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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

## ATTORNEY GENERAL

## ■ Prosecutions

**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[9639\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2020 to Question 6633 on Prosecutions, how many defendants had prosecutions (a) carried forward and (b) finalised in each year since 2014.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) maintains a central record of the number of defendants whose prosecution is carried forward or waiting to be completed at the end of each year. The table below shows the number of these, in cases where the CPS made a decision to charge, at the end of each year since 2014-15.

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Total Defendants Carried Forward	87,530	77,200	69,676	59,422	53,631

Data Source: CPS Case Management Information System

Records are also held showing the number of finalised (or resolved) prosecution outcomes (by defendant) where the CPS authorised a charge. The table below provides the volumes of these in each year since 2014-15. The 21% reduction in the number of CPS authorised charges since 2014-15 follows the falling caseload trend. Police charged CPS prosecutions reduced by 28% and total finalised prosecutions by 26% in the same time period.

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Total Finalised Prosecution Outcomes	233,959	234,124	223,079	211,154	183,917

Data Source: CPS Case Management Information System

**BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY****■ Business: Government Assistance****Alun Cairns:**[\[9663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which projects have been supported by regional selective assistance in each of the last three years.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Regional Selective Assistance scheme is available in Scotland; it has been replaced by successor schemes elsewhere in the UK. For example, the Department's Regional Growth Fund has provided £16.6m in 2017/18, £16.4m in 2018/19 and £2.7m so far in 2019/20 to support businesses.

**■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Reviews****Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[10304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if she will publish the titles of the reviews that her Department is undertaking.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Department is undertaking the following reviews on matters of public policy or delivery:

- A major review of research bureaucracy and methods, to free up the best researchers and establish the UK as a global science superpower.
- A review to understand the barriers that young people from all backgrounds face to starting and growing a business, led by The Prince's Trust.
- The Magnox Inquiry, an independent inquiry into the award of the Magnox decommissioning contract by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and its subsequent termination.

We support wider Government reviews, including the Net Zero Review led by HM Treasury, to support the UK's world leading climate commitment. We also support two independent business-led reviews to improve gender and ethnic minority representation at the top of UK business; the Hampton-Alexander and Parker Reviews.

**■ Government Departments: Iron and Steel****Nick Smith:**[\[10346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what quantity of (a) hot-rolled steel, (b) steel pipe and tubes and (c) total steel and steel products was procured from UK steel manufacturers by government departments in 2019.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

This Government is committed to supporting the UK steel industry.

The Department collates information from across Government where large amounts of steel are procured, including information about steel spend and origin, where known. This information is published annually at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/steel-public-procurement>

#### ■ Research: North East

**Ian Lavery:** [\[10384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans the Government has to allocate funding to scientific research in the North East.

**Chris Skidmore:**

We are committed to making the UK a global science superpower that attracts brilliant people and businesses from across the world.

The Government has already committed over £42m Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund funding to organisations registered in the North East

We have announced plans for an ambitious place strategy for UK R&D to ensure funding builds on strengths in the regions, and nations of the UK including the North East. We will work closely with UK Research and Innovation to develop a strategy that ensures the whole country contributes to and benefits from the national 2.4% R&D target.

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ General Elections: Armed Forces

**Scott Benton:** [\[9157\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the turnout among (a) members of the armed forces serving abroad and (b) their family members living with them abroad, in the recent General Election.

**Chloe Smith:**

Members of the armed forces serving abroad, or away from home in the UK, can vote with a postal vote or by proxy or in person if they are in their constituency on polling day.

Data that segments voters into categories of profession or other demographics is not collected as this could impact the secrecy of the ballot. In any event many armed forces personnel will have registered as ordinary electors and not in any manner that would identify them as service personnel at the time of voting.

We will continue to work with stakeholders to support the voting process for overseas electors, including armed forces serving abroad.

**Scott Benton:** [\[9158\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he plans to take to assist members of the armed forces serving abroad to take part in future elections.

**Chloe Smith:**

Members of the armed forces serving abroad, or away from home in the UK, can vote with a postal vote or by proxy or in person if they are in their constituency on polling day. We work with the British Forces Post Office to ensure that mail specifically for service personnel, sent to forces post office addresses, is delivered as quickly as possible. We also work Royal Mail on overseas deliveries, through a specific provision to expedite dispatch of mail to overseas addresses.

We will continue to work with these stakeholders and others to support the voting process for overseas electors, including armed forces serving abroad.

**Local Government: Elections****Mr Alistair Carmichael:**[\[8973\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2019 to Question 175803 on Local Government: Elections, whether EU citizens will be eligible in the transition period to (a) stand as candidates, (b) serve a full-term if elected and (c) vote in local elections in England and Wales in 2020.

**Chloe Smith:**

I refer the Rt Hon member to the answer which I gave to PQ [1802](#) on 29 January 2020.

**Trade Agreements****Christian Matheson:**[\[9052\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many international agreements the UK that a party to through its membership of the EU that will require rolling over after the 31 January 2020.

**Christian Matheson:**[\[9053\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the information his Department holds on the number of rollover requests made by the EU to third party countries.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the Hon Member to the Written Ministerial Statement laid on Thursday 30 January 2020, [HCWS82](#), available on the Parliament website.

**Voting Rights: EU Nationals****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[8985\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals to amend section 2(1)(c) of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Government has no plans to change the voting age, having been elected on a manifesto commitment to retain the voting age at 18.

## DEFENCE

■ **Armed Forces: Equality****Alun Cairns:**[\[9662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of representation from the nations and regions of the UK in the armed forces; and if he will make a statement.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The UK's Armed Forces are drawn from all the regions and nations that make up the UK and they play an essential role in our Defence and security. All regular recruitment is carried out online and through a network of Armed Forces Careers Offices. Although recruits provide a postcode, this is not always an accurate reflection of their nationality or origin.

Each of the three Services benefit from historic military connections and recruiting links with specific regions and nations and recruit predominantly from those to ensure those links, culture and identities are strongly represented in the UK's Armed Forces.

■ **Armed Forces: Recruitment****Mr Toby Perkins:**[\[8991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many of the people recruited by the (a) British Army, (b) Royal Navy and (c) Royal Air Force in 2019 resided in (i) Chesterfield constituency, (ii) Derbyshire and (iii) the East Midlands.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The requested information is provided in the table below:

**Intake to the Untrained Regular Armed Forces from Chesterfield, Derbyshire and the East Midlands, 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019**

ENLISTMENT LOCATION	ROYAL NAVY/ROYAL MARINES (RN/RM)	BRITISH ARMY	ROYAL AIR FORCE (RAF)
Chesterfield	~	10	~
Derbyshire	30	110	50
East Midlands	150	520	270

Notes:

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



2. For the RN/RM and RAF, Parliamentary Constituency, County and Region have been identified from known full contact postcodes as recorded in the Defence Recruitment System (DRS).
3. For the Army, Local Authority has been derived using the Postcode District only, not the full postcode. Due to this, there could be instances where a Postcode District covers more than one Local Authority.
4. The figures for Chesterfield are a subset of those for Derbyshire, which are in turn a subset of the figures provided for the East Midlands.
5. There are around 600 Army personnel, 800 Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel and 40 Royal Air Force personnel who did not have a postcode on entry and some of these may come from the Chesterfield, Derbyshire or the East Midlands region.

#### ■ **Nuclear Weapons: Military Bases**

**Stewart Malcolm McDonald:**

[\[10395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 January to Question 3807 and with reference to the key findings on page 7 of the NAO's report entitled Managing infrastructure projects on nuclear-regulated sites, published on 10 January 2020, which projects managed by his Department funding will be re-allocated from to fund the £1.35 billion combined cost increase in respect of the three projects examined by the NAO.

**James Heapey:**

The £1.35 billion cost increase reported in the NAO publication 'Managing Infrastructure on Nuclear-Regulated sites', represent the difference between initial cost estimates and the latest position for the projects reviewed. These costs have been absorbed and accounted for through business as usual budgetary processes within the Enterprise.

### DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

#### ■ **BBC: Information Services**

**Ben Bradley:**

[\[7293\]](#)

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

**Nigel Adams:**

Responsibility for assessing the potential effect of the closure of the BBC Red Button service on people's access to information on sport is for the BBC, which is editorially and operationally independent of the Government. The Government welcomes the BBC's decision to pause the closure of the Red Button service, ahead of its review of

the impact of the closure on the most vulnerable including the elderly, and deaf and blind licence fee payers.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Staff**

**Chi Onwurah:** **[10753]**

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish an organisational chart of his Department.

**Nigel Adams:**

DCMS publishes an organisational chart on a bi-annual basis in line with transparency reporting requirements. An organisational chart was due for publication on 6 December though this was postponed due to the guidance stating that no transparency data should be published in the pre-election period. This information will be published before 31 March 2020.

The latest published organisational chart can be found at this link:

<https://data.gov.uk/dataset/14218517-ef18-40ea-9ad1-aa637174c372/organogram-of-staff-roles-salaries/datafile/a887b21b-5b28-483d-aa8f-dc3495b97a60/preview#organogram>

Historical publications can be found at this link:

<https://data.gov.uk/dataset/14218517-ef18-40ea-9ad1-aa637174c372/organogram-of-staff-roles-salaries>

**Chi Onwurah:** **[10754]**

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many full-time equivalent staff work on the (a) digital, (b) culture, (c) media and (d) sport portfolios in his Department.

**Nigel Adams:**

At 31 December 2019 DCMS employed 1,234 full-time equivalent (FTE) Civil Servants, the majority of whom worked directly on projects relating to digital, culture, media and sport as set out in the table below. The staff not included in this table are either part of the corporate centre (e.g Finance and HR), part of cross-cutting teams working across multiple policy areas (e.g the department's Central Analytical Team) or part of teams which aren't directly linked to digital, culture, media or sport (e.g. the Office for Civil Society and the Gambling team).

WORK AREA	CIVIL SERVANT FTE
Digital	532.6
Culture	111.3
Media	55.4

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WORK AREA	CIVIL SERVANT FTE
Sport	49.5

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The information in the table above relates to Civil Servants on DCMS' payroll. This includes permanent staff, those on fixed-term contracts, those on paid loan/secondment in/out of DCMS and those on paid maternity leave.

#### ■ **Hotels: Internet**

**Scott Benton:**

[\[9154\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the level of commission charged by online booking websites on (a) small hoteliers and (b) bookings for hotel accommodation; and whether his Department plans to review the regulatory framework in relation to the charging of that commission.

**Helen Whately:**

My Department has not assessed the effect of the level of commission charged by online booking websites on either small hoteliers or bookings for hotel accommodation.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the UK's independent competition authority, is responsible for investigating markets where competition or consumer problems are detected. The CMA previously investigated the practices of hotel booking websites, reporting its conclusions in September 2019, and continues to monitor their compliance with consumer protection law in the sector.

