [\[8242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on plans for the development of a new hospital in Harlow; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

In September 2019 the Government announced the Health Infrastructure Plan - a new, strategic approach to improving our hospitals and health infrastructure, and rolling programme of investment, to ensure that our health infrastructure is fit-for-purpose for decades to come.

The Princess Alexandra Hospitals NHS Trust's major scheme is one of the six projects that will form the first £2.7 billion phase of the major hospital rebuilds. This money has been committed by the Government and gives the green light for a phased redevelopment of its estate.

The Trust are currently working with local clinical commissioning groups to finalise the Pre-Consultation Business Case, before progressing to consultation. After that, the Trust will work towards submission of the Outline Business Case, which will then go through a single Departmental/National Health Service process as part of the streamlined approvals that the Government is implementing.

■ Hospitals: Telephone Services

Rosie Duffield: [\[10440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits for improving health services of collecting data on the number of telephone calls that are unanswered in hospitals.

Edward Argar:

We have made no such assessment of the potential merits for improving health services of collecting data on the number of telephone calls that are unanswered in hospitals.

■ King's College Hospital and University Hospital Lewisham: Accident and Emergency Departments

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[8388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of A&E waiting times at (a) University Hospital Lewisham and (b) Kings College Hospital since 2010.

Edward Argar:

The information is not available in the format requested.

■ **Learning Disabilities Mortality Review Programme**

Barbara Keeley:

[\[9802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2020 to Question 5379 on Learning Disabilities Mortality Review Programme, whether he plans to publish the last annual report from the Learning Disability Mortality Review.

Caroline Dineneage:

The third annual report is the latest report from Learning Disabilities Mortality Review (LeDeR) programme and was published on 21 May 2019. A further annual report will be published by the University of Bristol later this year. NHS England and NHS Improvement will also publish an action from learning report, setting out the work underway nationally in response to common themes raised through LeDeR reviews across the country.

We are taking action to address the recommendations set out in the third annual LeDeR report and will publish our formal response shortly.

■ **Mental Capacity**

Jessica Morden:

[\[10333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the implementation timetable is for the provisions of the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Department is working to implement the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019 which will replace the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards system with the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) system, in October 2020.

The Department has worked with health and social care organisations, the third sector, the Local Government Association, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, other Government departments, and experts with lived experience to develop chapters of the Liberty Protection Safeguards Code of Practice.

The draft Code of Practice and Regulations for the LPS system will be published for public consultation in the coming months.

■ **Mental Health Services**

Barbara Keeley:

[\[10342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the National Quality Improvement Taskforce for children and young people's mental health inpatient services' has to include the transition to adult services in its remit; and what steps the Taskforce will take to ensure service improvements are carried over to adult services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The taskforce has been set up to ensure inpatient services deliver timely, safe and high quality care for children and young people, including a focus on well-planned discharge to home or other appropriate services.

Transition from inpatient child and young people's services to adult services will be considered as part of this work with the aim of ensuring decisions are based on the individual needs and circumstances of the young person. This should ensure appropriate preparation for transition of the children and young people and cross-organisational preparation for appropriate receipt into adult services.

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**Jim Shannon:**[\[8282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on provision for children and young people's mental health in the Online Harms Bill.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

While the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has had no direct discussions with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, officials from their respective Departments have worked together closely to develop the Online Harms White Paper, and continue to work together on taking forward the measures set out in the White Paper.

■ Neurology**Sir John Hayes:**[\[8138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of access to post traumatic care and rehabilitation for people with a neurological condition in (a) Lincolnshire and (b) the UK.

Sir John Hayes:[\[8139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the cost-effectiveness of community rehabilitation and the associated reduction in hospital admissions and reliance on social care for people with neurological conditions.

Sir John Hayes:[\[8140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of people living with a neurological condition have access to community rehabilitation for that condition; and what plans his Department has to increase that proportion.

Caroline Dinenage:

No specific assessment has been made on the cost-effectiveness of community rehabilitation. As the majority of rehabilitation services are provided locally, to support commissioners in the delivery of high-quality rehabilitation care, NHS England has provided guidance. In 2015, NHS England published 'The Principles and

Expectations for Good Adult Rehabilitation' to support commissioners deliver suitable rehabilitation care locally. In 2016, NHS England published further rehabilitation guidance, setting out a commissioning model and the evidence base for delivering high quality, cost-effective rehabilitation services. Both sets of guidance can be found at the following links:

www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/rehabilitation-comms-guid-16-17.pdf
www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/clinical-commissioning-community/documents/principles-and-expectations

For patients with complex rehabilitation needs, NHS England commissions specialised rehabilitation services at a national level to an agreed service specification. These provide intensive treatment and expert support.

To access the adequacy of rehabilitation access, the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership, on behalf of NHS England, commissioned The National Clinical Audit of Specialist Rehabilitation for Patients with Complex Needs Following Major Injury. NHS England published three reports between June 2016 and April 2019, exploring service performance and outcomes for those receiving specialised rehabilitation care. The reports highlight a range of positive performance results as well as areas for improvement.

Sir John Hayes:

[8144]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to require local authorities to record when someone they are providing services for has a neurological condition, to ensure that those needs are being met.

Caroline Dineneage:

There are no current plans to collect this information within social care data returns from local authorities. However, local authorities can currently record this for their own internal use when providing services for individuals, in order to capture experiences and outcomes and identify whether their needs are being met.

■ Neurology: Mortality Rates

Sir John Hayes:

[8143]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve mortality rates for people with neurological conditions; and what recent assessment he has made of progress in meeting that objective.

Sir John Hayes:

[8145]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will provide (a) clear commissioning guidance to clinical commissioning groups so that they are able to commission effectively for people with neurological conditions and (b) clarity on organisational responsibility for the provision of services for people with those conditions.

Caroline Dineneage:

As seen in a report from Public Health England in 2018, there has been an increase in deaths associated with neurological conditions. The report highlights two major

factors that are likely to be contributing to the increase in associated deaths; the success of the National Health Service in improving survival rates from other conditions such as heart disease and cancer, and better diagnosis and recognition of neurological conditions, a range of which are progressive and cannot be cured.

The report provides important data in supporting commissioners and services planners to better understand the burden of disease, and services that are needed to our changing population. NHS England and NHS Improvement work to provide tailored national support which enables local commissioners and providers to drive improvement and ensure services best reflect the needs of individual communities.

■ **NHS Trusts: Carbon Emissions and Climate Change**

Chi Onwurah:

[10493]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what guidance he has provided to NHS trusts on declaring a climate emergency and target for net zero emissions.

Edward Argar:

The 'For a Greener NHS' campaign builds on the plans set out in the NHS Long Term Plan and will help address the causes of air pollution and climate change, which are linked to thousands of deaths each year. As part of this work the National Health Service is asked to take action in 2020, with the consultation on the new Standard Contract and the NHS Operational Planning Guidance setting out requirements to cut business mileage, purchase renewable energy, replace lighting with low carbon LED alternatives, reduce carbon across NHS estate and switch to lower carbon inhalers and anaesthetics.

In addition to this, an NHS Net Zero Plan has been established to chart a practical route map to enable the NHS to get to 'net zero'. This panel, chaired by Dr Nick Watts, Executive Director of the Lancet Countdown, will set out recommendations to NHS England in the summer, in advance of the COP26 International meeting in Glasgow.

Additional information can be found at the following link:

www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs

■ **NHS Trusts: Subsidiary Companies**

Karin Smyth:

[8347]

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 727, what evidence has been provided to his Department in relation to plans to review section 41 VAT rules.

Edward Argar:

At the current date, no such evidence has been received as this has not yet been requested. The Government is currently working on the section 41 VAT policy paper and this, along with a corresponding 'call for evidence' will be published in due course.

■ NHS: Facilities

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[8266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve NHS facilities in Surrey.

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[8267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve NHS facilities in England.

Edward Argar:

In September 2019 the Government announced the Health Infrastructure Plan. As part of this, the Government is committed to building 40 new hospitals over the next 10 years.

Alongside the £3.9 billion extra capital funding announced at the 2017 Spring and Autumn Budgets, the Government has announced additional central funding totalling more than £5 billion since August 2019 to improve and modernise National Health Service facilities.

As part of these commitments, patients in Surrey will benefit from the following investments:

- Funding for Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust's new hospital scheme, providing adult emergency and women and children's services;
- Almost £40 million sustainability and transformation partnership (STP) funding, including Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust's £28 million scheme to provide integrated hubs to provide better treatment to patients more quickly out of hospital;
- A share of the £200 million investment in diagnostic machines across England to replace MRI/CT scanners more than 10 years old; and
- A share of £6.7 million provided for the last two winters across Surrey Heartlands STP, Sussex and East Surrey STP and Frimley Health and Care Integrated Care System.

■ Nurses: Recruitment

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[8270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the number of NHS nurses in (a) Surrey and (b) England.

Edward Argar:

The Government has committed to ensure 50,000 more nurses in the National Health Service in England by 2025. No individual target has been set for specific areas of the country.

We have already taken steps to deliver this commitment through our new financial support package. Eligible pre-registration nursing, midwifery and many allied health

students enrolled on courses at English universities from September 2020 will receive a payment of at least £5,000 per academic year which they will not need to pay back.

Additional payments of up to £3,000¹ will be available for some students in regions or specialisms struggling to recruit and to help students cover childcare costs. Up to a further £1,000 may be available for some students studying in certain regions or geographical areas in England. The Department is undertaking further work to develop this incentive payment.

This new grant will mean students have access to more money than under both previous systems and will encourage more people to apply, accept places and complete their courses.

Note:

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/paramedic-students-will-get-5000-support-payment-each-year>

■ Pain: Health Services

Scott Benton:

[10481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to issue guidance to hospital trusts on the treatment of pain experienced by adults with a damaged cortex.

Caroline Dinenage:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guideline, 'Neuropathic pain in adults: pharmacological management in non-specialist settings', updated July 2019, sets out evidence-based guidance for healthcare professionals in pharmacological treatments for neuropathic pain. This guidance can be found at the following link:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg173

In addition, NICE is currently developing guidance on the assessment and management of chronic pain, with an expected publication date of 19 August 2020. Guidance scope for the NICE clinical guidance document in development can be found at the following link:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/gid-ng10069/documents/final-scope

■ Palliative Care: Finance

Fiona Bruce:

[8223]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much additional funding he plans to allocate to palliative care in the next financial year.

Caroline Dinenage:

As with the vast majority of National Health Service services, the funding and commissioning of palliative and end of life care is a local matter, over which individual clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have responsibility. CCGs are best placed to

understand the needs of local populations and allocate funding for services to meet those needs from the overall resource allocations they receive.

■ Patients: Safety

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[8301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on patient safety of the implementation of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

It is a matter for the devolved Government for Scotland to make any assessment of the effects on patient safety of the implementation of their legislation.

When any such assessment is made available we will review it as we review a range of evidence on the provision of healthcare.

■ Plastic Surgery

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[8166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department collects data on how many fly in fly out surgeons operated in the UK in the last 12 months.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[8167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department collects data on the number of fly in fly out surgeons registered by the General Medical Council.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is not collected by the Department.

