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**CONTENTS**

<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>5</b>	■ International Military Services: Bank Services	10
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	5	■ International Military Services: Contracts	10
■ European Telecommunications Standards Institute: Computer Software	5	■ International Military Services: Debts	11
■ Renewable Energy	6	■ International Military Services: Finance	11
CABINET OFFICE	6	■ Military Bases: Lighting	11
■ Average Earnings: Wansbeck	6	■ Ministry of Defence: Lighting	12
■ Cybercrime	6	■ Ministry of Defence: Property Transfer	12
■ Local Government: Elections	7	■ Porton Down: Animal Experiments	12
■ Police and Crime Commissioners: Elections	7	■ Sri Lanka: Military Aid	13
■ Public Appointments: Standards	7	DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	14
■ Redundancy	7	■ Cycling	14
CHURCH COMMISSIONERS	8	■ Internet: Children	14
■ Youth Centres	8	■ Mobile Phones: North Norfolk	14
DEFENCE	8	■ Publishing: Digital Technology	15
■ Armed Forces	8	■ Sports: Public Participation	16
■ Armed Forces: Social Security Benefits	9	■ World Wide Web Foundation	16
■ Burkina Faso: Military Aid	9	EDUCATION	16
■ HMS Audacious	9	■ Display Energy Certificates	16
■ International Criminal Court	10	■ GCSE: Rother Valley	17

■ Primary Education: Assessments	18	■ Department of Health and Social Care: Senior Civil Servants	30
■ Schools: Uniforms	18	■ Diabetes	30
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	19	■ Diabetes: Ethnic Groups	31
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	19	■ Diabetes: Medical Equipment	31
■ African Swine Fever	19	■ Earwax: Medical Treatments	31
■ Agricultural Products: Import Duties	20	■ Health Services: Veterans	32
■ Agricultural Products: Prices	20	■ Healthy Start Scheme: Public Consultation	33
■ Animal Welfare	20	■ Hormone Replacement Therapy: Shortages	33
■ Busking: Animal Welfare	21	■ Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination	33
■ Dogs: Animal Welfare	21	■ Infant Mortality	34
■ Drinking Water: Standards	21	■ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence	34
■ Flood Control: North East	22	■ NHS: Vacancies	36
■ Floods	23	■ Obesity: Children	36
■ Food: Waste	23	■ Radiology: Vacancies	36
■ Pigs: Animal Housing	23	■ Smoking	37
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	24	■ Smoking: Children	37
■ Armed Conflict: Civilians	24	■ Suicide: Males	37
■ Human Rights	24	HOME OFFICE	38
■ India: Nationality	25	■ Action Fraud: Staff	38
■ Pakistan: Human Rights	25	■ Counter-terrorism	38
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	26	■ Crimes of Violence: Young People	39
■ Asthma: Children	26	■ Drugs: Pop Festivals	39
■ Bowel Cancer: Screening	27	■ Gangs: Mobile Phones	39
■ Cancer: Diagnosis	27	■ Immigration	40
■ Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients	28	■ Immigration: EU Nationals	40
■ Coronavirus: Quarantine	28	■ Knives: Crime	41
■ Dental Health: Children	29	■ Police: Injuries	42
■ Dental Services: Children	29		

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	42	■ Legal Aid Scheme: Low Incomes	53
■ Buildings: Fire Prevention	42	■ Prison Officers: Safety	53
■ Buildings: Insulation	42	■ Prisons: Crimes against the Person	54
■ Community Housing Fund	44	■ Prisons: Industrial Health and Safety	54
■ Evictions	44	■ Sexual Offences	55
■ Floods	44	LEADER OF THE HOUSE	55
■ Help to Buy Scheme	45	■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Closures	55
■ High Rise Flats: Insulation	46	NORTHERN IRELAND	56
■ Housing: Finance	46	■ Capital Investment: Northern Ireland	56
■ Mobile Homes: Standards	47	SCOTLAND	57
■ Owner Occupation	47	■ Scotland Office: Reviews	57
■ Planning Permission	47	SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS AUTHORITY	57
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	48	■ Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority: Pay	57
■ Developing Countries: Drugs	48	TRANSPORT	57
■ Developing Countries: Nutrition	48	■ A68	57
■ UN Commission on the Status of Women	49	■ Airports and Ports	58
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	49	■ East Coast Rail Franchise	58
■ International Military Services: Debts Written Off	49	■ High Speed 2 Railway Line	59
■ Overseas Trade: Pressure Groups	50	■ Leamside Railway Line	59
■ Trade Agreements	50	■ M1: North East	60
■ Trade Agreements: Environment Protection	50	■ Official Cars: Exhaust Emissions	60
■ Trade Agreements: Parliamentary Scrutiny	51	■ Railways: Death	60
■ Trade Agreements: Sustainable Development	51	■ Railways: Tickets	61
■ UK Export Finance: Audit	51	■ Rolling Stock: Procurement	61
■ UK Export Finance: Finance	52	■ South Eastern Rail Franchise	61
JUSTICE	52	■ Transport: Schools	62
■ Debts: VAT	52		

TREASURY	62	■ Social Security Benefits: Vulnerable Adults	73
■ Agriculture: Sustainable Development	62	■ Universal Credit	73
■ Beer: Excise Duties	62	<b>MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS</b>	<b>75</b>
■ Business Growth Fund	62	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	75
■ Capital Gains Tax	63	■ NHS: Expenditure	75
■ Electronic Publishing: VAT	63	<b>WRITTEN STATEMENTS</b>	<b>76</b>
■ Employment: Taxation	63	DEFENCE	76
■ Financial Services: Insurance	64	■ Ministry of Defence Votes A Annual Estimate 2020-21	76
■ Inheritance Tax	65	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	76
■ Mortgages	65	■ January Agriculture and Fisheries Council	76
■ Pensions: Advisory Services	65	FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	76
■ Tobacco: Smuggling	66	■ Transfer of the Cemeteries Endowment Fund to BACSA	76
■ Valuation Office Agency	67	HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	77
■ Voluntary Work: Young People	68	■ Local Government Finance	77
WORK AND PENSIONS	68	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	79
■ Asbestos: Compensation	68	■ Free Trade Agreements with the Rest of the World	79
■ Disability Living Allowance	68	■ Trade Policy Update	82
■ Food Banks	69	■ Update on Independent Investigation into Export Licences for Saudi Arabia Issued in Breach of Court Undertaking	83
■ Maternity Allowance	69	TREASURY	84
■ Maternity Pay	69	■ Breathing space	84
■ Personal Income: Kingston upon Hull	70		
■ Personal Independence Payment	70		
■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations	70		
■ Poverty: Children	72		
■ Social Security Benefits: British Nationals Abroad	72		

**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ European Telecommunications Standards Institute: Computer Software

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[11538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support her Department provides to ETSI in relation to the development of (a) quantum communications technology standards and (b) quantum key distribution.

**Chris Skidmore:**

Having agreed technical standards enables industry to provide products and services that work together and are an essential part of the electronic communications world. ETSI is one of the main standards organisations in this area. DCMS leads on standards for digital and electronic communications and pays the UK government membership fee to ETSI. DCMS is active on the board and a number of technical committees and coordinates the UK industry relationship with ETSI. The National Physical Laboratory (NPL) and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) lead the technical work on quantum communications and quantum-safe cryptography from a UK government perspective.

The NPL has had a long-standing involvement with the ETSI Industry Specification Group (ISG) on quantum key distribution (ETSI ISG-QKD), acting as rapporteur for the creation of a published guidance document ETSI GS QKD 011 (2016) that created the first measurement 'standard' in quantum technologies. The NPL continues to contribute to the drafting of test standards through ETSI ISG-QKD and will continue to explore where it would be beneficial for the UK to have further participation in other standards organisations, eg. ITU and ISO.

The NCSC is not a member of the ETSI ISG-QKD but has worked with the group to provide security assurance of QKD products; and has been closely involved in the ETSI Quantum Safe Cryptography (QSC) group since its establishment – this group is focussed on transitioning internet security to using algorithms that could not be broken by a quantum computer.

As part of the National Quantum Technologies Programme (NQTP), Government supports research in quantum communications, which is co-ordinated through a hub led by the University of York. The hub's expert advice contributes to standard setting through ETSI. Launched in 2014, the hub will have received around £48m in UKRI funding by 2024. In order to continue to develop these technologies towards commercialisation BEIS also funds collaborative quantum communications projects with industry through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) Commercialising quantum technologies challenge.

## ■ Renewable Energy

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[11535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what statutory role OfGem has in relation to decarbonisation policies; and what her Department's policy is on ensuring that the energy market best supports the transition to renewable energy.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Ofgem has an important role in the transition to net zero and has various powers and duties in relation to decarbonisation. Ofgem's principle duty is to protect existing and future consumers and this includes consumers' interests in the reduction of targeted greenhouse gas emissions from electricity and gas supply. Ofgem also has a duty to have regard to the effect on the environment of activities connected with the generation, transmission, distribution and supply of electricity and gas and, when performing its duties, to have regard to the need to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. These duties are set out in Part 1 of the Gas Act 1986 and Electricity Act 1989.

The Government will set out its vision for the GB energy market as part of the forthcoming Energy White Paper, which will address the transformation of our energy system in the context of delivering net zero by 2050.

## CABINET OFFICE

## ■ Average Earnings: Wansbeck

**Ian Lavery:** [\[10383\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average wage in Wansbeck constituency is.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Response [PQ10383.pdf]

## ■ Cybercrime

**Jeremy Hunt:** [\[11530\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much additional funding has been allocated to protect the UK from cyber attacks.

**Oliver Dowden:**

The National Cyber Security Strategy, supported by a £1.9 billion investment, is delivering transformational change, building new capabilities and intervening to protect the UK from cyber attacks. This is an increase on the first National Cyber Security Strategy which ran from 2011-2015 with an investment of £650 million.

Our manifesto has committed to investing more in cyber security, embracing new technologies and legislating to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online.

#### ■ Local Government: Elections

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:** [\[10328\]](#)

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 to (a) stand as candidates, (b) serve a full-term if elected and (c) vote in local government elections in England and Wales in 2020 during the transition period of the UK leaving the EU.

**Chloe Smith:**

I refer the Hon member to the answer which I gave to PQ 1802 on 29 January 2020.

#### ■ Police and Crime Commissioners: Elections

**Wayne David:** [\[11466\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether candidates standing for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections will be provided with a freepost to electors.

**Chloe Smith:**

As for previous Police and Crime Commissioner elections, all candidates standing at the May 2020 Police and Crime Commissioner elections are entitled to have a candidate address published on the [choosemypcc.org.uk](http://choosemypcc.org.uk) website. The Government will meet the cost of providing, on request, to eligible electors a printed booklet of all the candidate addresses for their police area.

#### ■ Public Appointments: Standards

**John Healey:** [\[11452\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 3 February 2020 to Question 8952 on Public Appointments: Standards, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the due diligence process for appointments to the panels of statutory public inquiries following the resignation of Benita Mehra from her role as a panel member on the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

**Oliver Dowden:**

Due diligence and consideration of conflicts of interest are important parts of any appointment process. The Inquiries Act 2005 sets out the suitability and impartiality requirements of inquiry panel appointments. Appointments to statutory public inquiries are made in accordance with the Act.

#### ■ Redundancy

**Ian Lavery:** [\[10382\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people were made redundant in (a) Wansbeck constituency, (b) Northumberland and (c) England in the last six months.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Response [PQ10382.pdf]

**CHURCH COMMISSIONERS**■ **Youth Centres****Jim Shannon:**[\[12268\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what estimate the Church of England has made of the number of church-based youth clubs; and what assessment he has made of effect of those clubs on the wellbeing of the young people that use them.

**Andrew Selous:**

The Church of England employs 2,670 children and youth workers in its parishes, and there are 80,000 volunteers across the church who are engaged in projects supporting children and young people. Projects can range from holiday clubs, messy church, sports ministry and creative play.

The Church of England commissioned a research project assessing how best to approach building confidence, engagement and belonging, creating a supportive and inclusive environment in 2016 which has formed the basis of its approach. The report can be read here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Rooted%20in%20the%20Church%20Summary%20Report.pdf>

**DEFENCE**■ **Armed Forces****Jeremy Hunt:**[\[11527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department has made on the development of Joint Force 2025; and if he will make a statement.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

In 2015 we set out a step change in our ambition for UK Defence; the ambition to be able to war-fight at scale by 2025. Our headmark for this is Joint Force 2025, a highly capable deployable force of around 50,000 personnel drawn from all services. We have made significant progress in delivering the Maritime Task Group, Army Division, Air Group and Joint Forces that make up this deployable force. But there are still challenges. We know the threat picture for the UK has evolved since 2015, this was acknowledged in our Modernising Defence Programme, and there is still work to be done to ensure we are on track for delivery by 2025. The forthcoming Integrated Review on Security, Defence and Foreign Policy and the Comprehensive Spending

Review provide us a unique opportunity to refresh our plans for Defence to make sure that we are delivering the right capability to keep the country safe now and in decades to come.

### ■ **Armed Forces: Social Security Benefits**

**Henry Smith:**

[\[10355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on having the benefits system for current and former service personnel administered by his Department.