#### ■ **Housing: Broadband**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[10373\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that full-fibre broadband that is competitively priced can be deployed in new build apartment blocks.

**Matt Warman:**

Ensuring all new rural and urban homes are built with the future in mind, ready to accept the next generation of digital infrastructure, is a top priority for this Government.

In the Queen's Speech, the Government announced it will legislate to amend Building Regulations so that all new build homes are required to have the infrastructure to support gigabit-capable connections. We will also legislate to require housing developers to work with broadband companies to install gigabit-capable connections in virtually all new build homes, up to a cost cap. In addition, the Chancellor has announced £5bn of funding to improve broadband in the hardest to reach areas of the country.

These measures will work alongside the provisions in the 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.

Together, these measures will drive competition in the commercial market, encourage investment in locations which may otherwise be left behind, and support leaseholders to receive the connectivity they need; from the providers that they want.

## ■ Internet: Children

**Tracy Brabin:** [\[10763\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to prevent underaged children accessing dating applications.

**Matt Warman:**

The Online Harms White Paper sets out our plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. We intend to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. The duty of care will ensure companies have appropriate systems and processes in place to keep their users safe. Companies will be required to take robust action when there is evidence that children are accessing inappropriate content, which includes underage access to dating applications.

## ■ Internet: Data Protection

**Mr David Davis:** [\[8949\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to help ensure that (a) website owners' and (b) providers' compliance with GDPR protects the privacy of their (i) customers and (ii) users.

**Nigel Adams:**

The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) strengthen the obligations on organisations to process individuals' data fairly, lawfully and transparently and to keep it safe and secure. It also strengthens individuals' rights to seek to access, rectify or delete their data.

This legislation is regulated and enforced by the independent Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO has issued comprehensive guidance for organisations on how to comply with the legislation and is also working closely with specific sectors to address areas of risk.

If individuals have concerns about the way online services are processing their data, they may wish to complain to the ICO. The ICO has a range of corrective powers and sanctions to enforce the GDPR, including:

- issuing warnings and reprimands;
- imposing a temporary or permanent ban on data processing;

- ordering the rectification, restriction or erasure of data; and
- suspending data transfers to third countries.

## ■ Openreach

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[10377\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has made an assessment of the accuracy of Openreach's current map of fibre connections in estimating the potential for full-fibre roll-out.

**Matt Warman:**

The Government uses a range of data sources in considering the potential for full fibre and gigabit broadband deployment. We have not made a specific assessment of the accuracy of Openreach's current map of fibre connections. However, we draw on data published by Openreach and other providers, as well as data Ofcom collects on overall network coverage, in estimating future roll-out.

## ■ Young People

**Steve Reed:**

[\[9038\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2019, to Question 6701, on Young People, for what reason the referenced long-term vision for young people is not the responsibility of the Department for Education and the Minister for Children and Families.

**Helen Whately:**

Policy relating to young people is shared between several government departments. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is responsible for out of school activities for young people. DCMS officials are working closely with several other government departments to develop a bold and ambitious youth offer, including the Department for Education.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Antisemitism: Education

**Royston Smith:**

[\[9085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to educate young people on the Holocaust.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is fully committed to Holocaust education. Every young person should learn about the Holocaust and the lessons it teaches us today, which is why it is unique in being the only subject named as a compulsory part of the history curriculum.

The Department further supports pupils' and teachers' understanding of the Holocaust by providing funding for the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons from

Auschwitz project - £2,126,437 in 2019-20 and £2,193,675 in 2020-21 and to the UCL Institute of Education's Centre for Holocaust Education - £500,000 in both 2019-20 and 2020-21, match funded by the Pears Foundation. Additionally, £1.7 million for the 2019-20 financial year is being provided for the Bergen-Belsen Commemoration Programme to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

## ■ Apprentices: Taxation

**Lucy Allan:** [\[9055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has plans he has to reform the Apprenticeship Levy to enable levy funds to be accessed by businesses for other forms of accredited training.

**Lucy Allan:** [\[9056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has plans to undertake a public consultation on proposals to reform the Apprenticeship Levy; and if he will make a statement.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The apprenticeship levy underpins our reforms to raise apprenticeship quality and supports employers to make long-term, sustainable investments in the skills that they need. Income from the levy is used to fund apprenticeships in all employers (both those who pay the levy and those who do not pay the levy).

In response to employers, we have already introduced the flexibility for levy-payers to transfer up to 25% of their funds, enabling them to support apprenticeship starts in their supply chains or to meet local skills needs. In January, we extended the use of transfers to cover the full cost of training for 16 to 18 year olds and eligible 19 to 24 year olds in employers with fewer than 50 employees.

We have listened to the concerns of businesses about the apprenticeship levy. We are committed to improving the apprenticeship programme to ensure that it continues to deliver the skilled workforce that employers need.

We will set out further detail on this in due course.

## ■ Children in Care: Standards

**Rosie Duffield:** [\[9760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the safety of children in care placed in unregulated homes.

**Michelle Donelan:**

*[Holding answer 3 February 2020]:* This is a priority area for this government. Where local authorities place children in independent and semi-independent settings, they must ensure that they are suitable and meet the needs of young people.

Ministers have reminded local authorities of their duty to keep children safe, particularly if they are placed away from their area. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, made this expectation clear in his letter to local authorities last year, and we will progress action.

## ■ Educational Visits

**Scott Benton:**

[\[9156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department records the number of young people who (a) visit Auschwitz on educational visits and (b) take part in other educational visits to remember the Holocaust and its victims.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department funds the Holocaust Educational Trust's 'Lessons from Auschwitz' which provides for two students, aged 16-18, and a teacher from every state funded school/sixth form college in England to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau. £2,126,437 is being provided in 2019-20 and £2,193,675 in 2020-21. We expect a minimum of 1,968 students to undertake visits through this programme in 2019-20.

Additionally, £1.7 million for the 2019-20 financial year is being provided for the Bergen-Belsen Commemoration Programme. The programme provides for pupils and teachers from state funded secondary schools in England to visit Bergen-Belsen to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp. We expect a minimum of 1,290 pupils to undertake visits through this programme in 2019-20.

## ■ Erasmus+ Programme

**Ben Lake:**

[\[9127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the (a) economic and (b) social effects of Erasmus+ membership for UK students.

**Chris Skidmore:**

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

The proposed regulations for the next 2021-27 Erasmus+ programme are still being discussed in the EU and have yet to be finalised. Future participation in EU programmes will be a subject of our negotiations on the future UK-EU relationship. Any economic and social effects on Erasmus+ membership for UK students given the UK's exit from the EU will be considered as part of wider discussions about the UK's relationship with the EU.

The Government supports initiatives for our young people to gain international experience, both through study and work placements abroad, to increase their language skills and cultural awareness, and improve their life chances and employability. We want to ensure that UK and European students can continue to

benefit from each other's world-leading education systems. We are considering a wide range of options with regards to the future of international exchange and collaboration in education and training, including potential domestic alternatives.

**Ben Lake:**

[\[9129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 17 January 2020 to Question 2672 on access to educational and cultural exchange programmes for Welsh students, what (a) representations and (b) data his Department has received from Wales' Education Minister on the effect of the Erasmus programme on Welsh students who have taken part in that programme.

**Chris Skidmore:**

The government highly values international exchange and cooperation in education and training and recognises the benefits that such cooperation brings. As we prepare to leave the EU, the department has engaged widely with stakeholder groups across the UK, which we will continue to do. We have received representations from many sector bodies such as Universities UK, the Association of Colleges, the Russell Group, MillionPlus and the National Union of Students.

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

As stated in my answer to 2672 on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the Secretary of State for Education and I regularly discuss matters relating to education and EU exit with the Welsh Government including on Erasmus+.

My officials also hold regular meetings on the topic of Erasmus+ with officials from the Welsh Government to ensure close cooperation on this matter.

## ■ Foster Care: Pay

**Layla Moran:**

[\[10769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which local authorities pay foster carers less than the minimum weekly allowance recommended by his Department.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The Department for Education does not collect data in relation to the national minimum allowance (NMA).

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services are clear that every foster parent should receive an allowance that covers the full cost of caring for a child. Whilst local authorities determine the allowance paid to foster parents in their area, the NMA serves as a baseline to the minimum amount that foster parents can expect to receive per week to cover the cost of a child living in their home. Whilst it is not mandatory in regulations, we expect all fostering services to pay at least this amount.



We are continuing to work with fostering services and others in the sector to ensure that the support offered to foster parents meets their needs.

## ■ Free School Meals

**Sir David Evennett:**

**[8963]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to improve the attainment of white British boys who are in receipt of free school meals.

**Nick Gibb:**

Educational achievement is at the heart of this Government's commitment to ensure no young person is left behind because of the place or circumstances of their birth. Due to our reforms, 86% of schools are now Good or Outstanding compared with 66% in 2010.

The Department recognises that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds – including those currently or formerly claiming free school meals and currently or formerly looked after - may face extra challenges in achieving their potential at school. We introduced the pupil premium in 2011 and have invested over £15 billion – and another £2.4 billion this year – so that schools have the resources to provide extra support for disadvantaged pupils of all abilities. Our data shows that 95% of the pupils attracting the pupil premium do so on the basis of free school meal claims. White disadvantaged male pupils constitute the largest pupil group of eligible pupils and so benefit significantly from this extra support.

Against a background of rising standards, disadvantaged pupils are catching up with their peers. The attainment gap index shows that since 2011, the gap at the end of primary school has narrowed by 13% and the gap at the end of secondary school has narrowed by 9%. This indicates better prospects for a secure adult life for disadvantaged pupils. Our reforms, and the focus provided by the pupil premium, have supported this improvement.

The Department's establishment of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) with a £137 million grant has ensured schools have access to high-quality, evidence-based effective practice drawn from hundreds of trials across England. We recommend schools consult the EEF's resources, particularly its recent 'Pupil Premium Guide', when they are considering how best to support their pupils claiming free school meals to close the attainment gap.

## ■ Holiday Activities and Food Research Fund: North East

**Grahame Morris:**

**[9004]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the number of children living in poverty in (a) Easington constituency, (b) County Durham and (c) the North East who are unable to access the provision of free school holiday activities and food.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Since 2018, the department has invested £11 million of funding to provide free healthy food and activities to children and families in some of the most disadvantaged areas during the summer school holidays, including thousands in the North East.

The department has announced our programme for 2020 where we will again invest £9 million to support children and their families. Officials are currently processing the bids received and we will announce the outcome in due course.

The department has also commissioned an independent evaluation of the 2019 programme, which will report on the number of disadvantaged children who accessed the clubs across the country, including our work in the North East. This will be published in 2020.