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the independent regulator of medical doctors in the United Kingdom. All medical doctors, including those undertaking cosmetic surgery, must register with the GMC and meet set professional standards to work in the UK and be fit to practise.

■ Plastic Surgery: Qualifications

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[8170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what qualifications are required to operate as a hair transplant surgeon.

Edward Argar:

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the independent regulator of medical doctors in the United Kingdom. All doctors must register with the GMC, hold a license to practise and meet set professional standards to work in the UK and be fit to practise. The GMC sets the standards that medical training organisations have to meet in the delivery of their training, and in the development of postgraduate curricula.

Qualified doctors do not need specific qualifications to perform cosmetic interventions (surgery) including hair transplant surgery.

■ Plastic Surgery: Registration

Mr Kevan Jones: [8168]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has plans to bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a statutory register of cosmetic surgeons.

Mr Kevan Jones: [8171]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has plans to bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a statutory register of hair transplant surgeons.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

At present, there are no plans to introduce statutory registers for doctors performing cosmetic surgery, as a robust regulatory framework is already in place.

Only doctors registered with the General Medical Council (GMC), the regulator of doctors in the United Kingdom, can perform surgical procedures, including hair transplant surgery. All registrants are required to meet the standards set out by the GMC in Good Medical Practice. Where these standards are not met the GMC can take action to protect patients from harm through the fitness to practise process.

In England any hospital or clinic offering cosmetic surgery must also 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.

■ Plastic Surgery: Training

Mr Kevan Jones: [8169]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average training period is for a cosmetic surgeon.

Edward Argar:

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the independent regulator of medical doctors in the United Kingdom. All doctors must register with the GMC, hold a license to practise and meet set professional standards to work in the UK and be fit to practise. The GMC sets the standards that medical training organisations have to meet in the delivery of their training, and in the development of postgraduate curricula.

Qualified doctors do not need specific qualifications to perform cosmetic interventions (surgery). There is no a defined 'route' to becoming a cosmetic surgeon, and as a result no average training period.

■ Snoring: Medical Treatments

Jim Shannon: [8277]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when laser surgery to cure snoring will be available on the NHS.

Caroline Dinenage:

There are no current plans to make laser surgery for snoring routinely available on the National Health Service. Any such technology would need to be assessed by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) before it can be considered for use by the NHS.

NICE has recommended continuous positive airway pressure devices as a treatment option for adults with moderate or severe symptomatic obstructive sleep apnoea or hypopnoea syndrome, where certain clinical criteria are met.

■ Social Prescribing: Young People

Jim Shannon: [8284]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to promote social prescribing for young people.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with local areas to support promotion and implementation of social prescribing. Social prescribing link workers will work with local partners (such as local public and voluntary, community and social enterprise agencies) to develop substantial support offers which address health and wellbeing needs for people of all ages. A key task of link workers is to promote social prescribing, its role in self-management, and the wider determinants of health.

Further information is outlined in the summary best practice guided published by NHS England and NHS Improvement in January 2019 and found at the following link:

www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/social-prescribing-community-based-support-summary-guide.pdf

■ Surgery: Children

Jonathan Ashworth: [8302]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children's operations were cancelled in each NHS trust in each month of (a) 2019 and (b) 2018.

Edward Argar:

This information is not available in the format requested.

■ Transplant Surgery: Finance

Dan Jarvis:

[8296]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional funding the Government plans to allocate to the NHS to support an increase in the number of organ transplants as a result of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019.

Caroline Dineneage:

The long-term funding settlement will see the National Health Service in England receive increased funding of £33.9 billion in cash terms per year by the end of the five years compared to today, in a move to secure the future of the health service.

To support their planning, NHS Blood and Transplant have been working with NHS England to model the anticipated impact of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019 on the number of organs donated and transplanted across each of the transplant units in England.

Providers have been asked to assess their capacity and capability to deliver the projected increases especially with regard to workforce, infrastructure and support services (for example theatre capacity, beds, short and long-term capacity to follow-up patients) to enable service to meet the increased demand.

■ Urology: Vacancies

Alex Cunningham:

[8275]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the shortage of clinicians in urology.

Edward Argar:

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.

Nationally, the number of training posts for each specialty is determined by Health Education England in the context of competing priorities, with reference to the NHS Long Term Plan.

There are 942 full time equivalent (FTE) consultants in the urology group, up by 19% (307 FTE) since 2010.

The NHS Long Term Plan set out the need to ensure a sustainable overall balance between supply and demand across all staff groups. For doctors, it will focus on reducing geographical and specialty imbalances.

HOME OFFICE**■ Cannabis: Licensing****Crispin Blunt:****[R] [8134]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) high-THC cultivation licences, (b) low-THC cultivation licences, (c) Schedule 1 domestic licences and (d) Schedule 1 import licences were granted in 2019.

Kit Malthouse:

In 2019, the Drugs and Firearms Licensing unit issued to premises in Great Britain (a) 33 low THC licences to cultivate low THC cannabis (b) 20 licences to cultivate high THC cannabis (c) 362 domestic licences covering possession of schedule 1.

Import licences are issued for individual drug substances as opposed to by schedule of drug. Thousands of drug substances could fall within schedule 1 control so it is not possible to provide a figure for the number of 'schedule 1' import licences granted.

■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments**Ronnie Cowan:****[8362]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to expedite the processes for granting import licences for cannabis-based products for medicinal use.

Kit Malthouse:

All applications are considered individually on their merits and with regards to our obligation under International Conventions and Domestic law. Applications for importation of CBPMs are already expedited, where documentation and regulatory approval is provided, in recognition of the need to ensure continuity of the supply of unlicensed medicines. Applications for import licences are normally decided within a few working days.

Ronnie Cowan:**[8363]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what meetings (a) she, (b) Special Advisers to ministers in her Department, and (c) officials in her Department have attended with representatives of patient groups on the import of cannabis-based products for medicinal use since 1 January 2018.

Kit Malthouse:

Home Office Ministers, Special Advisers and officials have regular meetings as part of the process of policy development and delivery. As was the case with previous administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all such meetings.

■ Civil Service Agencies: Staff

Jeremy Hunt:

[\[10337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many additional security and intelligence staff have been employed across all Government agencies since 2015.

Kit Malthouse:

Cutting crime is a priority for this Government and we recognise that there are strong links between drug misuse and crime. Tough enforcement is a fundamental part of our approach to tackling drugs and we are working across Government to address the drivers behind drug-related crime and help prevent further substance misuse and offending.

We continue to surge law enforcement action to tackle county lines and its associated violence and exploitation. The Home Secretary has announced £25m of targeted investment across 19-20 and 20-21 to significantly increase law enforcement's response to the issue. The Home Office has also announced that a UK Drugs Summit will take place on 27 February, which will bring together all four nations of the United Kingdom, to consider the challenges we are facing and to reflect on what more can be done to address drug supply and reduce drug harms.

The Prime Minister has also established a Cabinet committee on crime which will help to drive cross-Government action in this area.

■ Computer Misuse Act 1990

Alex Chalk:

[\[10417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with officials at the National Cyber Security Centre on reforming the Computer Misuse Act 1990.

Alex Chalk:

[\[10418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to review the effectiveness of the Computer Misuse Act 1990 in tackling the threat posed by cyber crime.

Brandon Lewis:

Home Office officials have been engaging in regular discussions with all relevant stakeholders regarding possible reform of the Computer Misuse Act 1990 which includes the National Cyber Security Centre. 10417

The Home Office keeps the Computer Misuse Act 1990 under regular review. It was last amended through provisions contained in the Serious Crime Act 2015. The Home Office is engaged in ongoing discussions with relevant partners in law enforcement, government and the private sector to ensure that the legislation continues to remain effective. 10418

■ Crime: Drugs**Sarah Owen:**[\[10473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking tackle drug-related crime.

Kit Malthouse:

Cutting crime is a priority for this Government and we recognise that there are strong links between drug misuse and crime.

Tough enforcement is a fundamental part of our approach to tackling drugs and we are working across Government to address the drivers behind drug-related crime and help prevent further substance misuse and offending. We continue to surge law enforcement action to tackle county lines and its associated violence and exploitation. The Home Secretary has announced £25m of targeted investment across 19-20 and 20-21 to significantly increase law enforcement's response to the issue.

The Home Office has also announced that a UK Drugs Summit will take place on 27 February, which will bring together all four nations of the United Kingdom, to consider the challenges we are facing and to reflect on what more can be done to address drug supply and reduce drug harms.

The Prime Minister has also established a Cabinet committee on crime which will help to drive cross-Government action in this area.

■ Fisheries: Migrant Workers**Andrew Bowie:**[\[9104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a Fisheries Workers Scheme, alongside the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

The UK Government will introduce a points-based immigration system that works in the interests of the whole of the United Kingdom. As part of this we will consider the needs of specific sectors and industries.

The Government commissioned the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to advise on salary thresholds and how points could be awarded to prospective migrants under a new points-based immigration system. The MAC published its report on 28 January and the Government will consider carefully their findings and recommendations before setting out further detail in due course.

■ Home Office: Recruitment**Hywel Williams:**[\[8967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff were recruited by her Department in the last twelve months to work on preparations for the UK leaving

the EU; and what the Border Force budget has been for (a) additional permanent staff members and (b) agency workers in each financial year since 2015-16.

Brandon Lewis:

The department has been continually assessing the resourcing levels required to prepare for EU Exit across all possible scenarios, developing contingency plans in line with government policy. It is not possible to provide the number of staff who have been recruited to work on preparations for the UK leaving the EU as staff are generally engaged across a range of workstreams, which will include business as usual activity as well as EU Exit preparations, across all scenarios.

Over the last 12 months the department has adapted to the different scenarios in preparation for the UK leaving the EU and our staffing numbers have fluctuated to meet these demands.

The latest published staffing and finance figures for Border Force can be found in the Home Office Annual Report for 2018-2019 on page 85

at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2018-to-2019>

The previous published staffing and financial figures for Border Force since 2015 to 2018 can be found at the following links:

2015-2016: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2015-to-2016>

2016-2017: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2016-to-2017>

2017-2018: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>

2018-2019: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2018-to-2019>

Excluding EU Exit, Border Force's gross resource budget for 2019-20 is £488m. This includes an income target of £19m, which means a net allocation of £469m.

Border Force has received a total of c.£182m for EU Exit preparations in 2019/20. (£141m Resource and £41M Capital)

Border Force originally received funding, based on a Deal, of £100m; this funding was to fund recruitment for full customs compliance by the end of 2020. The recruitment and training for this uplift of permanent staff has completed bringing the Border Force FTE to over 8,700 from 7,700 in March 2018.

The additional £41m Resource funding provided throughout 2019-20 enabled further recruitment with Border Force expecting to reach c9,300 FTE by March 2020.

Border Force received a total £82.1m for EU Exit preparations in 2018/19 (£72.1m Resource and £10m Capital)

Border Force received a total of £3.2m for EU Exit preparations in 2017/18 (£1.7m Resource and £1.5m Capital)

Budgets for 20-21 cannot be confirmed as they remain subject to final confirmation.

■ Immigration

Andrew Rosindell: [8177]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made of the number of people who have had their application for (a) leave to remain and (b) asylum refused but who remain in the UK.