**Johnny Mercer:**

No such discussions have taken place. In 2000, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) took on the administration of the War Pension Scheme from the Department for Work and Pensions as a discrete Scheme with benefit recipients who were already confirmed as veterans or widow/ers. However, the MOD is not resourced to take on the administration of the entire benefits system for all Service personnel and veterans and I have seen no evidence to suggest that such a change is required. In addition, there would be very significant logistical and administrative barriers to overcome, were such a change to be effected; MOD officials advise that over four million veterans records would have to be digitised to create a definitive database of all veterans.

### ■ **Burkina Faso: Military Aid**

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[11484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has received a request from his French counterpart to provide support to French military forces deployed in Burkina Faso.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Her Majesty's Government is concerned by the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel and more broadly in surrounding areas such as Burkina Faso. We remain in dialogue with French military counterparts and continue to provide non-combat assistance to the French-led counter terror mission Operation BARKHANE with our deployment of three CH47 chinook helicopters.

### ■ **HMS Audacious**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[10350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the delay in the delivery of HMS Audacious to the in-service dates of the (a) final three Astute submarines; (b) Dreadnought submarines; (c) the schedule for dismantling out of service nuclear submarines and (d) the requirements for nuclear licensed dock capacity at Devonport; and if he will make a statement.

**James Heapey:**

The delay to the delivery of Audacious will have some impact on the schedule for the next Astute Class, Anson. We remain committed to delivering all seven Astute boats

by the end of 2026. The Dreadnought programme is unaffected and remains on track for the first of the Dreadnought class submarines to enter service in the early 2030s. The planned in-service dates for Royal Navy submarines are withheld as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces. The schedule for dismantling decommissioned nuclear submarines is unaffected. Work to determine the future infrastructure requirements at Devonport is continuing and is unaffected by the delay to the delivery of Audacious.

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[10351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the delay in the delivery of HMS Audacious on the cost of extending the service lives of Trafalgar-class submarines.

**James Heapey:**

We do not routinely release planning assumptions for submarine availability as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces. There are no additional costs over those which are currently planned.

#### ■ International Criminal Court

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[10361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the meetings that officials in his Department have had with representatives of the International Criminal Court in each of the last 12 months.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

No meetings have taken place between officials in the Ministry of Defence and representatives of the International Criminal Court in the 12 months to 31 January 2020.

#### ■ International Military Services: Bank Services

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[11637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) UK and (b) offshore bank accounts International Military Services Ltd has.

**James Heapey:**

All International Military Services Ltd investments are made with institutions in the UK.

#### ■ International Military Services: Contracts

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[9750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the value was of pre-1991 claims that relate to contracts managed or brokered by the Ministry of Defence owned company IMS Ltd that were outstanding at 31 March 2019.

**James Heappey:**

The value of the claim is a matter of public record and that information is available in the judgement handed down by Mr Justice Phillips on 24 July 2019. The judgement can be found at:

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Comm/2019/1994.html>

**International Military Services: Debts****Tulip Siddiq:** [\[11627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department still holds a debtor's due debt from International Military Services Ltd in relation to the Court Funds Office deposit his Department made in relation to that company in 2001.

**James Heappey:**

The term "debtor's due debt" is not recognised. I should be grateful if the hon. Member would provide further clarification in order that the correct information can be provided.

**International Military Services: Finance****Tulip Siddiq:** [\[11623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 3 February to Question 9097 on International Military Services: Finance, what his Department's policy is on IMS Limited accountability for that company's financial activities to Parliament (a) before and (b) after financial year 18-19.

**James Heappey:**

International Military Services Ltd has been a private limited company up until this Financial Year (2019-20) and was not required to lay its accounts before Parliament (as is the case with any other private limited company). IMS accounts are publicly available at Companies House. IMS Ltd will now be included in the Ministry of Defence's financial accounting and reporting processes.

**Military Bases: Lighting****Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[10293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the (a) electricity cost of perimeter floodlighting of military bases and (b) potential cost saving of moving to LED or other energy efficient bulbs for such floodlighting.

**James Heappey:**

Energy usage of perimeter floodlighting of military bases is not metered separately and no estimate of costs are held.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is committed to improving energy efficiency across the defence estate in line with the Net Zero ambition. Energy efficient lighting is one aspect of this and there is a proactive programme to transition to LED lighting.

However, as MOD is not able to baseline the cost of perimeter floodlighting, potential cost savings cannot be provided.

### ■ Ministry of Defence: Lighting

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[10294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it is Department's policy to implement energy efficient lighting across the MoD estate.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is committed to improving energy efficiency across the defence estate in line with the Net Zero ambition. Energy efficient lighting is one aspect of this and there is a proactive programme to transition to LED lighting.

For new builds the MOD policy is to achieve an excellent rating under the Defence Related Environmental Assessment Methodology (DREAM) which requires the use of energy efficient fittings.

### ■ Ministry of Defence: Property Transfer

**Jeremy Hunt:** [\[11528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much and what proportion of his Department's built estate has been released to the public sector for development; what the reduction to the size of that estate has been as a result of the release; and how many properties have been built on land previously owned by his Department in each of the last three years.

**James Heappey:**

Since 2015, the Ministry of Defence's built estate has reduced in size by 1.3% and is currently 73,900 hectares.

The Ministry of Defence releases land for a mix of housing, economic growth and job creation uses. Since 2010, the Department has released land with a Housing Unit Potential of up to 8,321 houses.

The Department holds no information on the number of properties built on land sold for development as this would be a matter for the new owner of the land and local planning authorities.

### ■ Porton Down: Animal Experiments

**Cat Smith:** [\[9721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many experiments were conducted on animals by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory on behalf of his Department in each of the last 10 years.

**James Heappey:**

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) makes has an active programme to reduce and replace animal experiments and in recent years we have

developed a number of alternative methods for testing that do not require animals. We will continue to look for alternatives so that we minimise our use of animals.

Animal experiments are regulated by the UK Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA). Under ASPA, “animal experiments” are referred to as “scientific procedures”. In accordance with ASPA, Dstl makes an annual report of scientific procedures to the Home Office.

The numbers of scientific procedures using animals conducted at Dstl Porton Down between 2009 and 2015 have been previously reported to the House as in the table below:

YEAR	TOTAL
2009	8,452
2010	9,438
2011	9,722
2012	8,830
2013	6,461
2014	4,124
2015	3,249

#### ■ Sri Lanka: Military Aid

**Nia Griffith:**

[\[11516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support his Department is providing to Sri Lanka to combat (a) terrorism and (b) drug trafficking.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The Sri Lanka and UK defence relationship was significantly strengthened in 2019 with the appointment of a resident Defence Adviser.

Following the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks in 2019, the UK offered support to the Sri Lankan authorities based on the UK experience of tackling terrorism. Ministry of Defence support has included providing training to Sri Lanka in countering Improvised Explosive Devices, with some Sri Lankan students attending training in the UK.

HMS Montrose visited Colombo in April 2019 as part of her deployment in the Indian Ocean and conducted a short exercise with the Sri Lankan Navy. This visit was an opportunity for the UK and Sri Lankan Navies to compare experience in countering drug trafficking, and to share the tactics and techniques which have proven most effective in tackling this shared global threat.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ **Cycling**

**Catherine West:** [\[11646\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to increase levels of cycling.

**Nigel Adams:**

Government is committed to making sure that everyone regardless of ability or background feels able to take part in sport and physical activity. Government's Sporting Future strategy committed to increasing levels of physical activity regardless of the type of sport or activity.

Over 2017-21, through Sport England, government is investing over £17m in British Cycling to support the growth of grassroots cycling and cycling talent.

Since 2017, Sport England has separately invested more than £4.5m directly in grassroots cycling projects to support the growth of cycling at local level.

Government is also investing up to £15m in off-road cycling facilities to help drive a legacy from the 2019 UCI Road World Cycling Championships held in Yorkshire.

Almost £2 billion is projected to be invested in cycling and walking infrastructure over the 5 years from 2016/17 to 2020/21, and spending in England has doubled from £3.50 per head to around £7 per head over the current Spending Review period.

■ **Internet: Children**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[12261\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with the Home Secretary on ensuring that vulnerable children are protected online.

**Matt Warman:**

Protecting children online is at the heart of our online harms agenda and wider government priorities. The joint DCMS-Home Office Online Harms White Paper, published in April 2019, outlined the government's plans to make the UK the safest place in the world to go online. We will introduce a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator.

Ministers have regular meetings and discussions with their ministerial colleagues, on a range of issues, including the protection of vulnerable children online.

■ **Mobile Phones: North Norfolk**

**Duncan Baker:** [\[10478\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to improve mobile phone coverage in North Norfolk constituency; and what the timeframe is for improving that coverage.

**Matt Warman:**

The Government announced in-principle support in October 2019 for the Mobile Network Operators' (MNOs) Shared Rural Network (SRN) proposal. The proposal would share investment costs between the mobile network operators and government and increase 4G mobile coverage throughout the United Kingdom to 95% by 2025. It will be underpinned by a legally binding coverage commitment from each operator.

The Government's in-principle support is subject to detailed negotiations. While this is not yet a done deal, the Prime Minister has made improvements to rural mobile coverage part of his first 100 days pledge. I will continue to work with the sector to make that happen.

The exact site deployment plans and timescales will be managed by the MNOs themselves in order for them to best deliver the agreed coverage outcomes. So until the operators' final radio planning exercise is complete, neither the Government nor the operators will know the precise location or number of new or upgraded masts. However, the operators will be consulting with local communities as they do so. The MNOs' intention is to deliver this programme by the end of 2025.

**■ Publishing: Digital Technology****Tracy Brabin:**[\[11596\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to support digital innovation in the publishing sector.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK publishing sector is one of the UK's oldest, most respected and successful industries. We recognise the importance of the publishing sector, economically and culturally, as well as the need to support digital innovation as consumption trends broaden beyond physical products.

In particular, the Government is committed to supporting the sustainability of the news publishing industry as it transitions online. Last week we responded to the Cairncross Review into a sustainable future of journalism in the UK, by setting out support for the majority of its recommendations.

The Government has already started to take forward some of the interventions proposed in the Review. We have worked with Nesta to develop a £2million pilot innovation fund, which launched in October 2019, and seeks to invest in new technological prototypes, start-ups and innovative business models to explore new ways of sustaining the industry in this changing landscape. The government will evaluate this pilot to inform decisions on the full innovation fund ahead of the next Spending Review.

## ■ Sports: Public Participation

**Catherine West:** [11645]

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the legacy of the London 2012 Olympics on levels of grassroots sport participation.

**Nigel Adams:**

Government commissioned an independent consortium to carry out a meta-evaluation of the benefits of London 2012. These reports are published on GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/london-2012-meta-evaluation>) and cover a broad range of research areas such as grassroots sport participation economic benefits, sustainability standards and the impact on volunteering.

Government, in conjunction with the Mayor of London, published four annual reports on legacy between 2013 and 2016. These described legacy benefits in the areas of sport and physical activity, economic impact, communities, East London regeneration and the impact from the Paralympics. Again, these reports are available on GOV.UK via <https://www.gov.uk/society-and-culture/2012-olympic-and-paralympic-legacy>.

## ■ World Wide Web Foundation

**Ben Lake:** [8437]

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with representatives of the World Wide Web Foundation on signing the Contract for the Web.

**Matt Warman:**

Ministers and officials have regular meetings and discussions with stakeholders, such as the World Wide Web Foundation, on a range of issues, including their work in relation to the Contract for the Web. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

## EDUCATION

### ■ Display Energy Certificates

**Helen Hayes:** [11600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) school, (b) college and (c) university buildings in each Display Energy Certificate band; and what the total number is of such institutions required to hold an Display Energy Certificate.

**Helen Hayes:** [11601]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate his Department has made of the total building area in square metres of (a) schools, (b) colleges and (c) universities in each Display Energy Certificate band.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[11602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate his Department has made of the total area in square metres of (a) school, (b) college and (c) university buildings in England.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[11603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the energy consumption in kW, by energy type, of schools in each of the last five years; and what proportion of that energy consumption was bought renewable or self-generated renewable energy.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[11604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the total carbon dioxide equivalent emissions of schools in each of the last five years.

**Nick Gibb:**

In response to the legally binding target of reducing UK carbon emissions to net zero by 2050, the Department is reviewing building standards and specifications for school buildings to ensure this can be met. This will include data gathering, investigation of appropriate actions and effectiveness of any actions to reduce emissions.

At present the Department does not hold information on Display Energy Certificate data on schools, colleges or universities. The Department is working with the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy to access energy data from the education estate to influence future policy decisions. We do not currently hold accurate estimates of consumption by energy type or source.

The Department is working with University College London's energy unit on assessing energy use and carbon emissions across the schools estate. We encourage those responsible for further education and higher education estates to address energy reduction to support action on climate change.

Through the Condition Data Collection (CDC) programme the Department estimates that the total floor area of school buildings in England is approximately 80 million square metres. The CDC is being extended to further education colleges and the corresponding data will be available in due course. The Department can also access similar data from the Higher Education Statistics Service.