**■ Pre-school Education: Finance****Fleur Anderson:****[10775]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to increase the level of (a) financial and (b) other support for (i) Eastwood nursery Roehampton and (ii) other state nurseries.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government recognises that Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) are an important part of the early years sector and provide valuable services to disadvantaged children.

Last October, we announced increases in hourly funding rates paid to local authorities for the early education entitlements for 2020-21.

In 2020-21, all local authorities will see an increase of 8p an hour to the hourly funding rates for the 2-year-old entitlement and an increase of 8p an hour for the vast majority of areas for the 3- and 4-year-old entitlement.

In addition to the hourly funding rates above, we invest approximately £60 million in 'maintained nursery school supplementary funding' each financial year, to allow local authorities to preserve MNS funding levels and last October we announced that this additional funding will continue at its current level for the whole of the 2020-21 financial year.

Details of funding paid to local authorities can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2020-2021>.

The Government remains committed to funding for MNS in the longer term. Any reform to the way they are funded in the future will be accompanied by appropriate funding protections. The Government plans to spend more than £3.6 billion on early education in 2020-21.

## ■ Pupil Premium

**Layla Moran:**

[\[10768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Written Statement of 30 January 2020, Schools Funding updates HCWS78, whether funding to increase the pupil premium in line with inflation in 2020-21 is included in the £2.6 billion increase in schools funding in 2020-21 announced in the 2019 Spending Round.

**Nick Gibb:**

Funding to increase the pupil premium in line with inflation in 2020-21 is included in the £2.6 billion increase announced in the 2019 Spending Round.

## ■ Schools: Finance

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[9087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the national funding formula for schools on levels of socio-economic inequality in (a) Lewisham, Deptford constituency, (b) London and (c) England.

**Nick Gibb:**

The National Funding Formula (NFF) commits extra funding for pupils with additional needs, based on levels of deprivation, low prior attainment, English as an additional language and mobility. Evidence shows that pupils with these characteristics are more likely to fall behind, and need extra support to reach their full potential. In 2020-21, £6.3 billion will be allocated in the NFF for 5-16 year olds with additional needs in England. Areas with high levels of additional needs will attract more funding, and as a result, both the Lewisham, Deptford constituency and the wider region of London will receive higher than average per pupil funding. Next year, primary and secondary schools in Lewisham, Deptford will attract, on average, £5,381 and £7,086 per pupil respectively. Across all of London, primary and secondary schools will attract, on average, £4,827 and £6,370 per pupil respectively. In both cases, this is above the national average of £4,352 for primary schools and of £5,578 for secondary schools.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Air Pollution

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[10772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to tackle levels of air pollution in the most affected areas.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Our Clean Air Strategy (CAS) sets out an ambitious programme of action to reduce air pollutant emissions from a wide range of sources. The World Health Organization has recognised the CAS as an example for the rest of the world to follow. We have also put in place a £3.5 billion plan to tackle roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations and are working closely with 61 English local authorities, and have placed legal

duties on them, to tackle their nitrogen dioxide exceedances as soon as possible. Our Environment Bill was reintroduced to Parliament on 30 January 2020 and makes a clear commitment to set an ambitious target for fine particulate matter, the pollutant of most concern for human health. It also ensures that local authorities have a clear framework and simple to use powers to tackle air pollution in their areas, and will provide the Government with new powers to enforce environmental standards for vehicles. All this action will improve air quality across the UK, including in the most affected areas

#### ■ Air Pollution: Urban Areas

**Sarah Owen:** [\[10771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which (a) towns and (b) cities recorded the highest levels of air pollution in the last two years.

**Rebecca Pow:**

An annual assessment of air pollution in the UK is published on the UK-AIR website at the following URL: <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/annualreport/index>. Assessments for previous years can also be found at this URL.

For the purposes of air quality monitoring and assessment of compliance, the UK is covered on a region-by-region basis within each report. Results are detailed in Section 4 of each annual assessment.

#### ■ EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council

**Andrew Bowie:** [\[9102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether (a) she and (b) Ministers in her Department will (a) represent the UK at the annual European Fisheries Council in December 2020 and (b) conduct negotiations on behalf of the UK for the 2021 quota allocation.

**George Eustice:**

The UK left the EU on 31 January and will therefore not participate in the European Fisheries Council in December 2020 as a Member State. The UK will be undertaking future fisheries negotiations, including on fishing opportunities, as an independent coastal State.

#### ■ Fish: Sales

**Luke Pollard:** [\[8472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether buyers acquiring fish up to 30 kg in weight landed from licensed fishing vessels continue to be exempt from the need to produce sales notes, provided the fish are purchased for private consumption.

**George Eustice:**

Yes, buyers acquiring up to 30kg of fish for personal consumption will continue to be exempt from the need to produce sales notes.

**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE****■ India: Diplomatic Relations****Sarah Owen:**[\[10476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when his Department met with officials from the Indian Government in 2019.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

*[Holding answer 4 February 2020]:* In London, across India (where we have our largest diplomatic network) and in multilateral institutions across the world British officials engage daily with Indian counterparts. Our engagement covers the full range of issues in a broad and deep relationship.

**■ International Criminal Court****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[10360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much funding was allocated from the public purse to the International Criminal Court in each of the last five years.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

Contributions by States Parties to the International Criminal Court are financed in accordance with an agreed scale of assessment, based on the scale adopted by the United Nations for its regular budget, adjusted to take into account the differences in membership between the United Nations and the Court. Based on this agreed scale, the UK's contribution to the International Criminal Court for the last five years are outlined below:

- 2015: €10,230,362
- 2016: €10,339,152
- 2017: €10,759,597
- 2018: €10,934,653
- 2019: €12,085,392

**■ Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps****Suella Braverman:**[\[9083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps on regional stability.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

We have long expressed our deep concerns about the destabilising activities of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps both within and outside Iran, including its illicit economic activity and its role in Iran's ballistic missile development and support to militant and proscribed groups around the region. We call on Iran urgently to cease all forms of destabilising activity. As E3 leaders said in their 12 January statement, "We must address - through diplomacy and in a meaningful way - shared concerns about Iran's destabilizing regional activities, including those linked to its missile programme. We reiterate our readiness to continue our engagement for de-escalation and stability in the region."

**■ Nigeria: Christianity****Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[9062\]](#)

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 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. For many decades Nigeria has experienced episodes of serious 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.

**■ Venezuela: Human Rights****Hilary Benn:**[\[9590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of Human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, published on 5 July 2019, what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation in that country.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The United Kingdom remains alarmed at the deteriorating human rights situation in Venezuela. Actions of the Maduro regime have led to social and economic collapse and millions of misplaced people including many refugees, to neighbouring countries threatening regional stability and security. It is a man-made humanitarian crisis exacerbated by years of economic mismanagement, hyperinflation, shortages of food and medicine, and very serious human rights violations.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, Venezuela has a duty to uphold the highest standards of human rights and cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms. The United Kingdom will continue to support the work done by the Human Rights Council in Venezuela, and is committed to supporting a broad human rights agenda in the country.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ **Autism: Diagnosis****Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[9058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will work with NHS England & Improvement to establish an autism diagnosis waiting time standard.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

We are committed to ensuring people receive a timely diagnosis of autism in line with the clinical guideline set by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). This guideline recommends the length of time between referral and a first appointment to start an assessment should be no more than three months.

Whilst a diagnosis of autism should happen as soon as possible, it is important to recognise that a diagnosis is often complex and involves many different professionals and agencies. We are following the clinical guideline set by NICE.

Under the NHS Long Term Plan, over the next three years, autism diagnosis will be included alongside work with children and young people's mental health services to test and implement the most effective ways to reduce waiting times for specialist services. This will be a step towards achieving timely diagnostic assessments in line with best practice guidelines. The Department will support NHS England and NHS Improvement's work on this.

■ **Cannabis: Medical Treatments****Alun Cairns:**[\[9664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's policy is on the availability of medicinal cannabis; and if he will list the medical conditions that the NHS treats with medicinal cannabis.

**Alun Cairns:****[9665]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to review his policy on the prescribing of medicinal cannabis.

**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. The law does not restrict the medical conditions for which these products may be used, and the decision of whether to prescribe is ultimately one for clinicians to make on a case by case basis.

Two reviews have taken place since this change in the law:

- On 8 August 2019, NHS England and NHS Improvement published its review into barriers to accessing cannabis-based products for medicinal use on NHS prescription which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/barriers-to-accessing-cannabis-based-products-for-medicinal-use-on-nhs-prescription/>

- On 11 November 2019, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), following a review of the available evidence, published guidance on the prescribing of cannabis-based medicinal products which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng144>

This demonstrates a clear need for more evidence to support prescribing and funding decisions of cannabis-based medicines for intractable nausea and vomiting; chronic pain; spasticity; and severe treatment-resistant epilepsy.

We continue to work hard with the health system, industry and researchers to improve the evidence base for cannabis-based medicines and to implement the recommendations of NHS England and NHS Improvement's review.

**■ Care Homes: Fees and Charges****Alberto Costa:****[9072]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the affordability of residential care for those that need it.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

The Care Act 2014 placed a duty on local authorities to shape their local markets so that there is an adequate supply of provision which ensures all adult social care service users have a choice of high-quality services. In the case of state-funded care, local authorities negotiate with care providers to achieve a balance of quality, effectiveness and value for money for the public purse.

The level of fees charged to people who fund their own care is a private contractual matter.



The Care Act also placed a duty on local authorities to assess an individual's finances to establish if they are able to pay for their care. This ensures everyone can rely on state support if they do not have the means to support themselves. The means test is reviewed annually.

## ■ **Childbirth and Infant Mortality**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[10767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of (a) infant mortality and (b) premature births.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Data show that there were 2,503 infant deaths in England in 2017 (the last year for which official statistics have been published) and 646,794 live births. The infant mortality rate has been reducing since the 1920s. The rate was 4.2 in 2010 and reached an all-time low of 3.6 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014. Since then the rate has increased each year between 2014 to 2017, by which it has reached 3.9 deaths per 1,000 live births. The pre-term birth rate has remained at around 8% of all births since 2013.

The Maternity Safety Strategy and NHS Long Term Plan sets out a range of initiatives that focus on reducing pre-term births and plans to redesign and expand neonatal critical care services to improve the safety and effectiveness of services and experience of families. These initiatives are aimed at meeting the National Maternity Safety Ambition to halve the 2010 rates of stillbirths, neonatal and maternal deaths and brain injuries occurring during or soon after birth by 2025 and to reduce the pre-term birth rate from 8% to 6%.

## ■ **Coronavirus**

**Royston Smith:**

[\[8371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the coronavirus does not enter the UK.

**Jo Churchill:**

We have been closely monitoring the situation in Wuhan and China more widely and we have put in place proportionate, precautionary measures. Our approach has at all times been guided by the advice of the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty. Professor Whitty and Public Health England, aided by independent experts, are in close contact with their international counterparts, and are continually monitoring the scientific evidence as it emerges.