Victoria Atkins:

Information regarding the number of people who have had their;

(a) application for leave to remain refused, but who remain in the UK, can be found on tables PRE_MRP_01 of the Immigration Enforcement Transparency data, published 22nd August 2019:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data>

(b) application for asylum refused, but who remain in the UK, can be found on tables OLCU_01, OLCU_04 and ASY_03 of the Asylum, UK Visa & Immigration Transparency Data Q2 2019, published 22nd August 2019:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-transparency-data-august-2019>

■ Immigration: EEA Nationals

Afzal Khan: [8462]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons applications by third country dependents of EEA nationals to the EU Settlement Scheme frequently take longer to process than applications by EEA nationals.

Afzal Khan: [8463]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons applicants to the EU Settlement Scheme who are third country dependents of EEA nationals are required to provide more extensive evidence than proof of their relationship with an EEA national residing in the UK.

Brandon Lewis:

Our aim is to process all applications to the EU Settlement Scheme as expeditiously as possible. Complete applications are usually processed in around five working days. More information about processing times for applications under the scheme is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-application-processing-times/eu-settlement-scheme-pilot-current-expected-processing-times-for-applications>.

Where a non-EEA national is applying as the family member of an EEA citizen and does not already hold a permanent residence document, they must provide evidence of the family relationship for the relevant period, and in some cases, evidence of their

dependency on the EEA citizen during the relevant period. The non-EEA national applicant will also need to provide proof of the identity and nationality of the EEA citizen and evidence of that person's residence or status in the UK. Such cases can therefore be more complex and take longer for caseworkers to process.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Afzal Khan:

[8461]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what security mechanisms are in place to ensure data belonging to an individual granted settled or pre-settled status and stored by her Department under the EU Settlement Scheme cannot be (a) tampered with, (b) stolen and (c) accessed without the individual's consent.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office takes the security and integrity of all our data extremely seriously. Our staff are security cleared, and controls applied to data such that only those who have a valid business need to access data can do so.

Security audits are performed to ensure controls and processes are followed, and The Home Office monitors systems for abuse and misuse.

We engage independent third parties, accredited by the National Cyber Security Centre, to perform tests upon our networks and systems, to test cybersecurity controls.

The online service for those granted under the EU Settlement Scheme allows an individual to share their immigration status with an employer or third party, and in keeping with GDPR legislation, this process is initiated by the individual with their consent.

■ International Military Services: Iran

Tulip Siddiq:

[8410]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 20 November 2018 to Question 185141, whether any of the Iranian delegation detained in 2013 when coming to discuss IMS Ltd's debt remain incarcerated in the UK.

Brandon Lewis:

It is longstanding policy not to disclose details of records which may be held in relation to individuals' arrival in the United Kingdom, as to do so would not be in the interests of national security.

■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

Alex Norris:

[10445]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will publish her Department's response to the Violence and abuse toward shop staff: call for evidence, which was published on 5 April 2019.

Kit Malthouse:

We intend to publish the government's response in due course.

■ Shoplifting

Grahame Morris:

[\[8237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) guidance and (b) support her Department has provided to retail businesses in relation to the (i) management and (ii) mitigation of shoplifting in the last 10 years.

Grahame Morris:

[\[8238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve protections for retail staff from verbal abuse and physical attack by customers.

Grahame Morris:

[\[8239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce instances of shoplifting.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government recognises the damaging impact that shoplifting and violence and abuse can have on victims, businesses, and the wider community; and we are committed to tackling this issue.

To ensure that our response to retail crime is as robust as possible we work with a wide range of partners through the National Retail Crime Steering Group, including the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and British Retail Consortium.

In addition, we launched a call for evidence on violence and abuse toward shop staff to help strengthen our understanding of the scale and extent of the issue. The call for evidence has now closed and we are carefully analysing the responses before deciding what further action may be required. We intend to publish the government's response in due course.

■ UK Border Force: Staff

Hywel Williams:

[\[8968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what qualifications or criteria are required for Border Force personnel working in (a) ports and (b) airports; and whether those qualifications or criteria applied to the recruitment of agency staff, in the last twelve months.

Brandon Lewis:

Border Force have recruited nationally for permanent staff at various grades in the last twelve months. The educational qualifications and other criteria required will be dependent on the grade being recruited.

However, the basic criteria for all recruitment of permanent staff into Border Force must be:

- Be a UK national; evidence of which, will be required.

- Hold a full and valid passport;
- Be at least 18 years old as you will be required to work between midnight and 4am which is not legal unless you are 18.
- Depending on location and grade have a full and valid driving license

The agency staff are temporary staff which Border Force engaged for an administrative purpose should the UK have left the EU in a no deal scenario. Their intended role was not consistent with that of a permanent Border Force Officer and the agency staff received training appropriate to the duties to be carried out.

The criteria for eligibility to apply for agency staff was the consistent with the criteria set out above for permanent recruitment, with the exception that there was no academic qualifications required due to level of responsibilities to be undertaken

All agency staff were interviewed (assessed) and selected upon suitable demonstration of the following skills:

- excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- a strong sense of personal ethics and integrity;
- they enjoy interacting with colleagues, members of the public and external stakeholders;
- the ability to build relationships and thrive working as part of a team;
- a desire to develop.

■ Undocumented Migrants

Andrew Rosindell:

[8178]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to encourage people residing illegally long-term in the UK to (a) normalise their immigration status or (b) return to their homeland.

Kevin Foster:

Those without leave to remain in the UK should make arrangements to return to their home country. A Voluntary Return Service exists to support those wishing to leave the UK, and can include assistance with organising travel and reintegration support in their country of return.

The Home Office works with stakeholders including Local Authorities, non-profit organisations and other government departments to raise awareness of the service and support families and individuals without status return to their home country.

The department also engages with diaspora communities to raise awareness of the risks and consequences of illegal migration, and the options to regularise stay or to return voluntarily to their country of origin.

■ Visas

Kate Green: [R] [8272]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's White Paper of December 2018, The UK's future skills-based immigration system, Cm 9722, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending the length of the low-skilled visa from 12 months to 24 months.

Kate Green: [R] [8273]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's White Paper of December 2018, The UK's future skills-based immigration system, Cm 9722, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of reducing the length of the cooling-off period applicable to low-skilled visas as set out in that paper.

Kevin Foster:

The Government commissioned the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to advise on salary thresholds and how points could be awarded to prospective migrants under a new points-based immigration system. The MAC published its report on 28 January and the Government will consider carefully their findings and recommendations before setting out further detail in due course.

■ Visas: Standards

Sarah Owen: [10475]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations she has received on the time taken to process visa applications from (a) refugees and b) other visa applicants.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not hold the information in the format requested or routinely publish data to answer this question. To obtain it would exceed the **disproportionate** cost threshold.

Published data on the processing of visa applications is available at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data.

- Information on UKVI's service standards is available at:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration/about-our-services#service-standards.

■ Windrush Generation: Compensation

Vicky Foxcroft: [8376]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applicants to the Windrush compensation scheme from (a) England, (b) London and (c) Lewisham, Deptford constituency have received a financial settlement from the Government.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[8377]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications to the Windrush compensation scheme from (a) England, (b) London and (c) Lewisham, Deptford constituency have been refused.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[8378]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people from (a) England, (b) London and (c) Lewisham, Deptford constituency have contacted the Windrush helpline for support with compensation claims.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[8379]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of applicants to the Windrush compensation scheme have received guidance from the Windrush task force on making their application.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[8380]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many organisations have applied for funding to host community events promoting the Windrush compensation scheme in (a) England, (b) London and (c) the London borough of Lewisham.

Kevin Foster:

8376, 8377, 8378

We will publish information on the total number of claims paid and the overall amount paid out by the scheme shortly, as noted in the Home Secretary's report to the [Home Affairs Select Committee](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/update-to-the-hasc-on-windrush-22-october-2019) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/update-to-the-hasc-on-windrush-22-october-2019>. A breakdown of claims awarded by geographical area will not be published as this could potentially identify individual claimants. There is no plan to publish the number of calls made to the Helpline.

8379

The Windrush Taskforce does not provide guidance on making an application for compensation. There is guidance on how to complete the compensation form online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-compensation-scheme-claim-forms-and-guidance>. Windrush Helpline staff refer claimants to the Claimant Assistance Service if they require assistance completing their claim form.

8380

The number of organisations which have applied for funding to host community events promoting the Windrush Compensation Scheme are (a) ten in England, (b) two in London, and (c) none in the London Borough of Lewisham.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ City Deals

Anthony Browne:[\[9798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many city deal areas that fall (a) wholly and (b) partly within combined authority areas are (i) controlled by a combined authority, (ii) controlled by a local enterprise partnership and (iii) not controlled by a combined authority or a local enterprise partnership; and how those city deals not controlled by a combined authority or a local enterprise partnership are governed.

Jake Berry:

City Deals were bespoke negotiations between Government and Local Enterprise Partnerships conducted in England between 2011 and 2014. The only area at this time to have a Combined Authority in place was Greater Manchester, although Liverpool City Region, Sheffield City Region, North East, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire Combined Authorities were all established in 2014. City Deals aimed to help drive the growth of cities across the country: identifying barriers to growth and also investing to drive future economic growth on the basis of the specific economic strengths, assets and opportunities of places.

A list of all English City Deals and their relevant Local Enterprise Partnership and Combined Authority is available below:

CITY DEAL	LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP	COMBINED AUTHORITY
Wave 1		
Greater Birmingham	Greater Birmingham and Solihull	West Midlands (established 2016)
Bristol	West of England	West of England (established 2017)
Leeds	Leeds City Region	West Yorkshire (established 2014)
Liverpool	Liverpool City Region	Liverpool City Region (established 2014)
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester (established 2011)
Newcastle	North East	North East (established 2014)
Nottingham	Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (D2N2)	

CITY DEAL	LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP	COMBINED AUTHORITY
Sheffield	Sheffield City Region	Sheffield City Region (established 2014)
Wave 2		
Black Country	Black Country	West Midlands (established 2016)
Greater Brighton	Coast to Capital (C2C)	
Greater Cambridge	Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (established 2017)
Coventry and Warwickshire	Coventry and Warwickshire	West Midlands (established 2016)
Hull and Humber	Humber	
Greater Ipswich	New Anglia	
Leicester and Leicestershire	Leicester and Leicestershire	
Greater Norwich	New Anglia	
Oxford and Oxfordshire	Oxfordshire	
Plymouth and the South West Peninsula	Heart of the South West LEP and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP	
Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire	Lancashire	
Southampton and Portsmouth	Solent	
Southend-on-Sea	South East	
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	
Sunderland and South Tyneside	North East	North East (established 2014)
Swindon and Wiltshire	Swindon and Wiltshire	
Tees Valley	Tees Valley	Tees Valley (established 2016)
Thames Valley Berkshire	Thames Valley Berkshire	

■ Homelessness: Finance

Dr Matthew Offord:

[8247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding has been allocated to tackling homelessness in financial year 2019-20.