## ■ GCSE: Rother Valley

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[10489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils achieved (a) the highest and (b) pass grades at GCSE in Rother Valley constituency in each of the last five years.

**Nick Gibb:**

The percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in all state-funded schools[1] achieving grades 9-4 or A\*-C in English and mathematics GCSEs in Rother Valley constituency over the last four years are presented in the table attached.

Further data at institution level for schools in Rother Valley from 2014 to 2019 can be accessed from the download data section of the school performance tables website at: <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>.

[1] State-funded schools include academies, free schools, city technology colleges, further education colleges with provision for 14- to 16-year-olds and state-funded special schools. They exclude independent schools, independent special schools, non-maintained special schools, hospital schools, pupil referral units and alternative provision. Alternative provision includes academy and free school alternative provision.

**Attachments:**

1. 10489\_table [10489\_table\_key\_stage\_4\_attainment.pdf]

## ■ Primary Education: Assessments

**Jack Dromey:**

[\[9632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of (a) the effectiveness of the primary school assessment system and (b) whether that system reflects priorities of parents.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department ran a consultation in 2017 to seek views about key issues in the primary assessment system, including how we can ensure the assessment system is proportionate while continuing to support high standards in our primary schools. The consultation was open for 12 weeks and received 4,165 responses from a range of groups, including parents.

Our response set out a number of actions, including developing new and revised assessments by working closely with key stakeholders such as teachers. When developing new assessment policy, such as the new engagement model and the reception baseline assessment, the Standards and Testing Agency seeks the views of parents or their representative organisations to inform decision making. The response also set out how we would provide clearer and more meaningful information to parents on how their children are progressing as well as identifying where additional support may be required.

## ■ Schools: Uniforms

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[11671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has (a) in place and (b) to bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that school uniform costs are minimised.

**Nick Gibb:**

No school uniform should be so expensive as to leave pupils or their families feeling unable to apply to a school. The Government is pleased to support the Private Member's Bill to 'Make provision for guidance about the cost aspects of school uniform policies', which was recently introduced to Parliament on 5 February 2020.

This demonstrates the Government's commitment to ensuring that school uniform costs are reasonable.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Sally-Ann Hart:**

[900647]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to create new national parks.

**Rebecca Pow:**

As part of our 25 Year Environment Plan, the Government commissioned an independent review of designated landscapes in England, led by Julian Glover. We welcome the Glover Review and are now considering its findings, including proposals for new National Parks.

### ■ African Swine Fever

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[9786]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to (a) minimise the risk of African Swine Fever and (b) prevent the import of contaminated (i) meat and (ii) animals.

**George Eustice:**

The UK has robust measures and guidance to protect against the introduction of exotic diseases such as African Swine Fever (ASF). These measures include import bans on livestock and products of animal origin from high risk areas, a movement standstill regime and a ban on feeding swill to pigs.

UK authorities at the border also carry out documentary checks to ensure the country of origin of the animal or product is ASF disease free.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency's International Disease Monitoring team regularly assess the changing global animal disease presence and its potential risk to the UK. The most recent assessment was made in December 2019. These ASF assessments are published on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.

To safeguard the UK's pork and pig industries, Defra, together with the Scottish and Welsh Governments and DAERA in Northern Ireland, the UK pig industry and veterinary bodies have been working together to raise awareness of the risks of the introduction of ASF to the UK, the importance of good biosecurity and what steps can be taken to protect the UK pig herd.

A targeted campaign was launched last summer at the UK's border to help keep ASF out of the country. This includes displaying information and posters to raise awareness among passengers entering the UK of the risks of bringing back contaminated products. We also undertake extensive work with Border Force on intelligence-led operations to ensure no affected products cross our borders.

## ■ Agricultural Products: Import Duties

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[11455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions she has had with the National Farmers Union on plans on potential tariffs on (a) grains, (b) eggs, (c) fruit and (d) vegetables and (e) other dairy products; and if she will make a statement.

**George Eustice:**

The Secretary of State regularly meets the National Farmers Union (NFU) to discuss a range of issues. The Government is developing a new UK Most Favoured Nation tariff schedule which will enter into force on 1 January 2021.

The Department for International Trade launched a public consultation to inform the UK's new independent global tariff policy on 6 February. The consultation will be open online for four weeks from 6 February, closing on 5 March, and all views will be considered before the Global Tariff Policy is finalised.

This is the first time in almost 50 years that the UK will be free to set its tariff rates on all imported goods. This consultation represents a unique and historic opportunity for every business, every person and every civil society group, in every part of the UK including the NFU, to have their say.

## ■ Agricultural Products: Prices

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[11456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the potential effect on the price of agricultural imports of concluding trade negotiations with the EU without an agreement on 31 December 2020.

**George Eustice:**

Modelling conducted by Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) showed that under a Most Favoured Nation scenario there is a firming in agricultural commodity prices which would likely boost farm incomes. However, modelling carried out by the Resolution Foundation also showed that a similar scenario would increase consumer prices by around 4%.

## ■ Animal Welfare

**Paul Blomfield:**

[\[11532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when she plans to bring forward legislation to recognise animal sentience.

**George Eustice:**

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for City of Chester, Christian Matheson, on 20 January 2020, WQ [3774](#).

## ■ **Busking: Animal Welfare**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[9614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to tackle the (a) import, (b) drugging and (c) trafficking within the UK of dogs for use by multiple street entertainers.

**George Eustice:**

The Government takes the issue of the illegal importation of dogs and puppies seriously. All dogs entering the UK must be compliant with specific documentary and health preparations intended to safeguard their welfare and the biosecurity of this country. We have one of the most rigorous pet travel checking regimes in the world and any dogs found to be non-compliant with import rules may be refused entry or detained until compliant.

Anyone who illegally administers drugs to dogs to be used for begging or as part of street entertainment would be in breach of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 by causing unnecessary suffering or administering injurious drugs. The maximum penalty for either of these offences is six months' imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

However, the Government has already announced that it will increase the maximum custodial penalty for these offences to five years' imprisonment. Anyone who has concerns about the health and welfare of a dog or any other animal used by beggars or street entertainers should report it to the relevant local authority or the police who have powers to deal with such matters, or to the RSPCA who will also investigate.

## ■ **Dogs: Animal Welfare**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[900660\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to tackle the drugging of dogs for use by buskers.

**George Eustice:**

There are already laws and regulations in place to protect animals used by buskers. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, it is a criminal offence to cause unnecessary suffering to an animal, and to administer an injurious or poisonous drug to an animal. Specific concerns about the welfare of dogs used by buskers can be reported to local authorities, the police or the RSPCA.

## ■ **Drinking Water: Standards**

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**

[\[11607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what guidance her Department has issued to local authorities on drinking water standards.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Local authorities in England and Wales are the enforcers of the Private Water Supplies Regulations 2016 (as amended) (in England) and The Private Water Supplies (Wales) Regulations 2017 (in Wales). These regulations contain the standards that private supplies of drinking water are required to meet. Local

authorities are also required to keep themselves advised of the quality of public drinking water supplies in their area and water companies are required to meet standards in the Water Supplies (Water Quality) Regulations 2016 (as amended).

On public supplies, the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI), as enforcers of the regulations relating to public supplies publishes three quarterly reports and an annual report on the quality of public supplies which are available free of charge on its website <http://www.dwi.gov.uk/about/annual-report/index.htm>.

On private supplies, the DWI has a role in providing support to local authorities in discharging their regulatory duties and reports to Ministers annually on progress with improvements to private supplies. The DWI website ( <http://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supply/index.htm> ) contains a section specific to private water supplies and the section for local authorities provides guidance on the regulations, risk assessment (including a tool for local authorities to use), sampling and monitoring, notices (including templates), reporting and case studies covering real life cases. The DWI provides an advice line which, in 2018 handled 309 enquiries from local authorities ( <http://www.dwi.gov.uk/about/annual-report/2018/PWS-2018-England.pdf> ). In addition the DWI provides inspectors to regional local authority meetings on request and visits individual local authorities to provide training where required.

#### ■ Flood Control: North East

**Bridget Phillipson:**

**[11503]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of flood defences in the North East.

**Rebecca Pow:**

In the North East of England there are over 22,000 properties in areas at risk of flooding from Main Rivers and the sea. The Environment Agency (EA) maintain over 1,500 flood risk assets to protect communities in the North East against these risks. All EA-maintained assets are visually inspected on a routine basis as part of a risk based programme, with additional intrusive inspections undertaken where required. Where issues are identified during inspections the need for further works are prioritised through the EA's programme of capital or maintenance works.

The overall investment in the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC) in the North East of England for the 6 year capital programme Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management up to 20/21 totals over £100 million. This includes Local Levy and public and private sector contributions, with £48.8 million from Government funding.

The impacts of future climate change are taken into account when considering the levels of flood risk and the level of mitigation required as part of any investment decision.

There are a number of Risk Management Authorities, such as local councils, who also maintain flood risk assets to reduce the risk of surface water and groundwater flooding and better protect from the impacts of coastal erosion.

## ■ Floods

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[11584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will call a flood summit in response to the November 2019 floods.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Minister Pow announced at the Westminster debate on Flooding in South Yorkshire, on 30 January, that she proposes to host a meeting with the Mayor of Sheffield City Region Combined Authority, Members of Parliament from South Yorkshire and the Environment Agency in the near future to discuss the recent flooding and the work that can be done locally to plan for the future.

## ■ Food: Waste

**Wendy Chamberlain:** [\[900657\]](#)

What plans the Government has to reduce food waste by 20 per cent as recommended in the Committee on Climate Change's January 2020 report, Land use: Policies for a Net Zero UK.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Waste is a devolved matter. Data recently published by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) shows UK food waste fell by almost 15% since 2007 – enough to fill Wembley Stadium three times. However, I know there is more to do everywhere. The Resources and Waste Strategy which covers England only sets out a range of policy actions to reduce food waste further including a £15 million food waste fund, a consultation on mandatory reporting of food waste by businesses, and continued support of cross-sector collaboration through the Courtauld Commitment 2025 to achieve a 20% reduction.

## ■ Pigs: Animal Housing

**Kenny MacAskil:** [\[9787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the effects on levels of livestock of a ban on farrowing crates.

**George Eustice:**

The UK is ahead of most other pig producing countries in that 40% of sows already farrow freely on outdoor pig units and are not confined to crates. The Government believes the aim should be for farrowing crates not to be necessary. It is important that we make progress towards a system which both works commercially and safeguards the welfare of the sow as well as the piglets, and that we do so as quickly as possible so that crates can be consigned to history.

Our country's high animal welfare standards are something to be proud of and we will work continuously to ensure they are maintained and improved. A new statutory welfare code for pigs was laid in Parliament on 9 September 2019 and will come into

force shortly. It sets out the highest standards on how best to keep pigs, using the latest scientific and veterinary advice to safeguard and enhance welfare standards.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### ■ Armed Conflict: Civilians

**Stewart Malcolm McDonald:**

[\[11553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he plans to publish outcome of his Department's review of the Government's strategy on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

The Government is finalising work on the review of its approach to the Protection of Civilians (PoC) in Armed Conflict. We were unable to meet the previously stated publication date as we were required to adhere to the rules governing the publication of documentation in the run up to the December 2019 General Election. We will aim to publish a document outlining the Government's approach to the PoC by the end of April 2020

### ■ Human Rights

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[11492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to promote (a) human rights and (b) secular government throughout the world.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

The UK is committed to protecting and promoting human rights throughout the world through both bilateral and multilateral engagement, by working with and supporting human rights defenders, who play an essential role in upholding and promoting respect for human rights, democratic freedoms and civil society. We regularly raise concerns about countries that do not comply with their human rights obligations at the UN Human Rights Council, the Council of Europe and other multilateral fora; the UK has provided recommendations at every country's Universal Periodic Review since it began in 2008.

Additionally, we work to support democracies across the globe, whether secular or otherwise, as the system that best allows for societies that are more secure, more prosperous, and better equipped to meet the needs of their people. Effective democracy allows people to discuss and debate issues freely, to challenge their governments and to make informed decisions. Through our work with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and others, the UK works to strengthen democracy and to create inclusive, accountable and transparent democratic systems across the globe.

**■ India: Nationality****Mr Steve Baker:**[\[11491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies on international human rights of (a) recent protests against and (b) allegations of mistreatment of people arrested under the Government of India's Citizenship Amendment Act.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions across India are following reports on the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens, as well as the Government of India's response. We raise our concerns with the Government of India where appropriate. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon discussed the Government of India's intent with the CAA, and public response to the legislation, with India's Minister of State for External Affairs on 19 December 2019. Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials also raised the issue with the High Commission of India in London on 14 January.

India has a proud history of inclusive government and religious tolerance. Post-election, Prime Minister Modi promised to continue this under the guiding principles of "together with all, development for all, trust of all". We trust the Government of India will provide reassurances to its citizens who are expressing concern about the impact this legislation may have. We will continue to monitor the situation.