The United Kingdom is well prepared for these types of outbreaks – we are one of the first countries in the world to develop a test for the new virus.

We can confirm two patients in England, who are members of the same family, have tested positive for coronavirus. The patients are receiving specialist National Health Service care and we are using tried and tested infection control procedures to

prevent further spread of the virus. We are already working rapidly to identify any contacts the patients had, to prevent further spread.

We are advising people that if they have returned from Wuhan or anywhere in Hubei province in the last 14 days they should:

- Stay indoors and avoid contact with other people as you would with the flu;
- Call NHS 111 to inform them of your recent travel to the city;
- If in Northern Ireland, call the NI Direct special emergency telephone number 0300 200 7885;
- To follow this advice even if they do not have symptoms of the virus; and
- If they have travelled from anywhere else in China (not including Macao or Hong Kong) to the UK in the last 14 days and develop symptoms of cough, fever or shortness of breath, they should immediately self-isolate, even if symptoms are minor and call NHS111.

Public safety is the top priority. Anyone who has been repatriated from Wuhan will be safely isolated for 14 days, with all necessary medical attention.

#### ■ **Coronavirus: Quarantine**

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

[\[10732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date the decision was made to quarantine citizens that have been repatriated from Wuhan at Arrowe Park Hospital; what criteria his Department used to make that decision; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

We have put in place proportionate, precautionary measures in response to the outbreak of coronavirus in China, acting at all times on the clinical advice of the Chief Medical Officer and national experts in the treatment of infectious diseases.

A Ministerial decision was taken on supported isolation, based on advice by PHE, on 29 January.

Arrowe Park Hospital was chosen because it offers appropriate accommodation and other facilities for those coming back from Wuhan.

It also allows the health of those in the group to be regularly monitored and has the necessary medical facilities close at hand should they be required.

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

[\[10733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the cost to the public purse is of quarantining citizens that have been repatriated from Wuhan at Arrowe Park Hospital.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government has responded to the Wuhan coronavirus by putting in place protocols to protect the United Kingdom, and will continue to take action in line with the level of threat. Funding is in place to support this.

It is too early to know the final cost to the public purse associated with placing citizens returning from Wuhan in supported isolation at Arrowe Park Hospital.

**Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[10734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to allocate additional funding to (a) Wirral Council and (b) Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust for quarantining citizens that have been repatriated from Wuhan.

**Jo Churchill:**

We have put in place proportionate, precautionary measures in response to the outbreak of coronavirus in China, acting at all times on the clinical advice of the Chief Medical Officer and national experts in the treatment of infectious diseases.

It is too early to know the final cost to the public purse associated with placing citizens returning from Wuhan in supported isolation.

**Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[10736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason the hon. Member for Wallasey was not informed in advance of the decision to quarantine citizens flying back from Wuhan in an accommodation block at Arrowe Park hospital.

**Jo Churchill:**

The priority was to contact the hon. Member for Wirral West (Margaret Greenwood MP), where Arrowe Park Hospital is located, and she was informed in advance about the decision to place returnees in supported isolation.

Due to fast moving circumstances and the need to prioritise the protection of the public and those being evacuated, contact was made with all Wirral MPs subsequently.

**■ Dental Health: Children****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[10766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of tooth decay among children in the latest period for which figures are available.

**Jo Churchill:**

Public Health England coordinates the National Dental Epidemiology Programme (NDEP) that assesses the oral health of children including tooth decay.

Trend data for five-year-old children, from four surveys, available between the years 2008-2017, reveal a clear trend of statistically significant improvement in prevalence of decay levels. The proportion of children in England with experience of obvious

decay decreased from 30.9% in 2008 to 23.3% in 2017. These results can be viewed at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/768368/NDEP\\_for\\_England\\_OH\\_Survey\\_5yr\\_2017\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/768368/NDEP_for_England_OH_Survey_5yr_2017_Report.pdf)

Oral health data from NDEP for 12-year olds (in 2009) and three-year olds (in 2013) are available but no trend data are available. Results from the NDEP surveys can be viewed at the following links: 12-year-old data:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oral-health-survey-of-12-year-old-children-2009>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oral-health-survey-of-3-year-old-children-2013>

The 2013 children's' decennial dental health survey found that tooth decay in permanent teeth was 44% for 15-year-olds and 32% for 12-year-olds in England. This is a statistically significant reduction from the 2003 figures of 55% and 41% respectively. The Child Dental Health Survey 2013 can be viewed at the following link:

<https://files.digital.nhs.uk/publicationimport/pub17xxx/pub17137/cdhs2013-england-report.pdf>

## ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Families

**Michael Tomlinson:**

**[9089]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has appointed an official responsible for leading on his Department's application of the Family Test.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

Each Department has a Family Test lead who is part of our Family Test Network. This Network is the central forum through which we have sought input and comments on the support departments need to help with Family Test implementation.

This includes Network members feeding into improvements to the existing guidance for officials in all departments on Family Test implementation.

## ■ Doctors: Pensions

**Mr David Davis:**

**[8951]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of changes to the NHS pension scheme on doctors' working hours.

**Edward Argar:**

The Government is aware that the annual allowance may contribute to decisions from senior clinicians to reduce their National Health Service commitments, although a precise estimate of the change in consultants' working hours as a result of pension

tax is not available. The Government is listening closely to concerns raised by senior doctors and NHS employers about the tapered annual allowance.

The NHS has implemented a short-term measure to compensate NHS clinicians at retirement for the effect on their pensions of annual allowance tax charges incurred in 2019/20. To address this issue for future years, the Government is holding an urgent review of the annual allowance taper. The review will report at Budget on 11 March and will also consider the findings from the Department's recent consultation on a package of pension flexibility for NHS clinicians who face annual allowance charges.

## ■ General Practitioners: Standards

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[10773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate her Department has made of the length of waiting times for GP appointments by region in the latest period for which data is available.

**Jo Churchill:**

Data showing the proportion of time between booking an appointment with a general practice and the appointment taking place by National Health Service regions in England in the 12 months up to December 2019 are presented in the attached table.

NHS Digital publishes 'Appointments in General Practice'. This is an experimental data collection which is still being refined and improved.

It should be noted that the 'time from booking to appointment' refers only to the time elapsed between the successful booking of an appointment and the appointment taking place. The data does not take into consideration that many patients will be appropriately booking ahead as part of the continuity of care they receive for long-term conditions.

**Attachments:**

1. Waiting Times [PQ10773 TABLE Waiting Times by Region\_.docx]

## ■ Hormone Replacement Therapy

**Anneliese Dodds:**

[\[10770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral contribution, of 28 January 2020, Official Report, column 668, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the classification of 15 HRT products within Category C of the NHS Drugs Tariff, published in June 2018 on the relative availability of HRT products in the UK compared with EU27 nations.

**Jo Churchill:**

We are aware of ongoing supply issues with some hormone replacement therapy (HRT) preparations. The addition of HRT to the Drug Tariff is completely unrelated to the shortage.

We have been working closely with all suppliers of HRT preparations to maintain overall supply to patients. We have shared relevant information about the supply

situation and availability of HRT products with the National Health Service and are having discussions with organisations such as the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare and the British Menopausal Society. In October 2019 we took unprecedented action to ban the parallel export of all HRT products to keep these medicines in the United Kingdom.

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

We anticipate the supply situation will improve later this month (February 2020).

#### ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[9585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Answer of 13 January 2020 to Question 29 on Members: Correspondence, whether the Chief Executive of the NHS intends to respond to that letter before the February Parliamentary recess.

**Edward Argar:**

David Sloman, NHS Regional Director for London responded to the Member's letter regarding walk in services in Harrow on 10 January 2020.

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

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[9060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on achieving the target of reducing out-of-area placements for people receiving inpatient care for severe mental health conditions by 2021.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We remain fully committed to ending such placements by 2021 and are prioritising a number of actions to achieve this ambition. NHS England and NHS Improvement continues to provide targeted, intensive support to local areas to develop robust recovery plans where there is reliance on out of area placements.

To achieve longer-term sustainable improvements NHS England and NHS Improvement is supporting local areas to test innovative approaches to providing locally-based care for those with the most complex needs. This will also improve our understanding of how people currently cared for in long-term inpatient settings might be better supported closer to home, and in the community.

#### ■ **NHS: Buildings**

**Steve Reed:** [\[9701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many buildings across the NHS estate have High Pressure Laminate cladding.

**Edward Argar:**

Fifteen National Health Service buildings are currently understood to have High Pressure Laminate cladding and these are being reviewed to determine their specific situation.

■ **NHS: Standards****Stephen Timms:**[\[8937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to review the right of patients under the NHS constitution to access services commissioned by NHS bodies within maximum waiting times.

**Stephen Timms:**[\[8938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is his Department's policy to maintain the target set out in section 45 of the Health Service Commissioning Board and Clinical Commissioning Groups (Responsibilities and Standing Rules) Regulations 2012 for 92 per cent of patients to access elective treatment within a maximum waiting time of 18 weeks.

**Edward Argar:**

A clinically-led review of National Health Service performance standards was announced by the Prime Minister in June 2018. The NHS England and NHS Improvement Clinically-led Review of Access Standards is considering the appropriateness of operational standards for physical and mental health relating to planned, unplanned (urgent or emergency care), as well as cancer care.

The existing performance standards remain in place. The testing of potential new approaches is still underway, and the Government will respond to the recommendations of the review once it is concluded

■ **Pharmacy: Finance****James Murray:**[\[9160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding he will make available for community pharmacies in each financial year from 2019-20 to 2023-24.

**Jo Churchill:**

In July 2019, we set out our landmark five-year Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) deal to deliver an expanded role for community pharmacy. This outlined our ambition for community pharmacies to be fully integrated in to the National Health Service, support patients get the best from their medicines and provide advice to the public to help them stay healthy for longer. The deal commits £2.592 billion per year to community pharmacy from 2019-20 to 2023-24. This amounts to almost £13 billion across the 5 years.

We are reprioritising funding, moving to a more service based contractual framework. Through increased capacity and efficiency from modern dispensing methods, better utilising the skills of pharmacists, decommissioning Medicines Use Reviews, and

phasing out the establishment payment, we have the opportunity to redistribute funding to support more services which are fairly remunerated. These changes will not only provide value for money but also support pharmacies in making this transformation.

A more detailed breakdown of the funding can be found in the CPCF at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/819601/cpcf-2019-to-2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819601/cpcf-2019-to-2024.pdf)

## ■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

**Alex Sobel:** [\[9142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to review prescription charges for (a) Parkinson's disease and (b) other ongoing, degenerative, medical conditions.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department has no plans to change the list of medical exemptions from prescription charges.