Luke Hall:

This Government is clear that no one should be without a roof over their head. That is why we have committed to ending rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament and to enforcing the Homelessness Reduction Act. In 2019/20 £368 million was allocated to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. This funding is comprised of programmes such as:

- The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant which seeks to help local authorities plan and respond to their local homelessness pressures;
- The Rough Sleeping Initiative which is making an immediate impact on rough sleeping levels by funding local authorities to provide specialist services to help people off the streets and into secure accommodation;
- The Rapid Rehousing Pathway which puts in place the structures to ensure we prevent and quickly respond to rough sleeping in the longer term via a package of measures. This includes Somewhere Safe to Stay hubs which provide dry shelter, specialist navigators who act as a single point of contact, and funding to help source properties and improve tenancy sustainment.

The Government have allocated £437 million to tackle homelessness over 2020/2021. This marks an additional £69 million on what Government provided in 2019/20.

■ Homelessness: Hendon

Dr Matthew Offord:

[8246]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he will take through the Rough Sleeping Strategy to eradicate homelessness in Hendon constituency.

Luke Hall:

This Government is clear that no one should be without a roof over their head. That is why we have committed to ending rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament and to enforcing the Homelessness Reduction Act. The Government have allocated £437 million to tackle homelessness over 2020/2021. This marks an additional £69 million on what Government provided in 2019/20.

The Homelessness Reduction Act, the most ambitious reform to homelessness legislation in decades, came into force on 3 April 2018. It placed new duties on local housing authorities to take reasonable steps to try to prevent and relieve a person's homelessness. Government have allocated £5,129,847 to the London Borough of Barnet for 20/21 to support them in delivering their duties under the Act. Barnet have also been allocated £636,845 for 20/21 as part of the Rough Sleeping Initiative. The

Rough Sleeping Initiative funding is being used by councils to implement a number of initiatives which includes the following:

- Create street-based services including outreach teams who will locate and support rough sleepers directly on the streets and offer them access to services;
- Establish first stage accommodation such as hostels, Somewhere Safe to Stay hubs and emergency access beds which provide warm and dry shelter, rapid assessment, and support to people who are already - or at risk of - sleeping rough;
- Set up housing support providing stable, affordable accommodation and intensive wrap-around support to help people who are sleeping rough recover from complex issues and sustain their tenancies;
- Introduce specialist support workers including Rough Sleeping Coordinators, navigators, and specialist health and care staff.

■ **Housing: Construction**

Liam Byrne:

[\[7118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding has been allocated from the public purse to the West Midlands Combined Authority for home building since 2017.

Jake Berry:

[Holding answer 28 January 2020]: In March 2018, the Government agreed a housing package with the West Midlands Combined Authority, to deliver 215,000 homes in the West Midlands by 2030/31, and committed to back that ambition through a Land Fund of up to £100 million. Funding is transferred to the West Midlands Combined Authority when key milestones are met. In addition, West Midlands Combined Authority has been allocated £6 million through the 2017 Devolution Deal to support immediate and long term housing delivery in the region.

The Government has also committed to supporting a successful legacy of the Commonwealth Games in 2022 by providing £165 million of grant funding for infrastructure to unlock up to 5,100 homes in Birmingham.

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

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[10303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the titles of the reviews that his Department is undertaking.

Jake Berry:

The Department is currently undertaking reviews in the following areas:

- The quality and effectiveness of the audit and financial reporting of local authorities in England, led by Sir Tony Redmond;
- How Government can best engage with faith communities, led by Colin Bloom;
- Antisemitism, led by Lord Mann; and

- Fair funding Review for how funding is allocated and redistributed between local authorities.

The Department has also recently undertaken a number of significant reviews. This includes Dame Judith Hackitt's Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, which the Government has committed to taking forward its recommendations. The Building Better Building Beautiful Commission also recently published its final report, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/living-with-beauty-report-of-the-building-better-building-beautiful-commission>.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Emma Hardy:

[10450]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress his Department has made on the development of the Shared Prosperity Fund; and if he will make a statement.

Jake Berry:

Now we have left the European Union, we will create the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which will bind together the whole of the United Kingdom, tackling inequality and deprivation in each of our four nations.

The Government has been clear that final decisions about the design of the Fund must take place after a cross-government Spending Review. In the meantime, stakeholder views from across the UK have helped inform progress on policy design.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Armed Conflict: Sexual Offences

Nickie Aiken:

[9785]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what his Department's policy objectives are on preventing sexual violence in conflict.

Andrew Stephenson:

Preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG), including conflict-related sexual violence, is a priority for DFID. The FCO leads HMG's work on this important agenda through the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI). DFID contributes towards PSVI's objectives through investing in evidence revealing both the scale of the problem and effective interventions to prevent it. This has shown that violence is preventable.

In communities in the DRC, a project with faith leaders and community action groups resulted in domestic violence halving from 70% to 30% in less than three years, while conflict-related sexual violence reduced from 21% to just 4%. We are sharing this evidence across Government and with international partners to encourage increased investment globally in effective approaches to tackle sexual violence.

In November 2019, the Secretary of State announced a new £67.5 million programme to scale up interventions to prevent VAWG across development and humanitarian contexts, and to continue expanding the evidence base as a global public good.

The UK is also a leading member of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies – a global initiative working to drive system change to protect women and girls in emergency situations.

■ **Armenia: Gold**

Jon Trickett:

[10298]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether his Department has made an assessment of the International Finance Corporation decision to support the Amulsar gold mining project in Armenia.

Andrew Stephenson:

The UK is a shareholder of the International Financial Cooperation (IFC) and has a single seat on its Board. Our membership and support for international financial institutions like the IFC helps to advance sustainable and inclusive growth in developing economies. The IFC has robust environmental, social and governance safeguards, which it assesses all projects and investments against. The UK uses its seat on the IFC Board to ensure these standards are met and will take this into consideration when deciding whether or not to vote in favour of a particular project. The IFC has not been involved in the Amulsar gold mining project since 2017

■ **Developing Countries: Abortion and Maternity Services**

Scott Benton:

[9159]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment he has made of the proportion of his Department's budget that is allocated to (a) women's reproductive programmes and initiatives and (b) abortions.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Between 2013/14 – 2017/18 DFID's average direct bilateral expenditure, under the sector codes Reproductive Health care, Maternal and Neonatal health, and Training of Personnel was nearly £218 million each year. This excludes direct bilateral expenditure on family planning, which is reported separately. To note, this £218 million does not cover DFID's core contributions to multilateral organisations such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) which also provide reproductive health care services in developing countries.

Data for all sector codes and spend are available on the Statistics for International Development website, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development-uk-gross-public-expenditure-gpex>.

As DFID takes an integrated approach to our programming on sexual and reproductive health and rights, it is not possible to give a specific figure for our funding for safe abortion.

■ Developing Countries: Human Trafficking

Jamie Stone: [\[9120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps he is taking to tackle the (a) trafficking and (b) exploitation of adolescent girls in humanitarian crises.

Jamie Stone: [\[9121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much his Department has spent from the public purse to help prevent (a) trafficking and (b) exploitation of adolescent girls in humanitarian crises.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

DFID is at the heart of the UK's international efforts to meet Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.7 by taking immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking, as well as on other relevant SDGs covering human trafficking of women and girls and exploitation of children.

In DFID's Strategic Vision on Gender Equality, we set out our ambition to do more to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls during emergencies, when the challenges and needs are particularly acute. Ending this violence is essential in making the world a fairer, more prosperous and safer place – something that is absolutely in our national interest. That's why we have increased our resources and expanded our programmes to tackle violence against women and girls in more than 30 countries.

Since 2017 the Government has more than doubled UK aid spending to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking – committing just over £200 million to date. This includes work to prevent the trafficking of adolescent girls. Examples of our current work to protect vulnerable children in protracted crises include:

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

■ Overseas Aid: Audit

Tulip Siddiq: [\[10426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, on what occasions his Department's audit committee has formally reviewed the adequacy of its audit arrangements for grantees and recipients of official development assistance since 2010.

Andrew Stephenson:

DFID implements robust controls to ensure that partners' UK aid programmes deliver value for money, reflect our values and comply with relevant laws. DFID's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meets at least five times each year and reviews the strength of these controls on an ongoing basis. The Committee draws on audits conducted by DFID's Internal Audit Department and the National Audit Office.

JUSTICE■ **Asylum: Appeals****Bambos Charalambous:**[\[9114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average duration of appeal proceedings on first instance decisions on asylum applications was in the last twelve months for which data is available.

Bambos Charalambous:[\[9115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average duration of appeal proceedings was against first instance decisions on asylum applications for (a) Syrian, (b) Afghan and (c) Iraqi in the last 12 months for which data is available.

Chris Philp:

The average clearance time, from receipt to disposal, of an asylum appeal in the First-tier Tribunal Immigration and Asylum Chamber, over the last 12 months for which data are available

(1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019), was:

ALL NATIONALITIES	29 WEEKS
Syrian nationals	34 weeks
Afghan nationals	31 weeks
Iraqi nationals	20 weeks

These figures are from internal management information extracted from the tribunal's case management system. They do not form part of the published statistics.

Tribunal statistics are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:
www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics

HM Courts & Tribunals Service has worked extensively to reduce the outstanding caseload and improve timeliness in the Immigration and Asylum Chamber. This has seen the live caseload in the First-tier Tribunal reduce by more than two-thirds, from 64,800 to 20,300 between July 2016 and September 2019. The average duration across all case types has also improved from 52 weeks in the period July to September 2017 to 34 weeks in the period July to September 2019.

■ Crown Courts

Yasmin Qureshi:

[10343]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Crown court sitting days there were in each month of (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019.

Chris Philp:

The number of days sat in the Crown Court for each month of (a) 2017, (b) 2018, and (c) 2019 are set out in the attached spreadsheet.

Sitting days are based on the number of cases we expect the court to hear and, with fewer cases making it to the Crown Court, were reduced accordingly. The number of outstanding Crown Court cases has reduced by almost 40% since 2014.

We keep sitting days under constant review and in November allocated an extra 850 days to the Crown Court for this financial year to ease immediate pressure on the court. We have allocated a minimum of 87,000 to inform listing decisions in the first half of 2020/21 which is an increase of 4,700 on last year's allocation.

Notes:

- The attached HMCTS data covers the number of days in which a Crown Court room was sat by any number of judges.
- In some circumstances, judges will 'share' a courtroom to conduct judicial business; in most instances this will involve a returning judge for sentencing purposes only. These figures may therefore differ from the number of judicial sitting days at Crown Court as published in MoJ official statistics (which can, for example, also include days sat in chambers).

The information for 2019 covers January to March, as the National Statistics on judge sitting days for 2019 are due to be released in June 2020. Access to statistics before their publication is strictly controlled, with rules and principles on pre-release access set out in the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008.

Attachments:

1. Table for 10343 [PQ10343.xlsx]

Yasmin Qureshi:

[10344]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Crown court sitting days there were in each of the court circuits in England and Wales in (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019.

Chris Philp:

HM Courts & Tribunals Service does not hold data on the number of claimants who were pregnant at the time of making their claim to the Employment Tribunal.

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Attachments:

Table for 10344 (PQ10344.xlsx)

■ **Employment Tribunals Service: Females**

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[10458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many women making a claim at employment tribunal were pregnant in (a) 2010, (b) 2015, (c) 2017 and (d) 2019.