**■ Pakistan: Human Rights****Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[11585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has had discussions with his counterpart in Pakistan on alleged human rights abuses in Balochistan; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

We regularly raise our concerns about the human rights situation with the Government of Pakistan at a senior level. We continue to urge the Pakistani Government to guarantee the rights of all people in Pakistan, particularly the most vulnerable, including women, minorities and children, as laid down in the Constitution of Pakistan and in accordance with international standards.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[11586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has had discussions with his counterpart in Pakistan on the safety of journalists reporting on alleged human rights abuses in Balochistan; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

The UK is committed to the protection of journalists and promotion of media freedom. We regularly raise our concerns about the human rights situation, including on the

freedom of expression, with the Government of Pakistan at a senior level and continue to monitor the situation actively.

In support of our commitment to media freedom and the protection of journalists, the UK and other partners funded the Asma Jehangir Conference held in Lahore in October 2019. This was a two day conference, which provided space for civic discourse and included sessions on media freedom.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**

[\[11587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce the number of people dying due to alleged human rights abuses in Balochistan.

**Mrs Heather Wheeler:**

The UK supports the rights of Human Rights Defenders to carry out their work safely and without fear. We continue to raise human rights as a concern in our dialogue with the Government of Pakistan. In concurrence to these discussions, the British High Commission in Islamabad continues to support civil society and Non Governmental Organisations in lobbying the Pakistani Government to honour in practice its international commitments, including on human rights.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Asthma: Children

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[11549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of hospital admissions for asthma among children.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

The following table shows the finished admission episodes of 0-17-year olds who had a primary diagnosis of asthma, over the last five years. The table refers to activity in English National Health Service hospitals and English NHS commissioned activity in the independent sector.

FINANCIAL YEAR	FINISHED ADMISSION EPISODES
2014/15	28,710
2015/16	27,355
2016/17	27,609
2017/18	26,088
2018/19	25,231

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Digital

Note:

Inpatients are patients who are admitted to hospital and occupy a bed, including both admissions where an overnight stay is planned and day cases. Admissions do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the period.

## ■ Bowel Cancer: Screening

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[11494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to make an assessment of the potential merits of aligning the NHS England bowel cancer referral cut-off point for hidden blood levels in stool samples with the cut-off point in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England has committed, in the NHS Long Term Plan, to modernise bowel cancer screening by lowering the starting age from 60 to 50 and increasing the sensitivity of the faecal immunochemical test. NHS England is currently in the process of planning for delivery of the Long Term Plan commitment to modernise the Bowel Cancer Screening Programmes.

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[11496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to train and recruit more endoscopists to support NHS England in lowering the faecal immunochemical test threshold and diagnosing more bowel cancers at an early stage.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Health Education England Cancer Workforce Plan includes a commitment to invest in a further 200 clinical endoscopists by 2021 to support an increase in capacity for earlier diagnosis. This builds on the commitment to train 200 clinical endoscopists by the end of 2018. As of January 2020, 244 have either been trained or are currently in training. A training support package has been made available by Health Education England in 2017-19 to support the training of some clinical endoscopist trainees.

The final NHS People Plan will be released in early 2020 and will build upon the progress made through the Cancer Workforce Plan. Health Education England is working alongside NHS England and NHS Improvement in the development of the final NHS People Plan, looking at the longer term needs of the workforce.

## ■ Cancer: Diagnosis

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[11497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the level of increase in the NHS workforce required for the Government to meet its target of diagnosing 75 per cent of cancers early by 2028.

**Jo Churchill:**

The NHS Long Term Plan, published in January 2019, renewed the commitment to recruit 1,500 new clinical and diagnostic staff across seven priority professions to deliver cancer services between 2018 and 2021 - improving survival and increasing early diagnosis. Since 2017, there has been a net increase of 833 full-time equivalent staff across the seven priority specialisms.

The final NHS People Plan will be published in early 2020. The plan will build on the progress made through the Cancer Workforce Plan, securing the National Health Service cancer workforce we need for the future. NHS England and NHS Improvement, along with Health Education England, will take targeted action as a part of the final NHS People Plan to ensure that appropriate numbers of specialist cancer workforce staff are in place to meet the Government target.

**■ Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[10323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 while the Government has been considering its response to the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act, published on 6 December 2018.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[10324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 since 6 December 2018.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The information is not available in the format requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

**■ Coronavirus: Quarantine**

**Bill Esterson:** [\[11539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have missed (a) inpatient and (b) outpatient appointments at Arrowe Park hospital since the quarantining of citizens from Wuhan at that location.

**Bill Esterson:** [\[11540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether an assessment was made of the (a) density and (b) risk to the health of the local population when deciding where to quarantine citizens returning from Wuhan.

**Bill Esterson:** [\[11541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, from which budget he plans to allocate funding for the cost of quarantining citizens from Wuhan.

**Jo Churchill:**

We have put in place proportionate, precautionary measures in response to the outbreak of coronavirus in China, informed by the clinical advice of the Chief Medical Officer and national experts in the treatment of infectious diseases. The site in Arrowe Park was chosen because it offers appropriate accommodation and medical support for those coming back from Wuhan while they stay in the North West.

The team at this site is able to ensure that infection control remains at the highest standard and that individuals have access to specialist care if required. 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.

The presence of this group in the North West does not increase the risk to local people. The accommodation facility is solely occupied by the citizens returned from Wuhan. Those providing support at the site are fully trained to ensure that they provide care and assistance in a safe way. Staff are following tried and tested procedures and using the highest safety standards possible for the protection of National Health Service staff, patients and the public.

All services within the hospital are continuing to run as usual, including emergency services, outpatients and planned surgery. The hospital is completely safe for all users and, as always in the NHS, we would strongly urge people to keep to their appointments.

The cost of quarantining citizens from Wuhan will be covered by Departmental budgets.

**■ Dental Health: Children****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[9685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of children aged five and under have dental disease in each local authority area of England.

**Jo Churchill:**

The data is not held in the format requested.

**■ Dental Services: Children****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[9686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the proportion of children under the age of two who have visited an NHS dentist in the last 12 months.

**Jo Churchill:**

The number of children in England, under the age of two who received National Health Service dental care in the previous 12 months as of 30 June 2019 is set out in the following table:

AGE	NUMBER OF CHILDREN SEEN BY AN NHS DENTIST	POPULATION
0	22,485	653,467
1	162,724	674,807
2	272,151	675,045
Total	457,360	2,003,319

Source: NHS Dental Statistics for England, publication series

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-dental-statistics>

#### ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Senior Civil Servants

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**

**[11588]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many times (a) he and (b) his Ministers have met the (i) chief dental officer, (ii) chief medical officer, (iii) chief nursing officer, (iv) chief scientific officer, (v) chief allied health professions officer and (vi) chief pharmaceutical officer in each of the last five years.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and his Ministerial team regularly engage with the Chief Medical Officer as well as the Chief Dental Officer, Chief Nursing Officer, Chief Scientific Officer, Chief Allied Health Professions Officer and Chief Pharmaceutical Officer at NHS England, as part of regular Departmental business.

#### ■ Diabetes

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[11551]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to reduce rates of Type 2 diabetes among adults.

**Jo Churchill:**

The NHS Long Term Plan committed to fund a doubling of the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme (NHS DPP) over the next five years, including a new digital option to widen patient choice and target inequality. The programme supports individuals with non-diabetic hyperglycaemia over nine months to achieve a healthy weight, improve nutrition and increase physical activity, therefore reducing their risk.

The NHS DPP was established in 2016 to support individuals at risk of type 2 diabetes. It is the first national evidence-based diabetes prevention programme of its kind and over 500,000 people have so far been referred into the programme. In 2019 the programme achieved its 2020 NHS Five Year Forward View Target to support 100,000 people a year and over 250,000 people have progressed to the first stage of the programme, since commencement.

**■ Diabetes: Ethnic Groups****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[11552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to reduce rates of diabetes among BAME people.

**Jo Churchill:**

Local health economies are allocated places on the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme (NHS DPP) based on type 2 diabetes prevalence, ethnicity and deprivation in their communities to support equity of access to the programme. In 2019 NHS England re-procured the NHS DPP, taking the opportunity to include an outcome payment for providers when they retain people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) populations on the programme, and to implement digital services, which are likely to be of greater benefit proportionally to BAME people as they are likely to be younger and of working age when they become at risk of type 2 diabetes.

**■ Diabetes: Medical Equipment****Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[9679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the (a) supply and (b) availability of glucose monitoring systems for the treatment of diabetes; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

Recent technological advances and introduction of glucose monitoring systems to the market has brought significant benefits to patients and the way they can live their lives.

As global demand for these systems increases we recognise that it is likely to see temporary constraints on supply emerge from time to time. However, the Department maintains close engagement with industry to minimise the impact of these situations and be assured in any such situations suitable alternative products are available.

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are responsible for commissioning diabetes services for their local populations. This includes technologies such as glucose monitoring devices. CCGs are best placed as clinically led organisations that have both the local knowledge and accountability to make commissioning decisions in the best interests of their patients.

**■ Earwax: Medical Treatments****Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[10325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what regulations exist for private providers of micro-suction procedures for the removal of earwax.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[10326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the training period is for a person to be trained to conduct micro-suction procedures for the removal of earwax.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[10327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to increase the provision of micro-suction procedures on the NHS.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

All private providers of procedures for the removal of earwax are subject to regulation by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), if the procedures are being conducted by, or under the supervision of, a healthcare professional.

All providers registered with the CQC have a duty to ensure they meet the relevant regulations as defined in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. The CQC undertakes periodic inspections of all providers of regulated activities to ensure that the minimum standards of care are being met. The CQC will use its enforcement powers in cases where the standard of care falls below what is expected.

Information about the training period for a person to conduct micro-suction procedures is not held centrally.

Clinical commissioning groups are responsible for ensuring that they provide a comprehensive health service in their area, based on their assessment of local needs. The Department has no national plans to increase the provision of micro-suction procedures.

## ■ Health Services: Veterans

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[11644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to make it easier for veterans to access the health services.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

As part of the Government's continued commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, veterans are able to access National Health Service provided mainstream and bespoke veteran services.

The NHS in England has improved the health services it offers to veterans over the last four years. This includes spending £10.2 million a year on the current Veterans' Mental Health services and commissioning a High Impact Service for those individuals nearing crisis.

To help those accessing health via primary care, NHS England and NHS Improvement working with the Royal College of General Practitioners are rolling out the veteran friendly General Practitioner practice accreditation scheme across England. This scheme, which is intended to help ensure practices are equipped to best care for veterans and their families, has already accredited over 700 surgeries.

There is also the Veterans Trauma Network. Located in 10 major trauma centres across England, works closely with range of partners to provide a complete package of care and treatment to those with service-attributable physical health conditions.

#### ■ **Healthy Start Scheme: Public Consultation**

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:** [\[9618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for a public consultation on healthy start vouchers.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department is considering a range of options for consulting on Healthy Start vouchers. The consultation was postponed until after European Union exit and we are now considering opportunities to improve the Healthy Start Scheme.

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

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[9617\]](#)

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

**Jo Churchill:**

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

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

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

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

#### ■ **Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination**

**Mr John Baron:** [\[11462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ask the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation to make an assessment of the potential merits of a catch-up HPV vaccination programme for boys currently older than 12 to 13 years of age.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) is due to discuss human papillomavirus vaccination at its February 2020 meeting. Usual practice is for draft minutes from JCVI meetings to be available within six weeks of the Committee meeting.

**■ Infant Mortality****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[11548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help reduce the rate of infant mortality.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The NHS Long Term Plan, published in January 2019, has committed to accelerate action to improve maternity and neonatal care services and 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%.

The NHS Long Term Plan includes a range of initiatives with a focus on continuity of carer, reducing pre-term births, and sets out plans to redesign and expand neonatal critical care services to improve the safety and effectiveness of services and experience of families.

**■ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence****Mr Clive Betts:**[\[R\] \[11443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which patient organisations are members of the (a) modifiers considered in decision-making, (b) exploring uncertainty, (c) types of evidence, (d) health-related quality of life, (e) technology specific issues, (f) discounting, (g) cost-minimisation methods (h) costs used in HTA, (i) equality considerations in guideline development, (j) general approach to decision-making and (k) position of technologies in care pathway, NICE methods review task and finish groups.

**Mr Clive Betts:**[\[R\] \[11444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how patient organisations were recruited to the 11 NICE methods review task and finish groups.

**Jo Churchill:**

The following patient groups are currently involved across the programme of task and finish groups. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has advised that it continues to seek further members for the task and finish groups, and a full list of members is still to be finalised.

- Alzheimer's Research UK;
- Breast Cancer Now;
- Cancer52;
- Cystic Fibrosis Trust ;

- Diabetes UK;
- Genetic Alliance UK;
- Leukaemia CARE;
- Multiple Sclerosis Society;
- Muscular Dystrophy UK;
- Myeloma UK;
- Neuroendocrine Cancer UK;
- Prostate cancer UK; and
- Sarcoma UK.

In recruiting patient organisations to the NICE methods review task and finish groups, patients on the methods working group were asked to nominate representatives with a range of experience. Additional representatives were nominated by NICE where particular expertise or input was required. The organisations involved in the task and finish groups cover a broad spectrum of disease areas including cancer, non-cancer and rare diseases.

**Mr Clive Betts:** [R] [11445]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the NICE methods review task and finish groups will take to consult with the wider health charity sector.