Extensive arrangements are already in place to help people access National Health Service prescriptions. These include a broad range of NHS prescription charge exemptions for which someone with Parkinson's disease or other ongoing medical conditions may qualify. People on a low income, who do not qualify for an exemption, may be eligible for full or partial help with prescription charges through application to the NHS Low Income Scheme. To support those with the greatest need who do not qualify for an exemption or help through the Low-Income Scheme, patients can benefit from a prescription pre-payment certificate. A holder of a 12-month certificate can get all the prescriptions they need for just £2 per week.

## ■ Respiratory System: Medical Equipment

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[9680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation beds have been available to the NHS in England in each (a) year since 2015 and (b) week since 1 December 2019; and if he will make a statement.

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[9683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and which hospitals in England have provided extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation treatment in each year since 2010.

**Edward Argar:**

Since 2015, NHS England has commissioned a total of 15 adult respiratory extra corporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) beds per annum from five providers in England (with a further provider in Scotland). In periods of high demand, capacity can be increased in line with an agreed standard operating procedure. In winter 2018/19,



when there was significant morbidity associated with influenza, capacity was increased to over 30 beds. The five providers of adult ECMO beds are as below:

- Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust;
- Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust;
- Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;
- Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust; and
- University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust.

Since 2015, NHS England has also commissioned paediatric respiratory ECMO beds from five providers in England (with a further provider in Scotland). In periods of high demand, capacity at these providers can be increased in line with an agreed standard operating procedure. Whilst there is no set number of beds per provider because the number of paediatric cases is very small, there are typically no more than three patients requiring respiratory ECMO at any one time. The five providers of paediatric ECMO beds are as below:

- Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust;
- Birmingham Women and Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;
- Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust;
- The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust; and
- University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust.

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[9681\]](#)

-To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the availability of extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation beds in winter 2019-20.

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[9682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have been unable to access an extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation bed after its use had been clinically recommended in each of the (a) last 12 months and (b) last five years.

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[9684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what contingency plans are in place if all nationally designated extra corporeal membrane oxygenation beds are in use.

**Edward Argar:**

Extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) bed capacity is assessed and managed through an agreed standard operating procedure. During the period 1 November to 31 March, NHS England monitors capacity on a weekly basis (increasing this frequency to daily if required). No patient eligible for ECMO treatment has been unable to access an ECMO bed in either the last 12 months or the last five years.

## ■ Smoking

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[9059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to take tackle smoking in the vicinity of (a) schools, (b) playgrounds and (c) hospitals.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government has a track record of reducing the harm caused by tobacco. The United Kingdom is a world leader and we have been rated the best in Europe on tobacco control by independent experts.

The Health Act 2006 and the Smoke-free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006 made it illegal to smoke in public enclosed or substantially enclosed areas and workplaces. We support the development and implementation of smoke-free policies locally in and around public premises.

## ■ Statins

**Jim Shannon:** [\[9024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the level of use of statins.

**Jo Churchill:**

The efficacy and safety of statins has been studied in a number of large trials which showed that they can reduce cardiovascular events low-density lipoprotein strokes and save lives. The studies have also provided evidence that more significant lowering of LDL cholesterol with statins is associated with increased benefits in reducing cardiac events, particularly in patients who are at high risk such as those with a history of coronary artery disease and diabetes. Trials have also shown that medically significant side effects with statins are rare. Overall, the benefits of using statins to reduce cholesterol levels are considered to outweigh the risk of side-effects in the majority of patients.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), the national body responsible for issuing best practice guidance for the National Health Service in England, has also published a clinical guideline on cardiovascular disease. This guideline, 'Cardiovascular disease: risk assessment and reduction, including lipid modification' was last updated in September 2016 and makes recommendations on the effective use of statins. NICE's guideline is available at the following link:

[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg181](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg181)

## ■ Stem Cells: Donors

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[9584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) raise awareness of the need for stem cell donations from the BAME communities and (b) encourage more people to join the stem cell donor register; and if he will make a statement.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

Since 2011 the Department has provided over £26.8 million in financial support to NHS Blood and Transplant and Anthony Nolan to enable the establishment of a unified United Kingdom Stem Cell Registry and improve access to and outcomes of stem cell donation. This includes improving equity of access to unrelated donor stem cell transplantation for black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) patients through targeted recruitment to the UK Stem Cell Registry.

Current funding includes very specific stipulations about the numbers of newly registered bone marrow donors, and the proportion of umbilical cords stored in the UK Cord Blood Bank that must be from BAME backgrounds (35-40%). There are now 1.6 million donors on the UK's aligned stem cell registry and the proportion of BAME donors in the UK registry has gone up from 11% to 14% between 2014 and 2019. In 2018, 22% of newly registered potential donors were from BAME backgrounds.

**Urgent Treatment Centres: Canterbury****Rosie Duffield:**[\[10765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2020 to Question 2446, what plans are in place for the delivery of an urgent treatment centre in Canterbury during 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

Canterbury and Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has designated Kent and Canterbury Hospital as a tranche 6 Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC). The plan developed is for the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) currently located at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital to change to a UTC from April 2020.

This means urgent care services will be offered at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital in line with the national UTC specification, in practice an enhancement on the services currently available from the MIU. The regional team is working with NHS Digital, the CCG and acute trust to ensure compliance with the specification and standards as laid out in national policy.

**HOME OFFICE****Airguns: Reviews****Rachael Maskell:**[\[10761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to publish its response to the air weapons review, published on 12 December 2017.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government fully understands the interest that Members of Parliament and others have in the outcomes of the review of air weapons regulation, and the concerns that have been expressed about the consequences, sometimes tragic, arising from the misuse of these weapons.

We intend to publish our conclusions alongside a consultation on firearms safety issues, to which we committed during the passage of the Offensive Weapons Bill.

#### ■ **Arrowe Park Hospital: Coronavirus**

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

**[10735]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to allocate additional funding to Merseyside police to tackle the safety implications of quarantining citizens flying back from Wuhan at Arrowe Park hospital.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Merseyside Police could submit a claim for additional costs incurred from policing an unexpected and exceptional event within their area in the form of an application for Special Grant, provided it meets the relevant criteria of threatening the financial stability of the police force and their capacity to deliver effective policing and/or the additional costs equal or exceed 1% of the force's budget.

As set out in the police funding settlement for 2020/21, Merseyside Police will receive up to £359.4m in funding next year, if the Police and Crime Commissioner chooses to increase their precept flexibility. This is an increase of up to £27.1m on 2019/20.

#### ■ **Asylum: Advisory Services**

**Christine Jardine:**

**[9130]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to improve the transparency and accountability of providers on their performance against the targets set under the Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility contract.

**Victoria Atkins:**

AIRE is the new Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility service provided by Migrant Help. The AIRE contract contains a number of formal performance measures, including Key Performance Indicators, which provide a mechanism by which the effectiveness of contract delivery can be measured. These are monitored in formal monthly and quarterly contract governance meetings. Measures can be taken where performance falls short of the standards we set.

We are providing regular updates on performance, particularly in relation to call waiting times to Local Authorities and Voluntary Sector partners.

Further information about the performance measures within the contract can be found in the contracts, published here:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/028be8bb-3c69-494d-bfdd-59c2e1b34379?p=@UFQxUIRRPT0=NjJNT08> =

## ■ Asylum: Children

**Mr David Lammy:**

[7102]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department will take to facilitate child refugees being reunited with parents living in the UK after the UK leaves the EU.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government remains resolutely committed to the principle of family reunion.

When the UK leaves the EU, we will cease to participate in EU instruments at the end of the transition period, including the Dublin Regulation. This means that the ability of unaccompanied children under Dublin to reunite with family will end, unless a replacement agreement is negotiated. The Government has been clear that it is committed to seeking such an agreement with the EU, thereby ensuring these children can continue to reunite with family once we are out of Dublin. The Home Secretary wrote to the European Commission on 22 October to begin negotiations.

The UK will continue to be bound by the Dublin Regulation provisions during the transition period, allowing us to continue to transfer family reunion cases to the UK throughout 2020, and we will continue to process all family reunion requests that have been submitted but not completed under Dublin before the end of the transition period.

## ■ Asylum: Detainees

**Kate Green:**

[R] [9005]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum applicants were detained in the UK in 2019 under each criterion for detention.

**Kate Green:**

[R] [9006]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) victims of trafficking, (b) victims of torture and (c) people with other special reception needs were detained in the UK, by need, in 2019.

**Kate Green:**

[R] [9008]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average length of detention was for detained asylum seekers in 2019.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Migrants, including asylum claimants, may be detained for immigration purposes only in accordance with Home Office detention policy, as set out in Detention general guidance and adults at risk in immigration detention. The detention decision must always be made on the basis of the individual's particular circumstances and eligibility for detention.

If at any time it is concluded that a particular detainee's ongoing detention would not be appropriate, the individual must be released, with bail conditions appropriate to their particular circumstances.

Most people detained under immigration powers spend only short periods in detention. At any one time, 95% of those liable to be detained, are instead managed in the community.

We do not currently hold the data in the format you have requested, however published data on the number individuals held in immigration detention can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2018/how-many-people-are-detained-or-returned>

The Home Office records the number of all individuals referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and this information is published quarterly and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-referral-mechanism-statistics-quarter-2-2019-april-to-june>

This information does not distinguish between those detained under immigration powers and those living in the community nor does it make the distinction between those accepted/not accepted as being victims of torture within the Rule 35 process under the Detention Centre Rules 2001.

The use of immigration detention in all cases is subject to regular reviews and consequently, a change in circumstance may result in a different consideration. It is quite possible that an immigration detainee is referred to the National Referral Mechanism during a detention period and is released into the community at any point during that process.

The Home Office do however, centrally record the number of Rule 35 reports raised by Doctors under the Detention Centre Rules 2001 and the number of those who were released as a result. This information is published quarterly in Immigration Enforcement Transparency data found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-enforcement-data-november-2018>

The Home Office do hold records of the number of Adults at Risk identified but could not break this down further to identify persons with specific requirements.

## ■ Bail

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

**[10432]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government's review of pre-charge bail law will assess the potential merits of reforming Release Under Investigation (RUI), including (a) the introduction of time limits, (b) a requirement for sharing updates and (c) an updated approval process for using RUI.

**Kit Malthouse:**

This government is fully committed to protecting the public, and ensuring the police have the powers they need.

On 5 November the government announced its intention to review pre-charge bail legislation, including the practice of 'Released Under Investigation' (RUI), to ensure we have a system which more effectively prioritises the safety of victims and witnesses and the management of suspects.

Specifically, the review will look to:

- ensure the proper use of bail to protect victims and witnesses;
- support the police in the timely management of investigations, whether a suspect is released on bail or RUI;
- respect the rights of suspects, victims and witnesses to timely decisions and updates;
- ensure pre-charge bail supports the timely progression of cases to courts; and
- design simplified and flexible rules to support effective operational decisions.