Chris Philp:

HM Courts & Tribunals Service does not hold data on the number of claimants who were pregnant at the time of making their claim to the Employment Tribunal.

■ **Employment Tribunals Service: Pregnancy**

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[8450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to improve the support it offers to pregnant women undertaking employment tribunals.

Chris Philp:

HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) is fully committed to supporting access to its services for those who need them. Pregnancy and maternity are protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. HMCTS pays due regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty in relation to those protected characteristics.

For tribunal hearings that means that HMCTS staff would consider practical adjustments they could make for pregnant women to assist them if they attend an employment tribunal.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Caroline Lucas:

[8210]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government plans to take to ensure that the Independent Monitoring Authority for the Citizens' Rights Agreement (a) is independent and (b) ensures that applicants to the EU Settlement Scheme have access to an effective redress mechanism, beyond administrative review, to challenge decisions.

Chris Philp:

The Independent Monitoring Authority (IMA) will be fully independent, with its own legal personality separate from Government. It will have its own board to set direction and make decisions. The Government will have no role in the day-to-day running of the IMA or the decisions it makes. To ensure the independence of the IMA, the EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Act places a statutory duty on the Secretary of State to have regard to the need to protect the operational independence of the IMA.

The IMA will be fully capable of monitoring our domestic implementation of the citizens' rights parts in the Withdrawal Agreement and EEA EFTA Separation Agreement. Once the IMA is operational, this will include monitoring the EU Settlement Scheme. The IMA will be able to launch inquiries, receive complaints, and bring judicial review proceedings in order to safeguard the rights of citizens.

■ Justice and Security Act 2013

Mr Alistair Carmichael:

[9613]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Answer of 23 January 2020 to Question 4315 on Justice and Security Act 2013, if he will make it his policy to consult (a) civil society and (b) the legal profession on scope of the planned review of the operation of sections 6 to 11 of the Justice and Security Act 2013.

Chris Philp:

As the answer provided to the Honourable Member's earlier questions on the planned review of the operation of sections 6 to 11 of the Justice and Security Act 2013 advised, discussions are ongoing and an announcement will be made in due course.

■ Ministry of Justice: Hate Crime

Scott Benton:

[8478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what statistics his Department holds on hate crime.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice publishes information regarding prosecutions, convictions and sentencing for hate crime offences specifically defined in legislation, i.e. 'racially or religiously aggravated' offences. The court outcomes for these offences can be found here:

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

(using the pivot table, filter by 'Offence' for offences starting with 'racially or religiously aggravated...' and select all that appear).

Other hate crime offences are prosecuted under the specific offence in legislation that they fall under and the 'hate' element is an aggravating factor in that crime rather than the offence itself but these cannot be separately identified in the data.

■ Prisoner Escorts: Contracts

Alex Chalk: [8373]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to collate data on the number of prisoners not produced in court by companies operating prisoner escort contracts.

Lucy Frazer:

The next generation of Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) contracts will commence in August this year. Under these contracts data specifically related to any contractor failure to produce prisoners in court will be collated.

Alex Chalk: [8374]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to collate data on the number of court days lost as a result of prisoners not being produced in court by companies operating prisoner escort contracts.

Lucy Frazer:

HMCTS does record data on the number of trials that are ineffective in both Crown and Magistrate's Courts as a result of a defendant not being produced by prisoner escort custody services. These statistics are published in Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly publication on gov.uk and the latest data is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2019>

There is currently no requirement or plans for HMCTS to collate data on the number of court days lost as a result of prisoners not being produced in court by companies operating prisoner escort contracts.

Alex Chalk: [8375]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to collate data on the costs incurred as a result of prisoners not being produced in court by companies operating prisoner escort contracts.

Lucy Frazer:

In both the current and next generation of the Prisoner Escort Custody Services contract there are financial remedies in place when contractors delay proceedings in courts.

There is currently no requirement or any plans for HMCTS to collate data on the costs incurred as a result of prisoners not being produced in court by companies operating prisoner escort contracts.

■ Trials

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[10345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average length of time is between the listing of a case to a first hearing for non-custody trials in each court circuit in England and Wales.

Chris Philp:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

TRANSPORT**■ Aviation: Disability**

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[9065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve the experience of wheelchair users on flights from UK airports.

Paul Maynard:

The Government wants to ensure equal access to air travel for all. As part of Aviation 2050 green paper the government consulted on delivering a long-term aim, which will enable disabled passengers to travel in their own wheelchair in the cabin. The Government is working closely with key industry groups like The Safe Transportation of Wheelchairs (STOW) Group, Flying Disabled and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to deliver on this ambition.

■ Aviation: South East

Daisy Cooper: [\[8475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the timeframe is for the introduction of the Future Airspace Strategy Implementation South.

Paul Maynard:

We are expecting the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) to provide the second iteration of the Future Airspace Strategy Implementation South (FASI-S) masterplan in July this year, this will highlight the various conflicts and interdependencies of airspace changes. We expect that up to 17 airports in the South East will bring forward their airspace change consultations in 2021 or 2022 and the implementation of Airspace Change Proposals as part of FASI-S is expected to begin in phased geographical drops from 2024-2026.

■ Cross Country Rail Franchise

Luke Pollard: [\[8471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to announce the new franchise details for CrossCountry.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department is currently considering options for successor franchise arrangements when the existing contract ends in October 2020. We expect an announcement later this year.

■ Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency**Grahame Morris:**[\[10356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to undertake a review of the status of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's Trading Fund.

George Freeman:

The Government's approach to public bodies' reform includes robust tailored reviews led by Departments with Cabinet Office oversight and challenge.

A tailored review of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is in the early stages of planning. This will include consideration of the control and governance arrangements in place for the DVSA and will make recommendations for improvement. It is expected that the tailored review will include consideration of its trading fund status.

■ Driving Tests**Grahame Morris:**[\[10357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many driving test centres face closure; and where those test centres are located.

George Freeman:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) puts its customers at the heart of the services it provides. The agency keeps its operational estate under continuous review to ensure it delivers the highest level of service most efficiently. If the DVSA needs to review the size of its operational estate, it will first seek ministerial agreement to do so. It will then ensure it informs staff and stakeholders, and keeps them informed while working through any change.

Grahame Morris:[\[10358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will consult (a) the devolved administrations and (b) individual local hon. Members on planned driving test centre closures.

George Freeman:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has in place well-established criteria for the establishment of driving test centres. It will continue to work within these parameters. These do not currently involve the devolved administrations or individual Members.

Grahame Morris:

[\[10359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether an equality impact assessment will be conducted prior to any driving test centre closure.

George Freeman:

As a public body, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency is obliged to take account of its Public Sector Equality Duty when exercising its functions.

It does that now and will continue to do so in the future.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Mike Amesbury:

[\[8460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the public availability of electric vehicle charging points.

George Freeman:

We recognise that a UK-wide, reliable and joined-up public electric vehicle charging network infrastructure is essential for realising our ambitions for zero emission driving and we will continue to invest to bring this about.

Our jointly funded £400 million Chargepoint Infrastructure Investment Fund's 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.

On 21 January, we announced that Government has doubled the value of the On-street Residential Charging Scheme for 2020-2021 to £10 million to support the provision of up to 3,600 chargepoints for those that do not have off-street parking.

In July 2019 work commenced to determine a vision for a core rapid charger network on England's strategic road network. This will report in Spring 2020. Highways England has committed £15m to ensure there are chargepoints (rapid where possible) every 20 miles on 95% of the Strategic Road Network by 2020. As of December 2019 84% of the network is within 20 miles of a rapid electric vehicle chargepoint.

To date, government and industry have supported the installation of over 17,000 devices providing over 24,000 publicly available chargepoints. This includes over 2,400 rapid chargepoints – one of the largest networks in Europe.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Grahame Morris:

[\[8235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of High Speed Two on economic inequality.

Paul Maynard:

In August 2019 the Government commissioned the independent Oakervee Review to provide advice on whether and how to proceed with HS2. The Government will set

out its next steps on HS2 shortly including, if appropriate, a revised assessment of the scheme's business case.

Grahame Morris:

[8236]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the economic effect of High Speed Two on people living in Easington constituency.

Paul Maynard:

HS2 as planned has the potential to unlock significant investment in North East England. The project will integrate with Northern Powerhouse Rail and local transport, and will help to relieve congestion, improve reliability and speed up journey times between the North East with the Midlands and South.

■ **Hitachi Rail Europe: Redundancy**

Alex Cunningham:

[9009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has met with representatives of Hitachi Rail to discuss potential job losses at its factory.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Secretary of State for Transport has not met with representatives of Hitachi Rail to discuss any specific matters in respect of their facility at Newton Aycliffe. Officials at the Department remain fully engaged with Hitachi on a regular basis with regard to current and future projects.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Daisy Cooper:

[8476]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to respond to the letter from the Chairman of Committee on Climate Change Government, Of 20 September 2019 on International aviation and shipping and net zero.

George Freeman:

Alongside our upcoming Transport Decarbonisation Plan, we will shortly bring forward a consultation on aviation and climate change. It is critical that we consider how aviation can play its part in delivering our net zero ambitions, so that the aviation sector can continue to thrive.

International shipping is unique in being the only global sector with a volumetric emissions reduction target, as set out in the International Maritime Organization's Initial GHG Strategy. The UK was a leading voice in the negotiation of this Strategy, and our primary focus regarding international shipping emissions is now to agree through the IMO the short-, medium- and long-term measures required to reach the targets. Government will invite further views on its domestic actions to reduce shipping emissions through the publication later this year of a Call for Evidence on non-tax incentives to support the transition to zero emission shipping.

■ Network Rail: Planning Permission**Mohammad Yasin:****[8423]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to report on the Network Rail (London to Corby) (Land Acquisition, Level Crossings and Bridge Works) Order application.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The decision by the Secretary of State on the Transport and Works Act Order application by Network Rail for the London To Corby (land acquisition and bridge works) Order will be made in the near future.

■ Railways: Fares**Ruth Jones:****[8474]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the cost of rail fares.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government has frozen regulated rail fares in line with inflation for the seventh year in a row. In addition, we have already cut costs for thousands of young people with the 16-17 Saver railcard, will be rolling out a new Veteran's Railcard to give over 830,000 former service personnel, who do not otherwise benefit from discounted rail travel, up to a third off their rail costs. We have announced our intention to establish a new fares trials fund to explore the benefits and costs of a clearer, more flexible and fairer fares system. Fares revenue is crucial to funding day-to-day railway operations and the massive upgrade programme we are delivering, all of which benefit passengers.

■ Railways: Finance**Alan Brown:****[9081]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding the Government has allocated for each financial year of the Beeching Reversal Fund to (a) Scotland and (b) the UK; and what the Barnett consequentials are for that funding.

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 and is, for example, supporting the examination of the potential reopening of the Edinburgh-Carlisle 'Waverley line' as part of the Borders Growth Deal.

■ Railways: North of England

Mike Amesbury:

[8459]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of investment in Northern Powerhouse Rail since its inception.