**Mr Clive Betts:** [R] [11446]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for the publication of the full consultation on the proposed reforms to NICE methods and processes.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has advised that a six week public consultation on the proposals for changing its methods and processes will take place this summer. We understand that further work on the timetable is in progress and will be communicated in due course.

The wider health charity sector will have an opportunity to review the proposals for change from the task and finish groups during this consultation.

NICE also held a webinar with stakeholders in November 2019 to share how and why health technology evaluation is changing and what it means for patients. The webinar is available on the NICE website at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/about/what-we-do/our-programmes/nice-guidance/nice-technology-appraisal-guidance/changes-to-health-technology-evaluation>

NICE staff have also participated in a number of events to engage with the patient community, including the charity sector and about the methods review.

**■ NHS: Vacancies****Dan Jarvis:** [11498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the vacancy rates are among (a) radiologists, (b) histopathologists, (c) diagnostic radiographers, (d) gastroenterologists, (e) therapeutic radiographers and (f)(i) clinical and (ii) medical oncologists.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department does not hold the information requested.

**■ Obesity: Children****Mr Gregory Campbell:** [11457]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the Childhood Obesity Plan on trends in the rate of obesity among children.

**Jo Churchill:**

The high prevalence of childhood obesity has been decades in the making. It is going to take time to see results.

Through the three chapters of 'Childhood obesity: a plan for action' we are delivering a wide range of measures to help achieve our bold ambition to halve childhood obesity by 2030. We have seen important successes including the average sugar content of drinks subject to the soft drinks industry levy decreasing by 28.8% between 2015 and 2018, and significant investment being made in schools to promote physical activity and healthy eating.

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

[www.unicef.org/media/61356/file/SOWC-2019.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/61356/file/SOWC-2019.pdf)

**■ Radiology: Vacancies****Dan Jarvis:** [11495]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the level of vacancies in diagnostic posts in NHS England.

**Jo Churchill:**

The NHS Long Term Plan, published in January 2019, renewed the commitment to recruit 1,500 new clinical and diagnostic staff across seven priority professions to deliver cancer services between 2018 and 2021 - improving survival and increasing early diagnosis. Since 2017, there has been a net increase of 833 full-time equivalent staff across the seven priority specialisms.

The final NHS People Plan is due to be released in early 2020 and will build upon the progress made through the Cancer Workforce Plan. The plan will take targeted action

to ensure the supply of NHS staff who play vital role in increasing early diagnosis of cancer, including specialist cancer nurses, histopathologists, diagnostic radiographers, screening endoscopists and cancer support workers.

## ■ Smoking

**Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:** [\[9732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS Long Term plan, what steps his Department is taking to help people stop smoking in areas where smoking is more prevalent.

**Jo Churchill:**

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to the provision of tobacco dependence treatment services for all people who smoke who are admitted overnight to hospital, pregnant women and higher risk outpatients by the end of 2023/24.

The NHS Long Term Plan Implementation Framework, published in June 2019, outlines how these commitments will be delivered; encouraging local systems, to develop local plans to tackle health inequalities and best meet the needs of the populations they serve.

## ■ Smoking: Children

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[11461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the prevalence of smoking among 15 year olds.

**Jo Churchill:**

The latest data from the NHS Digital Survey on 'Smoking, Drinking and Drug use among Young People in England' shows that in 2018, 5% of 15-year olds were regular smokers, down from 7% in 2016.

## ■ Suicide: Males

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[11501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy in helping to prevent men aged between 45 and 49 years old from taking their own lives.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The National Suicide Prevention Strategy highlights men, and especially middle-aged and young men, as a group at high risk of suicide. In September 2018, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published the final suicide registrations data for 2018, which showed a significant increase amongst men, following four consecutive years of decreases. These latest figures reinforce why suicide prevention continues to be a priority for this Government.

Experts are clear that we need more data to be able to draw firm conclusions, and we have set up a working group with the ONS, Professor Louis Appleby and other academics to consider the data in more detail.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Action Fraud: Staff

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[11449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff were employed by Action Fraud to investigate crime in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

**Brandon Lewis:**

Action Fraud is the national reporting facility for fraud and cybercrime. Action Fraud does not have any investigatory powers and does not conduct investigations themselves. The role of investigations and enforcement remains with local police forces.

### ■ Counter-terrorism

**Sarah Owen:** [\[11657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to review the effectiveness of the Prevent Strategy.

**Sarah Owen:** [\[11658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Prevent Strategy.

**Brandon Lewis:**

In January 2019, the Government accepted the proposed amendment to include an independent review of Prevent within the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Bill. Royal Assent was given to the Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 on 12 February 2019.

We are currently considering next steps. We will make further announcements about its progress on the prevent review, as soon as possible.

**Sarah Owen:** [\[11665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the Prevent strategy does not unfairly target racial and religious minorities.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Prevent programme is fundamentally about safeguarding and supporting vulnerable individuals to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Prevent is about safeguarding people who are at risk of radicalisation. Prevent does not target a specific faith or ethnic group - it deals with all forms of extremism.

## ■ Crimes of Violence: Young People

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[11652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has made on developing a preventative approach to (a) knife and (b) violent crime involving young people.

**Kit Malthouse:**

As announced in the Queen's Speech we are 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.

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.

We have invested £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 have put in place a landmark review into drug misuse. The first grant round of the Youth Endowment Fund took place in 2019-20. 23 successful projects located across England and Wales will share £17.1m over 2 years.

This Government is also recruiting 20,000 more police officers over the next three years and increasing sentences for violent criminals. We have made it easier for the police to use enhanced stop and search powers and we will introduce a new court order to make it easier for the police to stop and search those who have been convicted of knife crime.

## ■ Drugs: Pop Festivals

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[11649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the provision of drug safety testing at music festivals.

**Kit Malthouse:**

No assessment has been made of the effectiveness of the provision of drug testing at festivals.

## ■ Gangs: Mobile Phones

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[11450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will impose restrictions on pay-as-you-go mobile phones to help tackle the activities of drug gangs; and if she will she make a statement.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The use of pay-as-you-go mobile phones to run drugs supply 'deal lines' is a key feature of the county lines business model. The Government is committed to tackling drugs supply and reducing the viability of the county lines business model.

The recent report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (Both Sides Of The Coin: The Police And National Crime Agency's Response To Vulnerable People In 'County Lines' Drug Offending) recommended that the Home Office should commission a review of the criminal abuse of mobile telecommunications services. We welcome this report and are currently considering all of its recommendations and our response.

**■ Immigration****Steve Double:**[\[9727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the Migration Advisory Committee's January 2020 report on a points-based system and salary threshold for immigration.

**Kevin Foster:**

Following the UK's exit from the European Union and the end of free movement, we will deliver a new points-based immigration system that allows us to attract the brightest and best talent from around the world and works for all parts of the UK.

The independent Migration Advisory Committee published its report on salary thresholds and the points-based system on the 28 January. We will consider carefully its findings and recommendations before taking any final decisions.

We will set out proposals for the future immigration system in the near future.

**■ Immigration: EU Nationals****Alex Norris:**[\[11546\]](#)

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

British citizens will continue to evidence their right to work or right to rent by providing their passport or other acceptable documents, as set out in the published code of practice.

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.

**Royston Smith:**

**[9084]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the EU Settlement Scheme.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The EU Settlement Scheme makes it straightforward for EU citizens and their family members to obtain the UK immigration status they need in order to stay here, guaranteeing their rights in UK law. Those resident here by 31 December 2020 have until 30 June 2021 to apply. Applicants only need to complete three key steps – prove their identity, show that they live in the UK and declare any criminal convictions.

The scheme is working well: according to the latest internal figures, more than 2.8 million applications have been received. The latest published statistics for the scheme are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics>.

## ■ Knives: Crime

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

**[11651]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of resources available to Avon and Somerset police service to respond to knife crime.

**Kit Malthouse:**

This Government is committed to tackling knife crime and serious violence and making our streets safer.

The police funding settlement for 2020/21 sets out the biggest increase in funding for the policing system since 2010. Avon & Somerset will receive an increase of £22.6m, or 7.4%, provided they utilise their full precept flexibility. The force has been allocated 137 additional officers from the 6,000 to be recruited by the end of March 2021, meaning more police on the streets to help tackle violent crime and keep our communities safe.

**■ Police: Injuries****Thangam Debonnaire:**[\[11650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers sustained injuries as a result of attending an incident on their own in 2019.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects and publishes statistics on the number of assaults with injury on constables in England and Wales. These are published quarterly and can be found here:

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

However, it is not possible to separately identify injuries sustained as a result of attending an incident on their own. Furthermore, data on injuries sustained for reasons other than assault are not collected.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Buildings: Fire Prevention****Steve Reed:**[\[5442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 11 July 2019 to Question 274550 on Buildings: Fire Prevention, what direct experimental information the Independent Expert Panel is relying on for their assessment that Aluminium Composite Material poses an unparalleled fire risk compared to other forms of cladding such as High Pressure Laminate.

**Esther McVey:**

The Independent Expert Advisory Panel relied on the preliminary results of the bespoke Non ACM test. The Government is committed to publish the results of all the tests including these. The results of this research will be published shortly. This is to allow for further tests on additional cladding materials including timber cladding and Class D High Pressure Laminates of various thicknesses and manufacturers.

So far, the results show that none of the materials tested present a significant fire hazard like that of Aluminium Composite Material with unmodified polyethylene core and other metal composites.

**■ Buildings: Insulation****Steve Reed:**[\[10387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his oral contribution of 20 January 2020, Official Report columns 24-36, what steps he plans to take to ensure ACM cladding is removed from buildings below 18m in height.

**Esther McVey:**

*[Holding answer 4 February 2020]:* The updated advice for building owners makes clear that 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. Building safety is the responsibility of the building owner. This advice can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-advice-for-building-owners-including-fire-doors>.

**Steve Reed:****[11500]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the £5 million of funding that his Department has allocated to local authorities to undertake identification of the cladding used on buildings in their areas.

**Esther McVey:**

Local authorities have been asked to undertake a data collection exercise on residential buildings 18 metres and over in height to identify their external wall systems. In recognition of the extra work required, £4 million of New Burdens funding was allocated to local authorities in November 2019. Its allocation reflected the distribution of high rise residential buildings across local authorities. The Department is in regular contact with both local authorities and housing associations to support them as they carry out the data collection.

**Steve Reed:****[11599]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the accuracy of the information provided by building owners to local authorities on the cladding and insulation on their buildings.

**Esther McVey:**

Local authorities have been asked to undertake a data collection exercise on residential buildings 18 metres and over in height to identify their external wall systems. The responsibility for collecting and providing information for the data collection lies with local authorities and housing associations. Local authorities have powers under Section 235 of the Housing Act 2004 to require building owners to provide documentation. This may be used to require information on the external wall system of a building. New Burdens funding has been provided to local authorities to offer support for the completion of the External Wall Systems data collection.

**Steve Reed:****[11605]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of enforcement powers available to local authorities to compel building owners to provide accurate information on the cladding and insulation present on their buildings.

**Esther McVey:**

Local authorities have been asked to undertake a data collection exercise on residential buildings 18 metres and over in height to identify their external wall systems. Local authorities have powers under Section 235 of the Housing Act 2004 to require building owners to provide documentation which may include the type of materials on the external wall systems of buildings. Local authorities can pursue enforcement action against buildings that are hazardous through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) regime.

**■ Community Housing Fund**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[8208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 24 January 2020 to Question 3723 on Community Housing Fund, whether he has held discussions with Homes England on (a) the number of outstanding applications to the Community Housing Fund for pre-development revenue funding which were submitted before the December 2019 deadline and (b) what steps Homes England are taking in relation to those applications; and if he will make a statement.

**Esther McVey:**

The management of all applications to Homes England's Community Housing Fund programme is a matter for Homes England. The Community Housing Fund is currently scheduled to close in March 2020. Allocations for future years will be considered at forthcoming Budget and Spending Review.

**■ Evictions**

**Taiwo Owatemi:** [\[11681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to end the use of no fault evictions.

**Esther McVey:**

The Government is committed to enhancing renters' security and improving protections for short-term tenants by abolishing 'no-fault' evictions through repeal of Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988. As announced at Queen's Speech, we will bring forward a Renters' Reform Bill to deliver this commitment

The Government recently consulted on how the new system should operate, once Section 21 is removed. The responses to the consultation will inform the legislation and the Government will respond in due course.

**■ Floods**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:** [\[900655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the progress on recovery of communities affected by flooding in November 2019.

**Jake Berry:**

The Government has been supporting local authorities from the outset of the November flooding. The Flood Recovery Framework was swiftly activated, to ensure that local authorities could implement local recovery schemes. In partnership with BEIS, the framework provides funding for local authorities to help affected residents and businesses to recover from the flooding, as well as reimbursements to local authorities for providing 100 per cent council tax and business rates to these affected properties.

The Government also committed to matching up to £1 million of funds raised by the South Yorkshire Flood Disaster Relief Appeal Fund. We have pledged a further £300,000 of match-funding for other eligible areas affected by recent flooding, where the Flood Recovery Framework has been activated.

Government continues to engage with local partners to wholly understand the local situation and provide adequate support.