## ■ Crimes of Violence

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[8387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has made on implementing the conclusions of the Serious Violence Strategy.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Since publishing the Serious Violence Strategy in April 2018, we have now delivered major commitments and actions. This includes:

- establishing the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre;
- delivering in Offensive Weapons Act;
- investing £220 million in early intervention and prevention initiatives to support children and young people at risk of exploitation and involvement in serious violence, through the £22 million Early Intervention Youth Fund and £200 million Youth Endowment Fund; and,
- appointing Dame Carol Black to lead a major review that is looking into the ways in which drugs are fuelling serious violence.

The work to tackle serious violence is ongoing and evolves according to the knowledge and understanding of our partners and the changing methodologies of criminals.

The Government is also recruiting 20,000 extra police officers over the next three years, ensuring violent criminals face swift and robust sentencing and expanding stop and search powers. As announced in the Queen's Speech we are also introducing the Serious Violence Bill, which will put a duty on police, councils and health authorities to prevent and reduce serious violence. We have announced an additional £25 million of targeted investment to increase our efforts to tackle county lines, including expanding the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre. And through the Serious Violence Fund we have provided £100million in 2019/20 to the 18 police

force areas worst affected by serious violence. A further £35 million was announced for Violence Reduction Units for 2020/21 on 29 December 2019.

## ■ Immigrants: Detainees

**Kate Green:** [R] [9007]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average length of detention was for detained migrants in 2019.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office publishes data on length of detention in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. The median length of detention of people in the immigration detention estate as at 31 September 2019 was between 15 and 28 days, and of people leaving the detention estate in year ending September 2019 was between 8 and 14 days. Banded length of detention figures are published in Det\_D02 and Det\_D03 of the [Detailed Detention datasets](#) .

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2019. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the '[summary tables](#)'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on detention.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'. Q4 2019 figures will be released on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

**Alison Thewliss:** [9070]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timetable is for the publication of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's Adults at Risk in Detention report.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Home Secretary is considering the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's report on Adults at Risk in Detention Policy, and it will be laid in Parliament in due course.

## ■ Immigration: EU Nationals

**Alex Norris:** [10446]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to update the (a) Right to work checks and (b) Right to rent document checks guidance to allow digital forms of identification to be accepted.

**Kevin Foster:**

When an individual undergoes a right to work or right to rent check they are not just evidencing their identity, they must also demonstrate their entitlement to work or rent.

The Home Office is transforming the way migrants demonstrate their immigration status and right to work and rent in the UK. The digital online status checking service



for employers conducting right to work checks was launched on 6 April 2018. In January 2019, we amended secondary legislation and issued new guidance to employers which sets out how they can use the online service in complying with their responsibilities under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 on the prevention of illegal working.

The Home Office is planning to launch an online digital right to rent status checking service to support landlords in conducting right to rent checks.

The Government is also working to develop proposals for a digital identity system that would enable people to prove their identity easily and securely, without the need to provide physical documents, and to meet the demands of the digital age.

## ■ Migrant Help

**Catherine West:**

**[8418]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the effectiveness of its contract with Migrant Help.

**Victoria Atkins:**

AIRE is the new Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility service. The AIRE contract with Migrant Help contains a number of formal performance measures, including Key Performance Indicators, which provide a mechanism by which the effectiveness of contract delivery can be measured. These are monitored in formal monthly and quarterly contract governance meetings. Measures can be taken where performance falls short of the standards we set.

The services within the new AIRE contract represent a new method of delivering advice and guidance to asylum seekers and look to provide a single point of contact for issues, feedback and requests for guidance and assistance, which has not previously existed. During the early months of the contract volumes of people accessing the service were in excess of those predicted.

The Home Office has been working closely with Migrant Help, including through the formal governance set out in the contract and, through the transition period to the new contracts. We will continue to monitor performance and the effectiveness of the contracts through the monthly Contract Management Groups and quarterly Strategic Review Management Boards.

Further information about the performance measures within the contract can be found in the contracts, published here:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/028be8bb-3c69-494d-bfdd-59c2e1b34379?p=@UFQxUIRRPT0=NjJNT08> =

**■ Naturalisation: Fees and Charges****Jo Stevens:** [9714]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to review the application fee for British citizen naturalisation; and if she will make a statement.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Border, Immigration and Citizenship System (BICS) is predominately funded by the user, and we think it is right that those who use it contribute to its cost, thereby reducing the burden on the UK taxpayer. We keep our fees for immigration and nationality applications under review and ensure they are within the parameters agreed with HM Treasury and Parliament, as set out in Section 68 (9) of the Immigration Act 2014.

**■ Police: Pensions****Louise Haigh:** [10411]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the implications of the quadrennial review of police pensions in 2020-21; and if she will make a statement.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Following the most recent valuation of the police pension schemes, the additional cost to policing in 2020-21 of employer contributions to police pensions is currently estimated to be £316 million.

The 2020-21 police funding settlement will increase funding available to the policing system by £1.1 billion next year. This includes general Government grant funding, pensions grant, council tax precept and investment in national priorities, and is the biggest funding increase in a decade. This substantial increase in funding will enable forces to meet their financial pressures as well as to invest in the recruitment of additional officers.

The written ministerial statement on the settlement, including details of the proposed pensions grant, can be accessed at:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2020-01-22/HCWS51/>

**■ Stop and Search: South Yorkshire****Alexander Stafford:** [10492]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on how many occasions stop and search was carried out in (a) Rotherham Borough, (b) South Yorkshire and (c) Rother Valley constituency in each year since 2010.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects and publishes statistics on the number of stop and searches, conducted by each police force in England and Wales, on an annual basis. Results are published in the 'Police Powers and Procedures, England and Wales'

statistical bulletin, the latest of which can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2019>

Data are collected only at Police Force Area level and information at borough and constituency level is not held centrally. The number of occasions stop and search was carried out in the South Yorkshire Police Force Area in each financial year from 2009/10 to 2018/19 is shown in the table.

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF SEARCHES
2009/10	29,214
2010/11	24,385
2011/12	18,631
2012/13	22,753
2013/14	22,527
2014/15	8,823
2015/16	3,895
2016/17	2,381
2017/18	2,030
2018/19	6,181

#### ■ UK Visas and Immigration: Staff

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[9022]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many officials were responsible for examining and making decisions on asylum applications at the end of 2019.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The number of officials across the department who were responsible for examining and making decisions on asylum applications at the end of 2019 is not held in a reportable format. To obtain this information would require detailed reporting against multiple cost centres and could only be obtained at disproportionate costs.

Decisions on asylum claims are made by decision makers in Asylum Operations. All staff are maintained at a level that allows the Home Office to progress cases and make timely decisions.

All asylum claims lodged in the UK are carefully considered on their individual merits against a background of relevant case law and up to date country information.

## ■ Undocumented Migrants: Employment

**Paul Blomfield:**

[10370]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many civil penalties have been issued under section 15 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 since July 2016; what the total value is of those penalties; and how much has been collected of that total to date.

**Kevin Foster:**

Data on the number of penalties issued under section 15 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, and the total value of those penalties are published on gov.uk. The latest published figures up to the end of June 2019 can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-enforcement-data-august-2019>.

A total of 5,856 civil penalties were issued between July 2016 and June 2019, with a total value of £100.1m.

The Home Office does not publish data on the total amount collected.

## ■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

**Helen Hayes:**

[9737]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of adult migrants who have illegally crossed the English channel from France and who have subsequently been granted asylum in the UK in each year since 2015.

**Helen Hayes:**

[9738]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of (a) accompanied and (b) unaccompanied child migrants who have illegally crossed the English channel from France and who have subsequently been granted asylum in the UK in each year since 2015.

**Victoria Atkins:**

1. Information regarding migrants crossing the English Channel was provided to the Home Affairs Select Committee on 5 March 2019 which gave the number of migrants detected entering the UK by small boats from January 2018 to February 2019 as 428.

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

The Home Office does not routinely publish breakdowns of asylum claims by method of arrival or type of claim.

In its quarterly Immigration Statistics, published on 28 November 2019 the Home Office published data regarding the number of asylum applications made. The total

number of adults claiming asylum since 2015 to year ending September 2019 is given as 136,995

1. Information regarding migrants crossing the English Channel was provided to the Home Affairs Select Committee on 5 March 2019 which gave the number of migrants detected entering the UK by small boats from January 2018 to February 2019 as 428.

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

The Home Office does not routinely publish breakdowns of asylum claims by method of arrival or type of claim.

In its quarterly Immigration Statistics, published on 28 November 2019 the Home Office published data regarding the number of asylum application made. The total number of unaccompanied minors claiming asylum since 2015 to year ending September 2019 is given as 15,554. The total number of accompanied minors claiming asylum since 2015 to year ending September 2019 is given as 16,886.

## ■ Visas

**Deidre Brock:**

**[4358]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much and what proportion of the revenue stream from visa applications represented the cost of processing those applications in each of the last four years.

**Kevin Foster:**

Published information for financial years 2016-17, 2017-18 & 2018-19 for revenue from visa applications can be found in the Home Office's Annual Report and Accounts via the links below:

The cost of processing applications is not reported separately from other UKVI expenditure in the accounts, but unit cost information is published, and the link to that is also below.

2018-19

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/807126/6.5571\\_HO\\_Annual\\_Report\\_201920\\_WEB.PDF#page=137](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807126/6.5571_HO_Annual_Report_201920_WEB.PDF#page=137)

2017-18

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/727179/6\\_4360\\_HO\\_Annual\\_report\\_WEB.PDF#page=126](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/727179/6_4360_HO_Annual_report_WEB.PDF#page=126)

2016-17

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/627853/ho\\_annual\\_report\\_and\\_accounts\\_2016\\_2017.pdf#page=119](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/627853/ho_annual_report_and_accounts_2016_2017.pdf#page=119)

Income generated via visa applications for the current financial year 2019-20 is expected to be published in June 2020.

Published visa unit costs are provided in the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visa-fees-transparency-data>

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Antisemitism: North West

**Scott Benton:**

**[9155]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of anti-Semitic incidents recorded in the North West in each of the last 10 years.

**Luke Hall:**

Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society, which is why we are taking a strong lead in tackling it in all its forms.

We recognise that there has been an increase in antisemitic incidents across the country. Home Office Official Statistics for hate crime, which report police recorded data, show that 18% of religiously motivated hatred was directed towards Jews, compared with 12 per cent in 2017/18. ['Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2018 to 2019' (Oct, 2019)].

We are also aware that Greater Manchester had the highest number of antisemitic incidents outside Greater London over last 10 years (2008-2018) according to the Community Security Trust, who are one of our key partners in tackling antisemitism and the main body reporting on the number of incidents each year.