Paul Maynard:

As the table sets out below, Northern Powerhouse Rail has seen year on year increases in its development budget for 5 years. The Government recognises that there is an urgent need for rail investment to improve connectivity, journey times and frequency between Northern towns and cities.

In Summer 2019, it was agreed that the first stage of Northern Powerhouse Rail will be a new line between Leeds and Manchester. We continue to work with TfN and intend to announce the next steps shortly.

YEAR	BUDGET
FY16/17	£10,000,000
FY17/18	£15,000,000
FY18/19	£20,000,000
FY19/20	£50,000,000
FY20/21 (forecast)	£75,000,000
Total	£170,000,000

■ Railways: Woking

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[8260]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve the performance of rail services operating from Woking to London.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

South Western Railways' (SWR) Franchise Agreement contains provisions that incentivises SWR to improve its own performance and to work jointly with Network Rail. Challenging targets for performance have been set and where performance falls below expected levels, SWR is required to invest additional sums of money into initiatives to address the causes of the poor performance. This has been the case in the first two years of the Franchise, where targets were not met. Officials and I continue to monitor closely SWR's performance and are currently in the process of finalising a Remedial Agreement.

Roads: Accidents**Jessica Morden:****[10332]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress the road collision investigation project led by the RAC Foundation has made; and what plans he has to extend that scheme to Wales.

George Freeman:

The Road Collision Investigation Project is ongoing. Progress to date includes:

- A report on Models and methods for collision analysis giving the rationale for taking a systems approach to collision investigation.
- RCIP Feasibility Study carried out by the Transport Research Laboratory to assess the validity of the AcciMap framework

This work is being led by the RAC Foundation, in collaboration with and supported by the Department for Transport (DfT), Highways England (HE), the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and other national and local organisations.

Three police force analysts are all using the Collision Reporting and Sharing System managed and funded by the Department for Transport - no Welsh forces use this system at present, though it would be open for them to do so. The learning from the project will be published in due course and will be available to all of central and local government (including devolved administrations), and all GB police forces.

Roads: Materials**Alex Chalk:****[8372]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to deploy (a) blended recycled plastic with bitumen and (b) other new technology to create more durable road surfaces.

George Freeman:

The Government is committed to exploring innovative ideas and processes for constructing, repairing and maintaining road surfaces. The Department for Transport is aware of a number of initiatives, both here in England and overseas, in which recycled plastic and other waste product materials are added as a binding mix to asphalt. Technological innovation in road maintenance processes can also improve efficiency and reduce waste by recycling existing road material.

As part of a Live Labs research programme, the Department for Transport, in conjunction with the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) and private partners, announced in January 2019 that we were providing Cumbria County Council with £16 million to extend a trial for the selection and testing of recycled plastic in surfacing and structural treatments on the Local Road Network for which they are responsible. This trial will assess the suitability and durability of the plastics additives from minor patching work and pothole repairs through to major resurfacing.

Elsewhere, on the Strategic Road Network, Highways England is committed to investing in innovation to help meet the economic, environmental and efficiency challenges we face in our changing world. Its Innovation Designated Fund provides £150 million in the first Road Investment Strategy for innovation capital projects to discover and implement emerging technologies, new materials and ways of working. Highways England currently has no plans to deploy blended recycled plastic with bitumen in road surfaces, but it continues to investigate its potential for future use.

A trial of asphalt containing Ground Tyre Rubber was successfully completed along the M1 motorway in May 2019. By including a small amount of Ground Tyre Rubber into the asphalt surface it can present a good opportunity to re-cycle tyre rubber at its end-of-life, while not undermining asphalt properties and performance.

■ **Taxis: Standards**

Wes Streeting:

[10420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to issue new statutory taxi hire standards.

George Freeman:

We will shortly be issuing Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Standards to licensing authorities, on protecting passengers and updated best practice guidance for other matters that will follow later this year.

■ **Transport: Midlands**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[9106]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding the Government has allocated to transport programmes throughout the Midlands.

George Freeman:

Figures on public sector expenditure at national and regional levels are part of the Government's Country and Regional Analysis (CRA) statistics.

The statistics include spend on transport by all public sector organisations including the Department for Transport, Local Authorities, Public Corporations (in the case of transport, this is mainly spend by London Underground) and other government departments including devolved administrations.

When comparing expenditure across regions a number of factors should be considered. The benefits from spend on transport interventions will often accrue to passengers far beyond the residents of the immediate local area or region. This is particularly the case for spending on the railways which connect cities and regions across the country and deliver broader benefits beyond the region concerned. Inevitably allocations are not always precise.

Table 1: Public expenditure on all transport in the Midlands, by all public sector bodies (£ million)

	EAST MIDLANDS	WEST MIDLANDS	MIDLANDS TOTAL
2014/15	1,023	1,459	2,482
2015/16	1,179	1,898	3,077
2016/17	1,024	1,871	2,895
2017/18	1,083	2,002	3,085
2018/19	1,286	2,758	4,044

These expenditure values are in nominal terms and have not been adjusted for inflation.

Source: Table A.8e - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/country-and-regional-analysis-2019>

TREASURY

■ Child Benefit

Peter Kyle:

[10422]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Office for Tax Simplification recommendation in its October 2019 publication, Taxation and Life Events: Simplifying tax for individuals, to review the administrative arrangements linked to the operation of Child Benefit.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has always urged parents to claim Child Benefit, in order to receive the associated National Insurance credits and help protect their future right to the State Pension. Parents are advised to do this on the Child Benefit claim form which is included in information packs that go to new parents, through the HMRC helpline, online at GOV.UK, and through partners such as Citizens Advice.

Since April 2019 the Child Benefit claim form and accompanying notes have been updated, with a prominent message on the front page to help people make a decision on whether they should claim and be paid Child Benefit, and to explain the importance of claiming even if they opt not to receive payments.

■ City Deals

Anthony Browne:

[9797]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which City Deal areas fall wholly or in part within Combined Authority areas.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Greater Cambridge City Deal was signed in 2014 to boost growth by investing in local infrastructure, housing and skills as one of the 26 City Deals agreed up to 2014.

Since then, the government has also signed a number of Devolution deals, including with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority in 2016. A full list of city and devolution deals is given on the Gov.uk website.

■ Cryptocurrencies

Adam Afriye:

[8202]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress he has made on creating an economic environment in which digital currencies can be developed.

John Glen:

The UK's approach to cryptoassets was outlined in the 2018 Cryptoassets Taskforce report, and in July last year the FCA set out its position in relation to the regulatory perimeter in this space. The government and regulators have since taken steps to continue encouraging responsible innovation in this area, while also mitigating risks to consumers and markets.

For instance, this January the Treasury transposed the cryptoasset provisions set out in the EU Fifth Anti-Money Laundering Directive (5MLD). This will combat the risk of cryptoassets being used for illicit activity, in support of the government's aims for the sector.

More broadly, the government is committed to creating an environment where tech businesses can thrive by investing in areas such as talent, cutting-edge research and growth finance. Venture capital investment in the UK tech sector grew by 44 per cent in 2019, from £7.1bn to £10.1bn. This was a faster growth rate than both the US and China.

The financial regulators continue to provide a platform that facilitates innovation in this space. For example, the Financial Conduct Authority has accepted a significant number of DLT-based projects into its Regulatory Sandbox to help enable the adoption of this technology to deliver better financial services with appropriate consumer safeguards.

■ Gambling

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[8391]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on (a) the cost to the NHS of treating (i) addiction to gambling and (ii) gambling-related harm and (b) the proportion of that cost that is accrued to the public purse through taxation on gambling.

Mr Simon Clarke:

In line with successive administrations, the details of Ministerial discussions are not normally disclosed.

Gambling Duties raise around £3bn in revenue for the Exchequer per year. As is the case with taxes in general, the revenue raised goes into the consolidated fund.

■ Gold: Armenia**Jon Trickett:** [10297]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the International Finance Corporation decision to support the Amulsar gold mining project in Armenia.

John Glen:

I refer the Honourable Member to the response from the Department for International Development given to his question of 30 January (UIN10298).

■ Help to Buy Scheme**Stephanie Peacock:** [9113]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many Help to Buy ISAs were opened in (a) Barnsley East constituency, (b) Yorkshire and Humber and (c) England.

John Glen:

We do not collect regional data for Help to Buy ISA account openings, therefore cannot confirm the amount of accounts opened specifically in those areas. However, as of June 2019, 1.6 million Help to Buy ISAs have been opened. 339,747 bonuses have been claimed throughout the UK, including (a) 645 in Barnsley East, (b) 34,192 in Yorkshire and Humber, and (c) 259,506 in England.

Further regional data about bonuses claimed under the Help to Buy ISA scheme, can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/official-statistics-on-the-help-to-buy-isa-scheme>

■ Infrastructure: Capital Investment**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [10320]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to make an assessment of the effectiveness of the UK Guarantees Scheme in relation to infrastructure investment.

Jesse Norman:

The Infrastructure Finance Review was launched at the Spring Statement 2019 and consulted on how the Government can best support private investment in infrastructure. This included consulting on the Government's existing financial tools, such as the UK Guarantees Scheme. The review will conclude alongside the upcoming National Infrastructure Strategy at the Spring Budget 2020. The Strategy will set out the Government's long-term ambitions for economic infrastructure, to ensure that the benefits of a prospering economy are felt across the whole of the UK.

■ International Military Services**Tulip Siddiq:** [8403]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department gave permission that the dividend paid to the Secretary of State for Defence by IMS Ltd in 2010 did not need to be returned to the Consolidated Fund by the Ministry of Defence.

Rishi Sunak:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Defence Procurement) James Heapey MP on 30th January 2020 UIN Reference 8402.

■ Social Services: Fees and Charges**Damian Hinds:**[\[8997\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy for all consumer deferred payment programmes to come under the regulatory oversight of the Financial Conduct Authority, whether or not an interest charge is payable.

John Glen:

In 2014, the Government transferred regulatory responsibility for the consumer credit market to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). In November 2019, the FCA published rules to address consumer harm in the Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) market. However, not all BNPL products fall under the FCA's regulatory oversight. Exempt agreements include those where no interest or charges are payable, and where credit is repaid in fewer than 12 months and no more than 12 payments.

The Government carefully considered this exemption at the time of transfer and decided this exemption achieved the right balance between ensuring that burdens on firms are proportionate whilst maintaining the appropriate level of consumer protection.

■ Tax Avoidance**Alex Cunningham:**[\[8276\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of the loan charge on the physical and mental wellbeing of people subject to it.

Jesse Norman:

The Government published a tax information and impact note (TIIN) for the Loan Charge, in common with all new tax legislation, and has since published a TIIN on the reform measures recommended in the independent review led by Sir Amyas Morse. These provide a clear explanation of the policy objective, together with details of the effect on the Exchequer, the economy, individuals, businesses, civil society organisations, as well as any equality or other specific area of impact.

As a result of these reforms, it is estimated that more than 30,000 people will benefit from reduced bills. The Government takes very seriously concerns over the physical and mental wellbeing of those subject to the Loan Charge and over the last year HMRC have significantly increased the support offered to customers undergoing compliance checks.

■ Taxation

Peter Kyle: [\[10421\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department plans to respond to the Office for Tax Simplification's Review, Taxation and Life Events: Simplifying tax for individuals, published 10 October 2019.