**■ Help to Buy Scheme****John Healey:**[\[11448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many and what proportion of Help to Buy, Equity Loan customers are in arrears, in each region of the UK.

**Esther McVey:**

At end November 2019 1,983 Help to Buy customers or 5.8 per cent of the total due to be paying interest fees, were in arrears. The large majority of customers in arrears are only one or two payments behind and this debt very largely reflects short-term administrative issues with direct debit set-up at the start of the interest fee paying period. Total interest fee arrears of £189,000 at end of November 2019 represent 2.7 per cent of total amounts charged to customer accounts.

The number of customer in arrears by region are: East Midlands – 221; East of England – 210; London – 103; North East – 174; North West – 352; South East – 270; South West – 182; West Midlands – 230; Yorkshire and the Humber – 241.

**John Healey:**[\[11451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the reasons why some people have redeemed their Help to Buy equity loans; and what estimate he has made of future redemption rates.

**Esther McVey:**

Of the 221,362 Help to Buy equity loans issued by 31 March 2019, 30,645 or 13.8 per cent had been redeemed by that date. Of the 30,645 full redemptions to 31 March 2019, 49.5 per cent (15,184) occurred via the sale of the home and 50.5 per cent (15,461) via customers remaining in their home and paying off their loan by re-mortgaging or with other funds.

## ■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

**Steve Reed:**

**[10388]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2020 to Question 7630 on High Rise Flats: Insulation, what steps his Department will take to reduce the time period between the removal of combustible cladding and the installation of replacement non-combustible cladding.

**Esther McVey:**

*[Holding answer 4 February 2020]:* We have regular engagement with a named contact from each high-rise residential building with unsafe ACM cladding to ensure progress with remediation is being made. Where building owners are failing to make acceptable progress towards completing remediation, further action will be taken. Building safety is the responsibility of the building owner.

**Steve Reed:**

**[11598]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if his Department will publish a progress report on the building safety programme in relation to cladding and insulation materials on high-rise buildings in England.

**Esther McVey:**

The Department publishes a monthly data release which provides information on the remediation and funding status of ACM clad high-rise residential and publicly owned buildings in England. The latest information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-programme-monthly-data-release-december-2019>.

## ■ Housing: Finance

**John Healey:**

**[11453]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 3 February 2020 to Question 9589 on Homelessness: Finance, how much funding has been allocated to (a) Housing First pilots (b) the London Collaboration Project and (c) each of the smaller pilots and funding streams in 2020-21.

**Luke Hall:**

Funding allocations for 2020-21 for Housing First pilots, the London Collaboration Project and the Offender Accommodation Pilots are currently being finalised.

Regarding the Housing First pilots in 2019-20, the Government has committed £7.9 million to the project.

Regarding the London Collaboration Project, the Government committed £37.8 million to the project in 2018 over 4 years.

Regarding each of the smaller pilots and funding streams:

- As part of the Rough Sleeping Strategy the Government committed £6.4 million to launch the Offender Accommodation Pilots to 2022.

- The £11.2 million Rough Sleeping Impact Bond (SIB) is a payment-by-results programme so payment is made on delivery of outcomes agreed with MHCLG. The programme was established as part of the £50 million Homelessness Prevention Programme. Delivery began in October 2017 and will run until March 2021.

## ■ Mobile Homes: Standards

**Andrew Bridgen:** [\[8293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish his Department's response to the consultation entitled Mobile homes: A fit and proper person test for park home sites.

**Esther McVey:**

We are in the final stages of considering the responses to the “Mobile homes: A fit and proper person test for park home sites” consultation and the engagement with key stakeholders. We expect to publish the response in spring.

## ■ Owner Occupation

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[8174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of households that owned their home in each year since 2015.

**Esther McVey:**

The Department measures the proportion of households in owner occupation in the English Housing Survey.

The proportion of owner occupiers in each year since 2015 can be found in Annex Table 1.1 of the English Housing Survey Headline Report 1018-19. This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2018-to-2019-headline-report>.

After more than a decade of decline, the proportion of 25-34 year olds in owner occupation has increased and there are now almost equal proportions of 25-34 year olds living in the private rented and owner occupied sectors

## ■ Planning Permission

**Louise Haigh:** [\[10408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implementation of the agent of change planning principle at local authority level; and if he will make a statement.

**Esther McVey:**

*[Holding answer 4 February 2020]:* The agent of change principle was introduced relatively recently, through revisions made to the National Planning Policy Framework in 2018. It makes clear that applicants for planning permission should provide suitable mitigation where the operation of an existing business or community facility

could have a significant adverse effect on development proposed nearby. The implementation of planning policy is, in the first instance, a matter for local planning authorities through their development management and monitoring arrangements.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### ■ Developing Countries: Drugs

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[10469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether tackling the (a) production and (b) trafficking of illegal drugs are conditions of the allocation of Official Development Assistance to developing countries.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Government takes the issue of tackling the illegal production and trafficking of drugs seriously. UK Aid currently support developing nations to strengthen their law enforcement and criminal justice capability, enabling them to tackle serious organised crime more effectively.

Most evidence concludes that attaching conditions to aid does not bring about policy changes that governments were not already prioritising. Instead DFID works closely with partner governments to make a positive, evidence-based case for change.

Our assessment of a government's commitment to reducing poverty, achieving the Global Goals for Sustainable Development, along with respecting human rights and other international obligations is used to inform our overall strategy for engagement in all countries in which DFID has a bilateral aid partnership.

### ■ Developing Countries: Nutrition

**Alex Norris:**

[\[11594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2020 to Question 6789 on Developing Countries: Nutrition, what the timescale is for his Department's adoption of the OECD policy marker for nutrition into its reporting systems.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

DFID is already taking steps to report using the nutrition policy marker. This includes ensuring there is guidance on how it should be used and to ensure it is applied consistently. DFID will start to report on the nutrition policy marker through the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System for 2020 aid spending onwards.

**Alex Norris:**

[\[11595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2020 to Question 6788 on Developing Countries: Nutrition, what steps his Department is taking to maximise the impact of its investments in (a) agriculture, (b) social protection and (c) climate adaptation on people's health and nutrition.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

DFID invests in regular reviews and evaluations of its programmes and we use this information – as well as evidence generated by others – to inform the design and evolution of our investments.

This approach is being used to ensure new programmes in areas such as agriculture, social protection and climate adaptation have a positive impact on nutrition and health.

We are also continuing to invest in research – particularly in relation to agriculture and food production – to build evidence on the most effective approaches.

**■ UN Commission on the Status of Women****Dan Carden:**[\[11630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans his Department has to attend the 64th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2020; and what his Department's objectives are for that meeting.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

Gender equality is a top development priority for the UK. Girls and women across the world are held back by systematic and entrenched inequality and discrimination.

This year's UN Commission on the Status of Women is particularly important: 2020 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the foundational international agenda for women's empowerment agreed in 1995, and five years since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. DFID will be attending the event.

Our engagement with CSW will reinforce the UK's bold leadership on gender equality, in the face of an increasingly coordinated and effective opposition to women's rights globally.

DFID is working across government and with like-minded partners to drive forward our international priorities for girls and women including: negotiating a progressive and forward-looking Political Declaration, championing the critical role of civil society in collaborating with governments, the UN and other key actors, and standing firm against the attempted rollback of the international framework.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ International Military Services: Debts Written Off****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[9751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department keeps a record of the total amount of sovereign debt owed to the UK related to the Ministry of Defence owned company IMS Ltd or its predecessor that has been written off since 1970.

**Conor Burns:**

No sovereign debt has been written off by UK Export Finance in respect of IMS Ltd.

**■ Overseas Trade: Pressure Groups****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[11625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what meetings she has had with organisations and activists focusing on trade justice in the last 12 months.

**Conor Burns:**

Since 24 July 2019 my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade has not had any meetings focusing on trade justice.

**■ Trade Agreements****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[11606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for International Development on including civil servants from that Department in negotiations on free trade agreements.

**Conor Burns:**

Trade negotiations will be a cross-Government effort. Negotiating teams will be led by a Department for International Trade (DIT) chief negotiator and will include experts from other departments and arm's length bodies. Typically, a trade negotiation will involve teams of differing sizes and expertise depending on their complexity and the interests of the UK and our partners.

The Department for International Development's Trade for Development Team are co-located within DIT and the two departments have worked closely together to deliver continuity agreements over the past year. This arrangement will continue now that the UK has left the EU, ensuring that international development is a priority for the UK's independent trade policy.

**■ Trade Agreements: Environment Protection****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[11624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure (a) social and (b) environmental protections are included in any future free trade agreements.

**Conor Burns:**

We are clear that more trade does not have to come at the expense of workers or the environment. We are exploring all options in the design of future trade and investment agreements, taking into account responses to the Government consultation exercise.

## ■ Trade Agreements: Parliamentary Scrutiny

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[11583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps she has taken to help enable parliamentary scrutiny of future free trade agreements.

**Conor Burns:**

The Government is committed to ensuring that our trade policy is transparent and subject to appropriate scrutiny. Parliament will have the opportunity to scrutinise both UK-EU and UK-Rest of World negotiations. My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade made a Written Ministerial Statement on 6 February, HCWS101, setting out the Government's proposed approach to free trade agreements (FTAs) with priority partners including the USA, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. This set out that we will publish negotiating objectives accompanied by an initial economic assessment, as well as the Government response to the public consultation. There will be further statements made in the coming weeks, setting out our plans for FTAs with global partners.

## ■ Trade Agreements: Sustainable Development

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[10777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department plans to undertake sustainability impact assessments of trade deals agreed after the UK leaves the EU.

**Conor Burns:**

*[Holding answer 5 February 2020]:* As set out in the February 2019 Command Paper, 'Processes for making trade agreements after the United Kingdom has left the European Union', at the end of negotiations the Government will publish a full impact assessment of a new free trade agreement alongside the full treaty text.

## ■ UK Export Finance: Audit

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[9748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 28 January 2020 to Question 7291, how many inspections of the records of recipients of UK Export Finance support have been conducted over the last five years, by country of operation and year.

**Conor Burns:**

UK Export Finance (UKEF) undertakes due diligence which is appropriate and proportionate to the circumstances of each case at all relevant stages of a transaction.

In the last five years UKEF has additionally used its rights to inspect records, for example:

- Working with the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) investigation into Airbus, to obtain assurance that Airbus was reforming its compliance procedures.

- In 2019 - UKEF worked with a partner bank led investigation into the use of monies drawn down under a UKEF facility.
- in 2018 - a review of bank compliance with obligations under UKEF's working capital and bond support schemes.
- In 2015 and 2016 – undertook 4 external compliance reviews of 7 cases where UKEF support was being considered or had been provided in Africa, the Middle East and South America.

## ■ UK Export Finance: Finance

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[9749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much UK Export Finance support has been granted in each of the last five years, by country of operation.

**Conor Burns:**

UK Export Finance's (UKEF) maximum liability on all new business for each of the last five financial years is listed below.

2018/19	£6.8 BILLION
2017/18	£2.5 billion
2016/17	£3.0 billion
2015/16	£1.8 billion
2014/15	£2.7 billion

UKEF publishes details of its support for exports, including destination markets, in its Annual Report and Accounts published annually.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-export-finance-annual-reports-and-accounts>.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Debts: VAT

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[9643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he is taking steps to compensate debtors who have been charged VAT on debts under the incorrect application of the Taking Control of Goods (Fees) 2014 Regulations.

**Chris Philp:**

As the recipient of High Court enforcement services, which are subject to VAT, creditors are liable for VAT on the fees charged by High Court Enforcement Officers. Creditors who are VAT registered are in turn able to recover VAT from HMRC, subject to the normal rules.

Under the Taking Control of Goods legislation, however, there are circumstances where this cost may be recovered from a debtor as part of enforcement costs. The Ministry of Justice is in the process of clarifying the circumstances and manner in which a cost equivalent to VAT may be recovered from a debtor and intends to publish guidance on this shortly.

## ■ Legal Aid Scheme: Low Incomes

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[11534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of access to free legal support for people on low incomes.

**Wendy Morton:**

A full review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 was published in February 2019.

In response to these findings and alongside the review, the Legal Support Action Plan was published to address the key challenges identified and outline the steps the government will be taking to improve the way people are supported as they experience legal problems.

In addition to a series of support pilots to test early forms of intervention that stop people's problems from escalating, the government will invest up to £5m into a Legal Support Innovation Fund to explore the role technology can play in helping people identify and resolve their legal issues. We are also enhancing the support on offer to litigants in person by providing a further £3m of funding over the next two years, ensuring that those representing themselves in court understand the process and are better supported through it.

Access to justice is a fundamental right and government is committed to ensuring that everyone can get the timely support they need to access the justice system.

## ■ Prison Officers: Safety

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[11533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the safety of prison officers in Durham prison and young offenders institute.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Prison Officers are some of our finest public servants, and we do not underestimate the challenges faced by everyone working in prisons. We are committed to making prisons a safe place to work and providing prison officers with the right support, training and tools to empower them to do their jobs.