That is why we became the first country in the world to adopt the working definition of antisemitism as set by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. We are making sure the police record hate crimes disaggregated by faith and our refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan reaffirms our commitment to combating antisemitism. We are working with partner organisations across England to make sure Jewish communities feel safe and are pressing for public sector institutions to adopt the IHRA definition.

### ■ Buildings: Insulation

**Steve Reed:**

**[6115]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his oral statement of 20 January 2020, Official Report, column 24, on Building Safety, whether it is his policy that Aluminium Composite Material cladding should be removed from all buildings regardless of height.

**Esther McVey:**

*[Holding answer 27 January 2020]:* ACM cladding with an unmodified polyethylene filler presents a significant fire hazard on residential buildings at any height with any

form of insulation, and action to remediate unsafe wall systems and remove unsafe cladding should be taken as soon as possible. Further advice on the measures building owners should take to ensure building safety can be found in the updated advice at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-advice-for-building-owners-including-fire-doors>.

## ■ Future High Streets Fund: Putney

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[10774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether Putney town centre is on his shortlist to receive funding under the Future High Streets Fund.

**Jake Berry:**

Putney Town Centre is one of the high streets that have been shortlisted for the first round of the Future High Streets Fund. Shortlisted high streets will now produce detailed business cases for investment proposals to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that improves experience, drives growth and ensures future sustainability. Wandsworth Borough Council has received £150,000 in revenue funding to support them to develop their plans in more detail. A final decision on which places will receive capital funding will be determined following a thorough assessment of value for money of each places' business case, in accordance with HM Treasury's Green Book appraisal guidance.

## ■ Housing: Standards

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[6679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the cost of retrofitting new build properties to meet carbon zero standards.

**Esther McVey:**

*[Holding answer 27 January 2020]:* By 2025 the government will introduce a Future Homes Standard for new build homes to be future proofed with low carbon heating and world leading levels of energy efficiency. This means that from 2025 new homes will not need to be retrofitted to meet net zero.

## ■ Parking: Fees and Charges

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[9026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure equity in the level of fines that private parking companies levy on drivers.

**Luke Hall:**

Privately managed parking is currently self-regulating through the two parking trade associations, the British Parking Association (BPA) and the International Parking Community (IPC). Both bodies have Codes of Practice that cap parking fines at £100.

Government has had concerns about the current system of self-regulation and we are taking action to improve the situation for motorists through the Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019.

On 3 November 2019, we announced we were contracting with the British Standards Institution (BSI) to develop a new Code of Practice for all private parking companies as a British Standard, to ensure the new regulation will be robust and of the highest quality. This will consider a range of issues including the cap on parking charges.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Reoffenders

**Richard Burgon:** [\[10762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of people (a) charged with and (b) convicted of violent offences in each of the last 10 years had previously served a prison term.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Ministry of Justice collects and publishes key statistics on proven reoffending in England and Wales. The proven reoffending figures include offenders who were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court, or received a caution or reprimand. The data published can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics>.

The specific information you have requested is not held centrally by the Ministry of Justice because our data only records people who are convicted/cautioned and not people who are charged. If someone is found not guilty of all offences they are removed from our Police National Computer (PNC) extract. This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost because we would need to link prisons data to PNC data on previous convictions.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Northern Ireland Office: Reviews

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [\[10315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will publish the titles of the reviews that his Department is undertaking.

**Julian Smith:**

My Department is not currently undertaking any public reviews.



**TRANSPORT**■ **A5****Dr Luke Evans:**[\[9150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of (a) Highways England and (b) local authorities on the (i) safety of the A5 and (ii) adequacy of that road to support economic growth in Bosworth constituency.

**George Freeman:**

Officials meet regularly with Highways England and local authorities to discuss conditions on the road network. They are well appraised of the work of the A5 partnership, of which the local authorities of Bosworth are committed members, as well as the advocacy of Midlands Connect for this corridor's potential.

■ **Department for Transport: Carbon Emissions****Alex Cunningham:**[\[9014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress he has made on his Department's decarbonisation plan; and whether that plan will include battery trains.

**George Freeman:**

The Government has set an ambitious, legally binding target to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from the UK by 2050. Rail must make a significant contribution towards achieving this target as part of our Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

In line with the recommendations of the Rail Industry Decarbonisation Taskforce, Network Rail is developing a Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy with the Department and industry partners. This work will examine which parts of the network are best suited to use of battery trains, as well as hydrogen trains and electrification, and will inform Government decisions in 2020 about the scale and pace of further rail decarbonisation.

■ **Hammersmith Bridge: Repairs and Maintenance****Fleur Anderson:**[\[10778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on the assessment of the potential merits of funding options for the repair of Hammersmith Bridge.

**George Freeman:**

As the owners of Hammersmith Bridge, it is for the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham to assess the merits of different funding options for its repair. Transport for London, on behalf of Hammersmith & Fulham, has recently submitted a proposal to the Department to make a funding contribution towards the repairs needed to the bridge. The Department is assessing this proposal in the context of other funding requests, and in view of the devolution settlement for London.

## ■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[9010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the effect of cancelling High Speed Two on (a) existing and (b) potential jobs in train manufacturing .

**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 make a decision on HS2 shortly.

## ■ Hitachi Rail Europe: North East

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[8972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has met with representatives of Hitachi Rail to discuss the sustainability of its factory in the North East.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Representatives from Hitachi rail were present at a meeting the Secretary of State held with TransPennine Express, and relevant stakeholders, to discuss TransPennine Express' recent poor performance. The facility at Newton Aycliffe was not discussed as it was not part of the agenda. Officials from the Department regularly engage with representatives from Hitachi on a number of matters including current and future projects.

The Minister for Business & Industry met with the MP for Sedgefield, the constituency in which Hitachi Rail's factory in Newton Aycliffe is situated, on 14<sup>th</sup> January.

At that meeting the Minister for Business & Industry was informed that a 45 day consultation period is currently underway, and while the exact numbers won't be known until late February or early March, understands that some may be redeployed elsewhere in Hitachi Rail Limited (HRL). The Minister welcomed HRL's decision to invest £8.5m in additional capability in Newton Aycliffe to make the plant more competitive and sustainable in the long term, as this demonstrates the company's long term commitment to the North East.

BEIS officials have been in close contact with HRL senior management at Newton Aycliffe through the last year over investment in the plant to increase capability and, following the 14<sup>th</sup> January meeting, have fed back directly to HRL that the Minister would welcome a meeting with the company's representatives.

## ■ Hitachi Rail Europe: Redundancy

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[9012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Williams Rail Review will make recommendations to ensure there are no further job losses at Hitachi Rail's Newton Aycliffe factory.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Williams Rail Review was tasked with bringing forward recommendations for root and branch change in the rail industry.

Keith Williams, its independent chair, and his team have been looking closely across the sector, including at workforce engagement and skills, to ensure it works in the best interests of passengers and taxpayers. He has not been asked to develop specific recommendations on rolling stock manufacturing. A White Paper based on his recommendations will be published soon.

**Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions****Karin Smyth:**[\[9075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress he has made on legislative proposals in relation to financial penalties for idling vehicles.

**George Freeman:**

Improving air quality is a key priority for this Government.

Further announcements relating to the powers which Local Authorities have to tackle unnecessary vehicle idling are expected to be made shortly.

**Railway Network****Andy McDonald:**[\[9040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of the finding of the Campaign for Better Transport report, The Case for Expanding the Rail Network, published in January 2019, that a national programme of reopening 33 priority rail schemes would cost £4.8 billion.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

We have made no formal assessment of the Campaign for Better Transport report. However, the Department has pledged to begin reopening closed railway lines and stations and are confident that this will help railways across the country. More details on this policy will follow in due course.

**Railway Stations: Air Pollution****Alex Cunningham:**[\[9020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking with Network Rail to improve air quality in train stations.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government is determined to reduce the impact of poor air quality on railway users, workers, and neighbours and will soon be announcing a Transport Decarbonisation Plan which looks at the environmental impact of transport. We are acting to both eliminate pollution, largely caused by diesel engines, and to reduce its negative effects.

The Government has reduced use of diesel trains on the network by delivering hundreds of miles of electrification since 2010. Of the passenger vehicle miles travelled by electric or diesel vehicles in 2018/19, about 70% were electric – up from about 63% in 2009/10.

We are supporting development of new technology to reduce pollution from diesel trains, funding air quality projects through the ongoing First of a Kind innovation programme. Network Rail have taken mitigating action in stations where air quality is particularly poor and plan to extend this to other stations.

## ■ Railways: Tickets

**Dr Luke Evans:**

[\[9152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support agencies to simplify the rail ticketing system.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government has supported industry initiatives for reform in both simplifying fares and improving the ticket buying process. To improve the ticket buying process, we supported the Rail Delivery Group's mobile barcode ticketing programme and made an additional £80m available to operators so that smart tickets are accepted at stations across almost all the network. We are now working with the industry to maximise the benefits of this investment.

In addition, we welcome the Rail Delivery Group's contribution to the Williams Rail Review through its publication of the Easier Fares Consultation. The Williams Review is the first root and branch review of the rail industry in a generation and will set out ambitious proposals early this year. On 2 January a trial of simpler, single-leg fares was launched on some London North Eastern Railway routes, and we 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.

## ■ Railways: Veterans

**Stephen Crabb:**

[\[8982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to introduce the Veterans Railcard in Wales.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

On 22 January, I announced that our new Veterans Railcard would be available from 11 November this year. Most railcards can be used across Great Britain and, given the interconnected nature of rail services, I have written to my counterparts in Wales and Scotland inviting them to work with me to ensure the Veteran's Railcard is accepted on services for which they are responsible. Passengers will be fully appraised of the railcard's validity before it goes live, and this will include how to apply and the detailed terms and conditions.

## ■ Rolling Stock: Manufacturing Industries

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[9018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of reforming the rolling stock procurement criteria.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Rolling stock procurement in the UK is undertaken through a competitive process by franchised or open access train operators who must act without discrimination and in a transparent manner. The Government continues to remain supportive of a competitive UK rolling stock manufacturing market that delivers benefits for both the economy and passengers.

## ■ Rolling Stock: Procurement

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[9011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Williams Rail Review will make recommendations on rolling stock procurement to (a) increase UK productivity and (b) create jobs in the North East.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Williams Rail Review was tasked with bringing forward recommendations for root and branch change in the rail industry.

Keith Williams, its independent chair, and his team have been looking closely across the sector, including at workforce engagement and skills, to ensure it works in the best interests of passengers and taxpayers. He has not been asked to develop specific recommendations on rolling stock manufacturing. A White Paper based on his recommendations will be published soon.

## ■ Trains

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[9013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to support the development of battery trains in the UK.