Jesse Norman:

The OTS undertook the review of 'Taxation and Life Events' as an own initiative review.

Officials will continue to consider the recommendations made in 'Taxation and Life Events' carefully.

■ Treasury: Reviews

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[10301\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the titles of the reviews that his Department is undertaking.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Treasury is currently undertaking the following formal reviews on matters of public policy or delivery:

- A review of the Economics of Biodiversity
- A review of the Costs of Net Zero
- The Infrastructure Finance Review
- A review and evaluation of the Financial Advice Market (joint review with the FCA)
- The Financial Services Future Regulatory Framework Review
- The Payments Landscape Review
- A review of s.272 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000
- The National Security and Listings Project
- A review of the rules for the Innovative Finance ISA
- A review of the tapered annual allowance in the context of the NHS and other public services
- A review of off-payroll working rules

■ Tyne and Wear Metro

Chi Onwurah: [\[10495\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to allocate funding from the public purse for new rolling stock for the Tyne and Wear Metro.

Rishi Sunak:

I am pleased to confirm the Government remains absolutely committed to investing £337 million to replace the Tyne & Wear Metro's nearly 40-year-old rolling stock with modern energy-efficient trains.

Last week, Nexus confirmed their preferred bidder to deliver 42 new Metro trains. These are set to transform journeys, providing more comfortable seats and better information for millions of passengers who use the network.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ Employment: Disability****Cat Smith:****[9723]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government has taken to ensure that people with disabilities receive help and support to identify and challenge discriminatory workplace behaviours and practices.

Victoria Atkins:

Any employer who undertakes actions that result in discrimination may be held liable for such behaviour at an Employment Tribunal. Through the Equality Act, employees are protected from victimisation, meaning they should not fear the consequences of challenging discrimination at their workplace, even where no legal case is taken or won.

In 2019 the EHRC published two pieces of guidance; a guide to help employees including disabled staff challenge discrimination at work, and a guide to help employers understand their responsibilities to provide disabled staff with additional support and workplace adjustments. The EHRC also supports disabled individuals who have experienced discrimination to take their cases to court; in 2018 EHRC delivered a Legal Support Project to increase access to justice for people experiencing disability discrimination. It offered groups £189,000 for legal assistance across 94 cases in areas including employment.

Prior to considering legal action, a person who feels that they have been unlawfully discriminated against can contact the [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service](#) or the [Equality Advisory and Support Service](#).

Cat Smith:**[9724]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that employers meet their obligations to provide reasonable adjustments to the workplace to ensure that people with hidden or invisible condition are able to (a) access and (b) stay in employment.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is committed to protecting people with disabilities in the workplace. The Equality Act 2010 places obligations on employers in relation to disabled employees and job applicants, including a duty to provide reasonable adjustments.

However, the legislation recognises the need to strike a balance between the needs of disabled people and the interests of employers. What is 'reasonable' will vary from one situation to another. This is because factors like the practicability of making the adjustment, the cost of the adjustment and the resources available to a business, will vary from one situation to another. Although employers may in some cases make anticipatory adjustments, many will be at the request of the employee, including those where the disability may not be obvious or may be entirely hidden.

The government runs Access to Work, a demand-led discretionary grant scheme that offers up to £59,200 funding per year for in-work support for people whose disability or health condition affects the way they do their job. The scheme is designed to offer support above the level of employers' statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010, as well as providing advice to employers on in work support available for their employees which could include reasonable adjustments.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Autism: Training

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[9057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy for Jobcentre Plus staff to receive adequate training on autism.

Justin Tomlinson:

Training and guidance is provided for working with different vulnerable groups, including customers with Autistic Spectrum Conditions. Support is also provided by Disability Employment Advisers and Work Psychologists. Work Coaches can refer individuals to personalised provision and support such as the Work and Health Programme (available in England and Wales) or Fair Start Scotland (devolved programme available Scotland).

We are continuing to build on local initiatives in Jobcentre Plus, to ensure that we deliver a consistently supportive service across the country. For example:

- As part of Autism Awareness Week in April 2019, we introduced short 'Bitesize' Autism Awareness Learning for work coaches and promoted Calm and Quiet Sessions across the network
- North London District developed and organised Calm and Quiet sessions, including a toolkit for organising these elsewhere. This is being promoted across the Jobcentre network. The extension of service hours, from March 2020, will give more opportunities to run calm and quiet sessions and to schedule appointments at less busy times.

Through a contract with Autism Alliance DWP has:

- Developed the Disability Confident Autism and Neurodiversity Toolkit to help staff from all Government Departments to understand how to support people with Autism and associated Neuro-Diverse conditions. The toolkit was launched in April 2017.

- Developed the Disability Passport 'About Me', to encourage disabled claimants, including individuals with Autism, to disclose their disability/ health conditions at the earliest stage to their Adviser, to improve communication and ensure reasonable adjustments are put in place. The passport was launched in March 2017.

■ **Bereavement Support Payment**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[10322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will review the Bereavement Support Payment in the light of the changes that were made to that payment in 2017.

Mims Davies:

We have always been committed to evaluating Bereavement Support Payment, but we need to ensure that we have enough information to assess all aspects of the policy, so that the review is meaningful. As BSP was introduced in 2017 and is payable in 18 monthly instalments we are only now reaching a point that we have sufficient data. We will set a date for publication of the review in due course.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Apprentices**

Angela Rayner:

[\[9050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of staff employed by her Department are apprentices.

Mims Davies:

Based on the last quarterly figures, produced 30 November 2019, 3.9% of DWP employees are apprentices.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Reviews**

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[10300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the titles of the reviews that her Department is undertaking.

Mims Davies:

The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

While departments conduct and commission a variety of formal reviews, there is no single public list of each of the reviews currently underway.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Welsh Language**

Hywel Williams:

[\[10317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her Department's policy is on receiving letters in the Welsh language; and what her Department's deadline is for replying to letters written in the (a) Welsh and (b) English language.

Mims Davies:

DWP welcomes letters in Welsh. When someone writes to us in Welsh, we will issue a reply in Welsh (if a reply is appropriate).

The target time for replying to letters written in Welsh is the same as the target for letters written in English.

Complaints – 15 working days

MPs writing to Ministers – 20 working days

Correspondence relating to policies – within 4 weeks

Where it is not possible to issue a substantial reply in this time, a written acknowledgement and explanation will be sent in whichever language the correspondence has been received (Welsh or English).

■ **Employment: North West Durham****Mr Richard Holden:****[7233]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people were (a) economically active, (b) (i) students, (ii) living with a long-term illness and (iii) in each other economically inactive category, (c) economically active and in work and (d) economically active and seeking work in (A) April 2010 and (B) the latest month for which statistics are available in North West Durham constituency.

Mims Davies:

Statistics on economic activity for constituencies are published by the independent Office for National Statistics (ONS) and come from the Annual Population Survey (APS).

As the figures below are estimates from survey data, of different-sized sub-groups of the population at a local level they are subject to varying levels of uncertainty due to small sample sizes – which we describe alongside the estimates.

For North West Durham, in the year July 2009 to June 2010 (including the month April 2010), there were:

a) 45,000 estimated economically active people. The ONS are 95% confident that the economic activity rate lies between 69.7% and 81.9%, with a central estimate of 75.8%. The economic activity rate is the proportion of the working age population (aged 16-64; 59,400 people in 2010) who are economically active.

b) Due to the very small number of people in this local area with these characteristics in the APS sample, these estimates are highly uncertain:

i) This data is not available, please see the section below.

ii) ONS estimates that 4,200 were inactive due to long-term sickness. The ONS are 95% confident that it lies between 16.5% and 41.7% of the inactive working age population, with a central estimate of 29.1%.

iii) Other reasons for inactivity: 3,800 people are estimated to be inactive due to retirement. The ONS are 95% confident that this estimate lies between 14.1% and 38.5% of the inactive working age population, with a central estimate of 26.3%.

c) 42,500 people were estimated to be employed. The ONS are 95% confident that the employment rate lies between 65.2% and 78%, with a central estimate of 71.6%.

For North West Durham, in the year July 2018 to June 2019 (including the month April 2019), there were:

a) 44,300 estimated economically active people. The ONS are 95% confident that the economic activity rate lies between 72.7% and 85.1%, with a central estimate of 78.9%. The working age population in this period is 56,200 people.

b) Due to the very small number of people in this local area with these characteristics in the APS sample, these estimates are highly uncertain:

i) This data is not made available by the ONS, due to extreme unreliability of estimates based on a very small sample of people with these characteristics in this year's APS.

ii) 5,700 who were inactive due to long-term sickness, the ONS are 95% confident that this lies between 31.7% and 64.9% of the working age inactive population, with a central estimate of 48.3%.

c) 43,300 people were estimated to be employed. The ONS are 95% confident that the employment rate lies between 70.6% and 83.4%, with a central estimate of 77%.

■ Social Security Benefits

Hywel Williams:

[\[10319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answers of 18 January to Questions 7121 and 7122, what steps the Government is taking to tackle the gaps in the data relating to the two-child limit policy.

Will Quince:

The Department has published an Impact Assessment of the two-child policy based on survey data which was of suitable quality to assess the impact of the policy from an equality and human rights perspective, meeting our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, and ensuring compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the rights of children.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[10402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many children have been affected by the two-child benefit limit in (a) York Central constituency, (b) Yorkshire and the Humber and (c) the UK in each year for which data is available.

Will Quince:

Statistics related to the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children was published in July 2019 and can be accessed at:

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

Providing support for a maximum of two children, or qualifying young persons in Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit, ensures fairness between claimants and those taxpayers who support themselves solely through work.

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

Stephanie Peacock: [10435]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit claimants receive their benefits from a credit union in (a) Barnsley, (b) South Yorkshire, (c) Yorkshire and Humber and (d) England.

Guy Opperman:

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

Stephanie Peacock: [10436]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much her Department has paid to credit unions to distribute to benefits claimants in (a) Barnsley, (b) South Yorkshire, (c) Yorkshire and Humber and (d) England in each year since 2010.

Guy Opperman:

Whilst some claimants choose to have benefit payments paid into Credit Union accounts, the Department does not have a contract with Credit Unions to distribute this money. DWP does not, therefore, make any payments Credit Unions to distribute money to benefit claimants.

Stephanie Peacock: [10437]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much her Department has spent under the Eligible Loan Deduction Scheme in each year since its introduction.

Stephanie Peacock: [10438]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the current backlog is of payments to lenders under the Eligible Loan Deduction Scheme.

Stephanie Peacock: [10439]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the timescale is for making payments to lenders under the Eligible Loan Deduction Scheme.

Will Quince:

Deductions can only be made where all benefit rules are satisfied, including affordability/hardship considerations. If deductions are appropriate, any recoveries

are paid to the lender on a monthly basis. There are no backlogs for agreed deductions.

DWP has administered deductions of this type since 2006. However, administration costs are only available from 2015/16 onwards. These costs can be found in the table below.

YEAR	ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS FOR ELDS
2015/16	£403,000
2016/17	£555,000
2017/18	£539,000
2018/19	£546,000

■ State Retirement Pensions: Females

Jim Shannon:

[\[8288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Government plans to provide financial support to women born in the 1950's who are subject to the changes to the state pension age.