Prisoners who assault staff should feel the full force of the law. We are working closely with the CPS to ensure prosecutions of prisoners who assault staff along with the strongest possible punishment being imposed. The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act increases sentences for those who assault prison officers.

We are rolling out prison officers body worn cameras, police-style restraints and PAVA incapacitant spray to prison officers to help them do their job more safely.

We have recruited more than 4,300 new prison officers over the last two years and we're investing £2.75 billion to transform the estate, to make prisons safer and cut crime behind bars.

## ■ Prisons: Crimes against the Person

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[11635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a zero-tolerance policy in relation to (a) violence and (b) abuse against prison staff.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Violence against our hardworking staff is completely unacceptable and will never be tolerated, which is why we have doubled the prison sentence for anyone who assaults prison officers. We are working closely with the CPS to ensure the successful prosecutions of prisoners who assault staff along with the strongest possible punishment being imposed.

We are rolling out prison officers body worn cameras, police-style restraints and PAVA incapacitant spray to prison officers to help them do their job more safely.

More widely, we are spending £100 million to bolster prison security, clamping down on the weapons, drugs and mobile phones that fuel violence and crime behind bars. This will fund tough airport-style security, body scanners and phone-blocking technology.

## ■ Prisons: Industrial Health and Safety

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[11632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many health and safety reporting systems each prison has in operation; and if he will make a statement.

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[11633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the efficacy of health and safety reporting systems in prisons.

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[11634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of prison governors holding monthly health and safety meetings with representatives of staff unions.

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[11636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps he has taken to improve health and safety in prisons.

**Lucy Frazer:**

In line with requirements, all prisons provide accident report forms/books placed throughout each establishment.

Details from accident reports are uploaded to a central health, safety and fire application which enables accident investigations to be coordinated and recorded. This also provides analysis to highlight risks and implement control measures.

Regular health and safety committee meetings are statutory and held at least quarterly at both prison and national level. Invites to attend these are issued to union representatives. Prison unions also have the opportunity to raise any issues of concern with governors in consultation meetings which occur every month.

The Government is investing £2.75 billion to make our jails safer - creating 10,000 additional places and stepping up security to cut crime and violence behind bars.

**Sexual Offences****Sarah Owen:**[\[10472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that judges are adequately trained on how to deal effectively with cases involving sexual assault and rape.

**Chris Philp:**

Judicial training is the responsibility of the Lord Chief Justice under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 section 7 2(b) and is exercised by the Judicial College. Since 2002, all judges who hear criminal cases involving serious sexual offences are required to attend specialist training provided by the Judicial College. Listing, which is a judicial function, ensures that cases are allocated to those who are authorised and trained. The Judicial College is also exploring with the senior judiciary what additional training should be made available to judges who may have to hear cases involving allegations of rape and serious sexual assault within family proceedings.

**LEADER OF THE HOUSE****Department for Exiting the European Union: Closures****Valerie Vaz:**[\[11512\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, which Government Department is responsible for answering the Exiting the European Union Select Committee following the closure of the Department for Exiting the European Union.

**Valerie Vaz:**[\[11514\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, which Government Department is responsible for answering written questions previously within the remit of the Department for Exiting the EU; and if he will make a statement.

**Valerie Vaz:** [11515]

To ask the Leader of the House, which Government Department is responsible for answering oral questions previously within the remit of the Department for Exiting the EU; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

As my Right Hon Friend the Prime Minister set out to the House

(<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-02-03/debates/20020316000004/DepartmentForExitingTheEuropeanUnionClosure>) the Department for Exiting the European Union (DEEU) closed on 31 January. Those of its functions which are still required have been transferred to relevant government departments. The administration of the closure of DEEU is being carried out by the Cabinet Office.

The Government department responsible for answering written questions will depend on the subject of the question. Questions can be transferred between departments to ensure that they are answered by the relevant department. The Government department responsible for answering oral questions will depend on the subject of the question.

Once the Exiting the European Union Select Committee members are nominated and it is fully constituted, the Committee may wish, in the first instance, to take up any questions it has with the Cabinet Office.

**Valerie Vaz:** [11513]

To ask the Leader of the House, whether the Government's Taskforce Europe will be subject to direct parliamentary scrutiny following the closure of the Department for Exiting the European Union; and whether he plans to allocate parliamentary time to debate the scrutiny of that body.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

Taskforce Europe is a unit within the Prime Minister's Office. Parliamentary scrutiny will be exercised in the usual way for the Cabinet Office and the Prime Minister, including through responding to written and oral questions. Questions on specific issues arising from the negotiations with the European Union will be answered by the department or departments most directly responsible; including the Cabinet Office.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Capital Investment: Northern Ireland

**Ben Lake:** [11591]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the Answer of 24 January 2020 to Question 5512 on Capital Investment: Northern Ireland, if he will publish an explanatory memorandum on the conditions that accompany the financial package.

**Julian Smith:**

The conditions that accompany the financial package have been published in the New Decade, New Approach agreement, Annex A.

This funding package is accompanied by a number of conditions designed to ensure that UK Government funding contributes to increasing overall fiscal and budgetary sustainability in Northern Ireland's public finances.

**SCOTLAND**■ **Scotland Office: Reviews**

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [\[10313\]](#)

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

**Mr Alister Jack:**

My Department are not currently undertaking any formal reviews on matters of public policy or delivery.

**SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS AUTHORITY**■ **Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority: Pay**

**Sir Bernard Jenkin:** [\[11429\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, what the mean salary is of the permanent staff of IPSA.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

In 2018-19, the mean salary of the permanent staff at IPSA was £38,930.92.

**TRANSPORT**■ **A68**

**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[11672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will follow the recommendation of the Transport for the North and include the A68 in the major route network.

**George Freeman:**

The Major Road Network was developed in 2017. At the time the A68 did not meet the qualifying criteria used. However, the roads which comprise the Major Road Network are reviewed periodically.

## ■ Airports and Ports

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[11454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to increase capacity for (a) freight and (b) passenger traffic at (i) each UK ferry port, (ii) Heathrow and (iii) Gatwick; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

UK ports are successful private enterprises, with a long history of private sector investment, that operate on a commercial basis delivering the capacity and capability required to serve their markets. As such the Government does not routinely intervene to increase capacity for either freight or passenger traffic. The Government is supportive of ambitions for Port growth, and has set out its vision and ambitions for the future of the British maritime sector in the *Maritime 2050: navigating the future*.

This Government has over the last 12 months, provided significant investment worth £30 million to our national ports infrastructure, including the Ports Infrastructure Resilience and Capacity fund which has been granted to ensure that UK ports are not only prepared for growth, but they are ready and eager for it.

The Airports National Policy Statement was designated as government policy in June 2018 following a vote in the House of Commons. It sets out that there is a need to increase airport capacity in the South East of England by 2030 by constructing one new runway and that this need is best met by the Northwest runway scheme at Heathrow Airport. It requires that at least 740,000 air transport movements are delivered at Heathrow per annum.

The Northwest runway scheme would enable Heathrow to nearly double its current freight capacity, it would also lead to better domestic connectivity by securing at least 14 domestic routes.

The Government is also supportive of airports making best use of their existing capacity, subject to the assessment of the merits of individual applications, including consideration of their environmental impacts. The Government set out its policy position for the South East of England in *Beyond the Horizon: The future of UK aviation: Making best use of existing runways*.

These policies make clear that the government considers that potential airport growth applications should be considered under the appropriate planning regime and should take careful account of all relevant considerations, particularly economic and environmental impacts and proposed mitigations.

## ■ East Coast Rail Franchise

**Andy McDonald:**

[\[10390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2019 to Question 6129, whether the Discretionary Rejection Panel's decision to commence the review of Stagecoach and Virgin Trains' passport on the Virgin Trains East Coast

franchise five weeks in advance of the franchise termination in June 2018 constitutes a precedent which will be followed for future franchise terminations.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The timing of any future Discretionary Rejection Panels that the Department holds will be based on the specifics of the franchise in question

■ **High Speed 2 Railway Line**

**Greg Smith:**

[\[9795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps HS2 Ltd takes to assess barn owl activity on sites under construction as part of High Speed Two enabling works.

**Paul Maynard:**

HS2 Ltd has undertaken extensive wildlife surveys across the route, which includes barn owls. In addition, HS2 Ltd has a Barn Owl Mitigation Plan (developed after consultation with wildlife groups including the RSPB) to ensure that best practice guidelines are followed to minimise any adverse effects of HS2 on barn owls and maximise potential benefits.

■ **Leamside Railway Line**

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[11505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the feasibility of expanding (a) rail and (b) light rail services on the former Leamside railway line.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

As part of its Continuous Modular Strategic Planning work on long term strategy for the rail network, Network Rail is assessing what is required to make sure that the rail network between York and Newcastle meets the needs of passengers and freight users in the coming decades. This study is considering the potential role of reinstatement of the Leamside line in meeting those needs, including for local connectivity through extension of the Tyne and Wear local conventional rail or Metro network. It will make recommendations for further option development.

To help communities across the country, the Government has pledged £500m to start reopening lines closed following the Beeching report. I am inviting Honourable Members to work with local authorities and community groups to come forward with proposals to explore. I have set out how this should be done and my officials are providing further guidance and assistance. We will consider the proposals received and expect to make a further announcement on development funding in autumn this year.

**■ M1: North East****Paul Blomfield:** [\[11531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will made an assessment of the safety of the smart motorway section of the M1 from junction 32 to junction 35a.

**George Freeman:**

Any death on our roads is one too many. We want our roads to be as safe as possible.

That is why the Secretary of State asked the Department to carry out an evidence stocktake to gather the facts about the safety of smart motorways and make recommendations. The Department will present the findings of the stocktake shortly.

While I would not want to pre-judge the results of that work, what I can say is that we will continue to prioritise improving safety – making conditions safer for everyone on our roads. The Roads Minister will write to you as soon as the stocktake is completed to answer your specific question.

**■ Official Cars: Exhaust Emissions****Catherine West:** [\[11647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to decarbonise Government owned or operated vehicles.

**George Freeman:**

The Government Car Service (GCS) is a division of the central Department for Transport (DfT). With the support of DfT, GCS is replacing its fleet with Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) as vehicles become due for replacement. Currently 48% of the GCS fleet is now either battery electric, petrol/electric hybrid or hydrogen, and we are actively looking at options to accelerate this transition.

**■ Railways: Death****Rachael Maskell:** [\[10401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many dead bodies have been found on railway tracks in each of the last 10 years.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department for Transport does not hold the information requested.

The Rail Safety and Standards Board publishes annual statistics on the number on fatalities and injuries related to the railways. This annual report can be found here:

<https://www.rssb.co.uk/Standards-and-Safety/Improving-Safety-Health--Wellbeing/Monitoring-safety/Safety-Performance-Reports>

## ■ Railways: Tickets

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[9758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps is he taking to ensure that the roll-out of smart ticketing on the rail network does not exclude people without access to the necessary technology from purchasing rail travel.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Smart tickets are making it more convenient to buy and use rail tickets. We have invested £80m and worked with industry so that smart tickets are accepted at stations across almost all the network. Passengers who do not have access to technology may continue purchasing paper tickets. We have not asked operators to withdraw these and will consider withdrawal only when we are satisfied that all rail users can continue to purchase train tickets as readily as they can do today.

## ■ Rolling Stock: Procurement

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[9612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that rolling stock procurement delivers economic benefits to (a) the North East and (b) the UK.

**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.

## ■ South Eastern Rail Franchise

**Sir David Evennett:**

[\[9596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the timetable is for announcing the successful bidder of the South Eastern Rail Franchise.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Following the decision to cancel the South Eastern Franchise competition, the Department is developing a solution to deliver benefits to passengers as quickly as possible. In the immediate term, the Department is considering the most appropriate route to contract the franchise after 1 April 2020. This could be in the form of either another Direct Award with the incumbent operator, or the transfer of the franchise to the Operator of Last Resort. A decision, that puts passengers interests first, will be made in March.

**■ Transport: Schools****Jonathan Edwards:** [\[11485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the effect of the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility (PSVAR) Regulations on school transport in Carmarthenshire.

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

The Government supports the creation of an inclusive transport network, and enabling disabled children to travel to school alongside their non-disabled peers is important for making this a reality.

Officials engage regularly with colleagues at the Welsh Government, as well as other stakeholders, concerning the application of the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) and the impact of exemptions issued, on home to school transport services across Great Britain.

**TREASURY****■ Agriculture: Sustainable Development****Duncan Baker:** [\[11660\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether sustainable farming activities under the Agriculture Bill will be deemed active practices and benefit farmers for the purposes of VAT and inheritance tax legislation; and if he will make a statement.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC will consider the tax implications of any detailed proposals.

**■ Beer: Excise Duties****Hilary Benn:** [\[9591\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to continue the existing scheme for small breweries' relief.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

As announced at Budget 2018, the Treasury is reviewing the Small Brewers Relief (SBR) scheme. Further announcements about the review will be made in due course.

**■ Business Growth Fund****Chi Onwurah:** [\[11536\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much and what proportion of the Business Growth fund was under spent in each of the last three years.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The Business Growth Fund was established in 2011 as an investment company with financial backing from Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds, RBS and Standard Chartered. It is

independent of government and its investments are a commercial matter for the Fund.