**George Freeman:**

The Government supports use of battery trains on the railway where appropriate to deliver our legally binding target to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from the UK by 2050.

Our innovation programmes have supported development of battery technology and continue to provide funding opportunities for innovative environmental projects. The Government is also funding work on safety and wider issues that will have to be considered to allow the smooth entry into service on the network of battery trains.

**TREASURY****■ Digital Technology: Taxation****Jeff Smith:**[\[9076\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to use revenue from the new digital services tax to fund independent research into the effect of social media on children and young people's mental health.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has committed to introducing the Digital Services Tax from April 2020. This is expected to raise around £1.5bn over four years. These funds will not be directly hypothecated to any particular spending area.

However, the Government recognises the impact that harmful online content and activity can have on users, and that there are growing concerns about the potential impact on users' mental health and wellbeing. The Online Harms White Paper, published in April 2019, set out plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online.

**■ Employment: Taxation****Fleur Anderson:**[\[10776\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the outcome of his review of proposed changes to IR35 tax regulations.

**Jesse Norman:**

The review of the off-payroll working rules reform (also known as IR35) was announced on 7 January 2020. As set out at Budget 2018, the reform is due to be extended to medium and large organisations in all sectors from 6 April 2020. The review is looking to determine if any further steps can be taken to ensure smooth and successful implementation of the reform due to come into force in April 2020. The review will conclude by mid-February 2020, after which point the recommendations will be made public.

**■ NHS: Finance****Jim Shannon:**[\[9025\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on NHS funding after the UK leaves the EU; and what his policy is on levels of pay for frontline staff in the NHS.

**Rishi Sunak:**

NHS funding has been set out in the published Long Term Plan which commits to grow NHS revenue funding by an average of 3.4% in real terms over the next 5 years – a real terms increase of 20.5 billion by 2023/24. The Barnett formula will be applied in the usual way to determine funding for the devolved administrations. It is for

devolved administrations to allocate this funding across their devolved responsibilities, including to their health services if they so choose.

The Government is committed to supporting frontline staff in the NHS who make a valuable contribution to patient care. More than one million NHS staff in England are currently benefitting from the three-year Agenda for Change pay deal, which came into force in 2018/19 and will see the starting salary for a newly qualified NHS nurse rise to £24,907 by 2020/21, an increase of 12.6% since 2017/18.

The Government takes a flexible approach to public sector pay, taking into account each workforce's circumstances so that public sector employers can address skill shortages, incentivise improvements to public sector productivity, and recruit to meet demand for services. This approach means that public servants, including NHS frontline staff, are rewarded fairly while making sure that public services remain affordable and sustainable in the long-term.

#### ■ **Non-domestic Rates: Midlands and North of England**

**Lucy Allan:**

[\[9054\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to stop downwards phasing of transitional relief in the business rates system to support high streets in Telford constituency, the north of England and the Midlands and (b) if he will include this in the next Budget.

**Jesse Norman:**

The current transitional relief scheme runs until the next business rates revaluation. Details of the scheme for the next revaluation will be confirmed before that revaluation.

The Government is committed to conducting a fundamental review of business rates. Further information will be announced in due course.

#### ■ **Smuggling**

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[10468\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the outcome was of the inaugural meeting of the UK Anti-Illicit Trade Group held on 24 September 2019; and what proposals it has for further action on (a) the activities of the group itself and (b) tackling illicit trade.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

As announced at Budget 2018 and following the recommendation of the APPG on Illicit Trade, the Government has now established a UK-wide Anti-Illicit Trade Group.

The Group met for the first time in September and brought together officials from several departments and enforcement agencies. The aim of the Group continues to be to share best practice and develop a national strategy for tackling the illicit trade. The next meeting of the Group will take place in Spring 2020.

**WOMEN AND EQUALITIES****■ EnAble Fund for Elected Office**

**Marion Fellows:** [\[10758\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she plans to (a) extend or (b) replace the EnAble Fund for Elected Office.

**Victoria Atkins:**

It is the Government's ambition to see more disabled people in public office. While financial support for candidates in elections is also a matter for political parties, the Government is considering what support it might provide to succeed the current EnAble fund. The Disability Unit is considering options in connection with the National Strategy for Disabled People, which is due to be published in 2020.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Pensions**

**Nick Smith:** [\[9644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether there are provisions to transfer out of defined benefit pension schemes into alternative investments in Pension Schemes Bill.

**Guy Opperman:**

In answering this question, the term 'alternative investments' is assumed to refer to investments that the individual chooses themselves, either that are unconventional in that they carry more risk, or are not typical of investments offered by personal pension schemes.

The Pension Schemes Bill 2019-20 has no provisions that restrict how members transferring from defined benefits pensions should invest their pension rights.

Clause 124 of the Pension Schemes Bill contains provisions to amend the statutory right to transfer and thereby restricts the types of pension arrangements under which a member can compel trustees to approve a transfer request. Members can still use their statutory right to transfer to an authorised Master Trust or an FCA authorised pension arrangement.

In accordance with the principles of freedom and choice, members with defined benefit pension rights have the right to transfer to a defined contribution scheme to self-invest. These self-invested personal pension schemes can offer the member a range of investment funds, including alternative investments.

Members with a cash equivalent greater than £30,000 must seek financial advice before they transfer or convert their pension rights into flexible benefits, that can be used for alternative investments. FCA rules for pension transfer advisers require that the form of investment the member is considering on transfer is considered as part of their recommendation to the member to transfer or not. However, the member retains



the right to follow or ignore the advice they receive. Where trustees' have concerns with the alternative investments in a members' choice of destination, they should make the member aware as part of their overall requirement to carry out due diligence in the member's interest.

#### ■ **Social Security Benefits: Appeals**

**Jeff Smith:**

[\[9077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the average waiting time for an appeal to be resolved by internal review on claims for (a) universal credit, (b) personal independence payment and (c) employment support allowance.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Information on the average time to lapse an appeal is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

#### ■ **Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**

**Lilian Greenwood:**

[\[10366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average number of days was between a final warning being issued to a benefit claimant and that claimant's payments being stopped in each year from 2010.

**Will Quince:**

The Department does keep this information centrally and to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

#### ■ **Social Security Benefits: Vulnerable Adults**

**Lilian Greenwood:**

[\[10363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants assessed as vulnerable had their benefit payments stopped in each year from 2010 to 2019.

**Will Quince:**

The information is not available.

#### ■ **State Retirement Pensions: British Nationals Abroad**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[10434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Government plans to uprate the state pension paid to people living in the EU each year in the next three years.

**Guy Opperman:**

The three year State Pension up-rating guarantee was part of the Government's no deal preparations. The Withdrawal Agreement has now been ratified.

Under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, UK state pensioners living in the EEA or Switzerland by 31 December 2020 will have their state pensions increased annually as long as they continue living there.

Currently, the basic state pension and amounts of new state pension up to the full rate are increased in line with the “triple lock” mechanism, which ensures they will rise each year by the highest of either 2.5 per cent, the rate of price inflation or average earnings growth.

People will get their state pensions up-rated in the EU even if they claim their pension on or after 1 January 2021, as long as they meet the UK state pension qualifying conditions and are covered by the Withdrawal Agreement.

The position of those who do not fall within the scope of the Withdrawal Agreement will be covered by the future relationship with the EU, which is yet to be negotiated.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### JUSTICE

#### ■ Crown Courts

**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

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 04 February 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

The number of days sat in the Crown Court for each of the court circuits in England and Wales in (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 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.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

#### ■ TV Licences

**Minister of State for Digital and Creative Industries (Nigel Adams):** [\[HCWS93\]](#)

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

On 5 February the Government launched a consultation on decriminalising TV licence evasion. The consultation invites views from both members of the public and organisations on whether the Government should proceed with the decriminalisation of TV licence evasion by replacing the criminal sanction with an alternative civil enforcement scheme.

Decriminalisation of TV licence evasion was previously looked at by David Perry QC, and he concluded that the criminal penalty remained appropriate under the current licence fee model. However, it has now been five years since the Perry Review. The broadcasting landscape has changed significantly, not least because five years ago a TV licence was not required to watch or download content on BBC iPlayer. As well as this, the BBC's decision on the future of the over 75 licence fee concession means those aged over 75 and not in receipt of Pension Credit may become liable to face TV licensing enforcement procedures.

Given such changes, the Government believes that it is right to look again at decriminalising TV licence evasion in order to ensure a proportionate and fair approach to licence fee penalties and payments is in place, which protects the most vulnerable in our society.

Against this background, the consultation will seek responses on whether to decriminalise evasion and give consideration to how this could happen. The determining factors that the Government will consider include:

- Would an alternative, non-criminal enforcement scheme be fairer and more proportionate?
- What the cost is and how difficult it would be to implement any alternative scheme?
- What is the potential impact on licence fee payers, particularly the most vulnerable and those with protected characteristics?
- And what is the overall impact on licence fee collection?

The consultation will remain open for a period of eight (8) weeks, after which the Government will carefully consider the responses. A consultation response will be expected to be published by summer 2020. Any changes will not enter into effect until April 2022.

The closing date and time for responses is **5 pm on 1 April 2020**. A copy of the consultation will be placed in the House Libraries.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Police Powers: Pre-charge Bail

**Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):**

[\[HCWS94\]](#)

This government is committed to ensuring the police have the powers they need to protect the public, and that our criminal justice system has at its heart the welfare and best interests of victims.

That's why on the 5 November we launched a review of pre-charge bail to ensure we have a system which prioritises safeguarding and supports effective investigations, while also respecting the rights of suspects.

We have listened to people's concerns, including important issues raised by those who provide frontline support to victims of crime and survivors, the police and parliamentarians.

Today I am therefore pleased to announce the launch of our consultation on proposed changes to pre-charge bail. Specifically, the consultation seeks views on the following proposals:

- Removing the presumption against pre-charge bail;
- Placing a duty on officers to use pre-charge bail where necessary and proportionate, which would apply in cases where there were safeguarding risks to victims, witnesses and the public; where necessary to prevent further offending; or where the offence in question has significant real or intended impacts;
- Lowering the rank of officer needed to authorise and extend pre-charge bail, while also extending the initial period pre-charge bail can be applied from 28 to either 60 or 90 days and delaying the point at which magistrates' approval for the extension of bail is required from 3 months to 6, 9 or 12 months; and
- Introducing review points in codes of practice for investigations where pre-charge bail is not used- including where individuals are interviewed voluntarily or released under investigation.

Importantly, this consultation will also look to gather views from victims of crime and those individuals who have been released under investigation about how the current system can be improved, as well seeking views on the current effectiveness of bail conditions

This is a government that both listens and acts, and I look forward to hearing views on this important issue.

The consultation will be available at [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/police-powers-pre-charge-bail](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/police-powers-pre-charge-bail). A copy of the consultation will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.