Guy Opperman:

Changes to State Pension age were made over a series of Acts by successive governments from 1995 onwards; including the Coalition 2010-2015, Labour 1997-2010 and the Conservatives 1995-1997, following public consultations and extensive debates in both Houses of Parliament. Through the welfare system, the Government is committed to providing financial support for people at every stage of their life, including when they near or reach retirement.

■ Universal Credit

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[10362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what additional financial support her Department provides to vulnerable people who receive universal credit.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[8248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what additional financial support her Department provides to vulnerable people who claim universal credit.

Will Quince:

Millions of people who move onto Universal Credit from legacy benefits are better off, including around a million disabled households who will gain on average around £100 per month.

The Department takes seriously the need to support vulnerable claimants, and wants the application process for Universal Credit to be as quick and easy as possible, ensuring that claimants receive money at the earliest opportunity.

Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland have supported over 180,000 individuals through the 'Help to Claim' provision since April 2019, offering tailored and practical support to help people make a Universal Credit claim up to receiving their first full correct payment on time. 'Help to Claim' is available online, on the phone and face-to-face in multiple locations including Jobcentres and Citizen's Advice Bureaux.

We have listened to feedback on how we can improve Universal Credit to support our claimants and acted quickly, making improvements such as extending advances, removing waiting days, and introducing housing benefit run on. These changes are giving support to those who need it most, whilst at the same time helping people get into work faster

Stephen Timms:

[8135]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether claimants in receipt of transitional protection following their migration to universal credit will continue to receive that protection after an involuntary change in their employer under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations.

Will Quince:

Claimants in receipt of transitional protection following managed migration to Universal Credit, who change employers, will continue to be eligible for transitional protection provided that they remain in work and continue to earn above the Administrative Earnings Threshold.

■ Universal Credit and Welfare Tax Credits

Hywel Williams:

[10318]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she has taken to make prospective parents aware of the two child limit on tax credits and universal credit in the last 12 months.

Will Quince:

Information about this policy is available on GOV.UK and Jobcentre staff are able to advise on how the policy operates. The Government continues to look to identify effective ways of making prospective parents aware of the policy.

Claimants were alerted to this policy when it was announced by the Government as part of the Summer Budget 2015. HMRC, who currently have the majority of claims from those with more than two children, also provide information about this change in leaflets which are sent to all claimants renewing their Child Tax Credit claim.

DWP and HMRC also produce annual joint reports with statistics relating to the implementation of the policy. The most recent of these was published 31 July 2019 and can be found online at:

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

■ Work Capability Assessment

Neil Gray:

[8330]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of removing the option to share the results of work capability assessments with GPs on the ability of disabled people to access support; and if she will make a statement.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Universal Credit system is structured around an online personal account which contains all the information relevant to the claim. This includes claimant's bank account details, savings, capital, medical history, family relationships and address information. In order to take all reasonable steps to protect the position of claimants and their data, the Universal Credit design principle is that claimants own their own data, and this is made clear from the beginning of the claim.

When Universal Credit claimants receive their Work Capability Assessment decision, we advise them they no longer need to supply medical evidence to support their claim. Claimants may choose to obtain medical evidence for other purposes (for employers or other support in the community). Claimants may also choose to share the outcome of their Work Capability Assessment with their GPs, depending on their personal preferences and the relevance of the information to their GPs.

The Department continues to improve the process to ensure our claimants receive the appropriate support and information.

■ Work Programme: Offenders

Andrew Rosindell:

[8179]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of offenders who joined the Work Programme on leaving prison secured a sustained job outcome within two years of joining that program in each year since 2015.

Will Quince:

Available statistics on the Work Programme, including information on job outcomes and sustainment payments of various payment groups, including JSA Prison Leavers is published and available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/work-programme-statistical-summary-data-to-december-2017>

Table 1.3a from the latest statistical summary gives the proportion of JSA Prison Leavers that achieved a job outcome within 12 months of referral, by monthly referral cohort.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Andrea Leadsom):
[\[HCWS90\]](#)

The Government is committed to supporting working families to balance work with their caring responsibilities. We have laid Regulations in Parliament which, subject to Parliamentary approval, will implement our commitment to give employed parents a statutory minimum right to time off work in the devastating circumstances where their child dies or they suffer a stillbirth.

Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay are the first of a raft of new employment reforms which will make the UK the best place in the world to work and to start and grow a business. As announced in the Queen's Speech, the Employment Bill will introduce further measures to benefit employees and their employers, including Carer's Leave and Neonatal Leave and Pay.

The Parental Bereavement Leave Regulations 2020; the Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (General) Regulations 2020; and the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018 (Commencement) Regulations 2020 (collectively referred to as "the Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Regulations") were laid in Parliament on 23rd January 2020. Taken together, they implement a statutory right to a minimum of 2 weeks' leave for all employed parents whose child under the age of 18 dies or who suffer a stillbirth from 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Employment law is a devolved matter in the case of Northern Ireland so the new entitlement to Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay will only apply to parents in Great Britain (GB). There are around 7,500 child deaths a year in GB, including around 3,000 stillbirths. The Government estimates that this new entitlement will help to support over 10,000 GB parents a year.

The entitlement to Parental Bereavement Leave will be a "Day 1" right which means that employed parents will be entitled to time off work to grieve irrespective of how long they have worked for their employer. Parents who have worked for their employer for 6 months or more at the time of their child's death will also be able to claim Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay.

Employed parents will be able to take their leave and pay as either a single block of 2 weeks, or as 2 separate blocks of one week each.

The right to Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay makes GB one of a very small number of countries worldwide to recognise the impact that the death of a child has on parents and to offer such support to parents. We are the first to offer a full 2 weeks of leave and pay and this is the most generous offer on Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay in the world.

Both the leave and pay can be taken at any time in the first 56 weeks after the child's death. The ability to take time off work over a long period recognises that grief is a very personal matter – whilst some parents may want to take time off work immediately, others may prefer to take time off work on the first anniversary of their child's death or to enable them to attend the funeral or inquest.

The new entitlement will be known as Jack's Law in memory of Jack Herd whose mother Lucy has campaigned tirelessly on this important issue.

Subject to Parliamentary approval, the new entitlement will apply to parents who lose a child on or after 6 April 2020.

CABINET OFFICE

■ State of the Estate in 2018-19

Parliamentary Secretary (Jeremy Quin):

[\[HCWS91\]](#)

I have today laid before Parliament, pursuant to Section 86 of the Climate Change Act 2008, the "State of the Estate in 2018-19". This report describes the efficiency and sustainability of the Government's Civil Estate and records the progress that the Government has made since the previous year. The report is published on an annual basis.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Paterson Inquiry

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock):

[\[HCWS87\]](#)

Today the report of the Independent Inquiry into the issues raised by the former breast surgeon Ian Paterson has been published.

This report follows two years of work by the Inquiry, led by Bishop Graham James. The Bishop has adopted a strong commitment to a "patients and families first" approach to public disclosure, which means that the process of public disclosure began earlier this morning with the patients and families themselves.

The report contains an analysis of the circumstances surrounding Ian Paterson's malpractice that has affected so many patients and considers other past and current practices. It also tells the stories of patients who came forward to provide evidence to the Inquiry, which bears testament to their courage. As such it makes for difficult reading and it is with deep regret that we have to acknowledge the failure of the NHS and the independent sector to protect patients from Paterson's malpractice.

The public should be able to trust that a health professional will never again be allowed to place personal gain or advancement over the best interests of his or her patients whether care is funded by the NHS or privately. It is therefore essential that the whole of the health sector responds quickly and effectively to the lessons of this inquiry. The

Government will give a thorough and detailed consideration of its findings over the coming weeks.

We expect now for all the relevant agencies and organisations both nationally and locally, and across the whole healthcare sector to give this report urgent and thorough attention.

Once that work is done, the relevant agencies will decide what steps to take next.

Copies of the report will be laid before the House and will be available from the Vote Office and at: <https://www.gov.uk>

An oral statement will be delivered to the House today.

SCOTLAND

■ Contingencies Fund Advance

Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr Alister Jack):

[[HCWS92](#)]

I hereby give notice of the Scotland Office and Office of the Advocate General's intention to seek a repayable cash advance from the Contingencies Fund of £1,900,000. The Department requires an advance to meet its cash requirements pending parliamentary approval of the Supplementary Estimate 2019-20.

The Department is operating within the budget agreed in the Main Estimate, however, will be seeking an increase in net cash requirement in the Supplementary Estimate.

Accessing the contingency fund will allow the department to cover existing expenditure consistent with existing Parliamentary Estimates and does not represent additional spending.

The advance will be repaid immediately following approval of the Supplementary Estimate.

Parliamentary approval for additional cash of £1,900,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for Scotland Office and Office of the Advocate General. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £1,900,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

TREASURY

■ Bilateral loan to Ireland

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):

[[HCWS89](#)]

I would like to update Parliament on the loan to Ireland.

In December 2010, the UK agreed to provide a bilateral loan of £3.2 billion as part of a €67.5 billion international assistance package for Ireland. The loan was disbursed in 8 tranches, and the final tranche was drawn down on 26 September 2013. Ireland has made interest payments on the loan every six months since the first disbursement.

On 3 February, in line with the agreed repayment schedule, HM Treasury received a total payment of £404,714,183.56 from Ireland. This comprises the repayment of £403,370,000 in principal and £1,344,183.56 in accrued interest.

As required under the Loans to Ireland Act 2010, HM Treasury laid a Statutory Report to Parliament on 3 October 2019 covering the period from 1 April to 30 September 2019. The Report set out details of future payments up to the final repayment on 26 March 2021. The government continues to expect the loan to be repaid in full and on time.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bilateral-loan-to-ireland>

The next Statutory Report will cover the period from 1 October 2019 to 31 March 2020. HM Treasury will report fully on all repayments received during this period in the Report.

■ **Operation of the UK's Counter-Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime: 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019**

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen): **[HCWS88]**

Under the Terrorist Asset-Freezing etc. Act 2010 (TAFE 2010), the Treasury is required to prepare a quarterly report regarding its exercise of the powers conferred on it by Part 1 of TAFE 2010. This written statement satisfies that requirement for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019.

This report also covers the UK's implementation of the UN's ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida asset freezing regime (ISIL-AQ), and the operation of the EU's asset freezing regime under EU Regulation (EC) 2580/2001 concerning external terrorist threats to the EU (also referred to as the CP 931 regime).

Under the ISIL-AQ asset freezing regime, the UN has responsibility for designations and the Treasury, through the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), has responsibility for licensing and compliance with the regime in the UK under the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida (Asset-Freezing) Regulations 2011.

Under EU Regulation 2580/2001, the EU has responsibility for designations and OFSI has responsibility for licensing and compliance with the regime in the UK under Part 1 of TAFE 2010.

EU Regulation (2016/1686) was implemented on 22 September 2016. This permits the EU to make autonomous Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) listings.

The annexed tables set out the key asset-freezing activity in the UK during the quarter.

Attachments:

1. Counter-terrorist asset freezing regime Q3 2019 [TAFE Q3 2019 Table.pdf]