## ■ Capital Gains Tax

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[11458\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure people selling residential properties which may lead to a potential capital gains tax payment are aware of the changes to that tax which will be introduced from 6 April 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

From 6 April 2020 anyone disposing of a UK residential property on which a chargeable gain arises, such as on a second home or a rental property, will be required to report and pay any capital gains tax due within 30 days of the completion of the sale.

HMRC recognise that this is a significant change and are starting to roll out a comprehensive communications plan, so that people understand what the changes mean for them and what they need to do.

## ■ Electronic Publishing: VAT

**Tracy Brabin:** [\[11597\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of removing VAT from sales of eBooks.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government keeps all taxes under review, including VAT.

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

## ■ Employment: Taxation

**Martyn Day:** [\[11565\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the review of changes to off-payroll working rules will recognise that freelance contractors are not employees.

**Martyn Day:** [\[11566\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the ongoing review of changes to off-payroll working rules will estimate the additional tax revenue that will be raised as a result of the proposed changes.

**Martyn Day:** [\[11567\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether any estimate of potential additional tax revenues that may be accrued as a result of changes to off-payroll working rules will also

account for the loss of tax revenues should contractors stop working, move abroad or go out of business due to the proposed changes.

**Jesse Norman:**

The off-payroll working rules are designed to ensure that an individual who works like an employee, but through their own limited company, pays broadly the same Income Tax and National Insurance contributions as other employees. Employment status is not a matter of choice but depends on the facts and actual working practices of an engagement.

From April 2020, following the roll-out of the reforms to the off-payroll working rules to large and medium sized organisations in all sectors, clients will be required to assess a contractor's employment status and determine whether they fall within the scope of the rules. HMRC's Check Employment Status for Tax (CEST) digital service was developed in conjunction with tax specialists, contractors and other stakeholders, and is available to help organisations apply the off-payroll working rules correctly.

The Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) published in July 2019 sets out HMRC's assessment that the reform to the off-payroll working rules is expected to raise around £3 billion by 2024, and is not expected to have any significant macro-economic impacts. The TIIN can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2YTbOaA>. Furthermore, independent research conducted by IFF Research and Frontier Economics following the implementation of the 2017 public sector reform showed the reform had not resulted in significant disruption to the sector, or to its use of contingent labour.

■ **Financial Services: Insurance**

**Nick Smith:**

**[10348]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to raise professional indemnity cover limits which independent financial advisers are required to have to practise.

**John Glen:**

The requirement for Independent Financial Advisers (IFAs) to hold adequate Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) cover is an important element in protecting consumers who receive financial advice. The Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) handbook sets out the various requirements around the PII cover that IFAs are required to hold.

There is no intention to raise the minimum PII cover levels for IFAs at present. The minimum limit of indemnity of PII is specified by FCA rules and European legislation such as the Insurance Distribution Directive (IDD), depending upon the type of IFA. The UK is no longer a Member State of the European Union. However, both the UK and the EU are committed to a period of transition – lasting until the end of 2020 – where common rules for businesses and consumers will remain in place, including the IDD.

Many IFAs are in scope of the IDD, because they undertake life assurance type transactions. IDD limits are reviewed every five years via regulatory technical

standards and were last reviewed in November 2019 and the revised limits, which have increased slightly, will apply to IFAs that are IDD firms from 12 June 2020.

The FCA are continuing work to examine consumer harms, and potential claims that may arise from certain business activities carried out by IFAs; and these findings may prompt a further examination of the minimum levels of indemnity in the future.

## ■ Inheritance Tax

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[11460\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the report from the Office of Tax Simplification entitled Inheritance Tax Review, second report: Simplifying the design of Inheritance Tax, published July 2019.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Office of Tax Simplification have produced two reports on inheritance tax on both the administration of the tax and its policy design. The Government will consider the recommendations made, and as is customary for tax policy, any changes to inheritance tax will be delivered through a future fiscal event.

## ■ Mortgages

**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[11659\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans the Government has to provide further support to mortgage prisoners.

**John Glen:**

A mortgage prisoner is defined by the FCA as an existing customer that may be experiencing harm because they are unable to switch to a better deal. The Government is aware that these borrowers have been in a difficult and stressful situation. We have worked closely with the FCA to implement their rule change to remove the regulatory barrier that has prevented some customers from switching.

It is expected that lenders will need approximately 6 months to make the necessary adjustments and system changes, after which they will be able to use the modified affordability assessment for borrowers looking to re-mortgage.

I have written to Stephen Jones, Chief Executive Officer of UK Finance to outline my expectation that as many of its members as possible should move quickly to offer new deals to borrowers that are eligible to switch under the new FCA rules.

## ■ Pensions: Advisory Services

**Nick Smith:** [\[10347\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to introduce penalties in respect of negligent independent financial advice on transferring pensions.

**John Glen:**

The Government works closely with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the independent financial services regulator, to ensure that the market for pensions advice works fairly.

The FCA already has considerable powers to take enforcement action where consumers are harmed by poor financial advice and where an FCA authorised firm has breached FCA rules. The FCA has the power to impose a range of sanctions, including fines on firms or individuals, requirements to carry out redress exercises, and bans on firms or individuals. There are currently no plans to introduce further penalties in respect of negligent pensions transfer advice.

If the FCA suspects that criminal fraud has been committed, the FCA will refer the case to the relevant authorities for further action to be taken. The FCA can also take action through the courts against firms or individuals who carry out regulated activity without authorisation.

The FCA have recently consulted on a number of interventions in the Defined Benefit (DB) pensions transfer market to reduce the number of consumers transferring their pensions when it is not in their best interests. The FCA are in the process of considering the feedback they have received and plan to publish a Policy Statement on the outcome in the first quarter of 2020.

In addition, the Department for Work and Pensions are introducing legislation, through the Pension Schemes 2019-20 Bill, to allow regulations to be made to stipulate the destinations and circumstances under which a pension scheme member will have a right to transfer their pension savings to another pension scheme. This will further protect members from pension scams by helping trustees of occupational pension schemes ensure transfers are made to safe and not fraudulent schemes.

**■ Tobacco: Smuggling****Kenny MacAskill:****[9789]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much money was accrued by (a) his Department and (b) HMRC in compensation as a result of (i) court orders and (ii) other recovery and penalty mechanisms in relation to illicit tobacco in each of the last 10 years.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

Due to the way HMRC records and retains information it is not possible to provide a complete response to the question. HMRC regularly reports its performance against the strategy to tackle illicit tobacco and the latest published data can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-tobacco-smuggling-2013-to-2014-outputs/outputs-for-april-2016-to-march-2018>. HMRC do not hold the requested information relating to court orders but the Ministry of Justice may be able to provide this data.

## ■ Valuation Office Agency

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[11679\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what impact assessment his Department undertook in advance of the decision to close regional offices of the Valuation Office Agency.

**Jesse Norman:**

The VOA's People and Locations strategy has been designed to ensure that the Agency is more efficient and more effective, by using fewer resources. The VOA will be moving into fewer offices, in strategic locations. This balances affordability and geographic coverage, and also recognises the impact on staff. As part of this process the VOA has carried out Equality Impact Assessments, which are reviewed.

By consolidating into a smaller number of higher-quality buildings, the VOA will be able to support its staff in adapting to a more flexible way of working, delivering services to its customers in a more cost-effective and sustainable way.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[11680\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) valuations, (b) valuation challenges and (c) successful valuation appeals were made to the Valuation Office Agency in each year since 2014-15.

**Jesse Norman:**

Valuation for rating purposes is not a self-assessment process. The Valuation Office Agency assesses the Rateable Value of non-domestic properties in England and Wales at each revaluation, using information provided by occupiers/owners.

The period since 2014-15 covers two Rating Lists, the 2010 list (effective from 1 April 2010) and the 2017 list (effective from 1 April 2017).

Official Statistics showing the numbers of challenges against 2010 Rating List valuations in **England and Wales** in the years since 2014-15 can be found in Table 1.1 at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/845226/Challenges\\_and\\_changes\\_against\\_the\\_2010\\_local\\_rating\\_list\\_England\\_and\\_Wales\\_September\\_2019.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/845226/Challenges_and_changes_against_the_2010_local_rating_list_England_and_Wales_September_2019.xlsx)

The numbers of challenges against 2017 Rating List valuations in **Wales** in the years since 1 April 2017 can be found in Table 1.1 at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/845225/Challenges\\_and\\_changes\\_against\\_the\\_2017\\_local\\_rating\\_list\\_Wales\\_September\\_2019.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/845225/Challenges_and_changes_against_the_2017_local_rating_list_Wales_September_2019.xlsx)

The system for challenging valuations in **England** changed in 2017 with the introduction of Check, Challenge, Appeal (CCA). The numbers of challenges against 2017 Rating List valuations in **England** in the years since 1 April 2017 can be found in Table 2.1 at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachm](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment)

[ent\\_data/file/845223/Checks\\_challenges\\_and\\_changes\\_against\\_the\\_2017\\_local\\_rating\\_list\\_England\\_September\\_2019.xlsx](#)

Appeals are made to the independent Valuation Tribunal Service. Statistics on Appeals can be found on their website at <https://www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk/about-us/publications-policies/vts-statistics/>

## ■ Voluntary Work: Young People

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[9735\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of relaxing the ring-fenced budgets for the National Citizen Service for Supplementary Estimates 2019-20.

**Rishi Sunak:**

As part of Spending Review settlements, some spending is subject to specific policy ring-fences. If so, departments may not move money across the ring-fence, except as specified in the Spending Review settlement. The budgets for the National Citizen Service are subject to such a policy ring-fence. Her Majesty's Treasury keeps all such ring-fences under review.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Asbestos: Compensation

**Afzal Khan:** [\[9778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the equalisation of payments made to people with asbestos-related diseases and their dependants under the Pneumoconiosis etc (Workers' Compensation) Act 1979.

**Afzal Khan:** [\[9779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made on the equalisation of payments under the 2008 Diffuse Mesothelioma Scheme to people suffering from asbestos-related diseases and their dependents.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The 1979 Act and 2008 Act schemes were designed to pay those who suffer from eligible diseases at a higher rate than is paid to their dependents. It is right that available funding is prioritised where it is needed most, that is to people living with these diseases.

### ■ Disability Living Allowance

**Neil Coyle:** [\[11577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people receiving disability living allowance over state retirement age have had their lifetime awards reviewed in each of the last six years.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

This information is only available at disproportionate cost to DWP as the Department does not have a business requirement for this information to be retained.

**Food Banks****Chris Stephens:****[R] [9079]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will place in the Library a copy of the evidence review undertaken by her Department on the drivers of food bank use, that was commissioned in 2018; and if she will make a statement.

**Will Quince:**

The literature review on the drivers of food bank use will be published in due course; at which point it will be placed in the Library.

**Maternity Allowance****Steve McCabe:****[10295]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2020 to Question 5322 on Maternity Allowance, what the average working day turnaround was for Maternity Allowance claims from (a) 16 to 31 December 2019 and (b) 1 to 15 January 2020.

**Mims Davies:**

The service level agreement for processing a Maternity Allowance claim is 30 working days.

The average working day turn-around for Maternity Allowance claims for the periods quoted are:

- a) From 16 to 31 December 2019 – 30 working days
- b) From 1 to 15 January 2020 – 30 working days

**Maternity Pay****Caroline Nokes:****[9656]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to tackle the disparity of treatment between self-employed and employed people in relation to statutory maternity pay.

**Mims Davies:**

The differences in the parental benefits available to the self-employed reflect that this group generally have more flexibility over how to plan their workload and time off. This is reflected in the additional flexibility seen in Maternity Allowance (when compared to Statutory Maternity Pay).

**■ Personal Income: Kingston upon Hull****Layla Moran:** [\[11661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to undertake a universal basic income pilot in Kingston upon Hull; and whether she has made an estimate of the timescale for the implementation of such pilots.

**Will Quince:**

The Department for Work and Pensions does not have any plans to undertake a pilot of universal basic income (UBI).

**■ Personal Independence Payment****Chris Stephens:** [\[11547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants' personal independence payments have been stopped as a result of a claimant being unable to attend an assessment in (a) Glasgow South West constituency, (b) Scotland and (c) the UK.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The latest available data on Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Award Review and Change of Circumstances clearances can be found in the published data tables "Data tables: PIP experimental statistics on planned award review and change of circumstance registrations and clearances to October 2019" available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-independence-payment-april-2013-to-october-2019>

This data is broken by type of clearance including claims that were disallowed due to failing to attend an assessment and is broken down by various geographical areas, including region and parliamentary constituency within Great Britain. This data can be found in Tables 2B (i), 2B (ii), 2C (i) and 2C (ii) of the published statistics above.

Please note that whilst we hold data on the number of Award Reviews disallowed for failing to attend an assessment, we do not hold recorded data on the reason that a claimant failed to attend an assessment.

Please note that the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) is only responsible for benefits in Great Britain. Social security benefits, including PIP, are a devolved matter in Northern Ireland and your questions regarding PIP in Northern Ireland should be directed to the Department of Communities in Northern Ireland.

**■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations****Marion Fellows:** [\[9726\]](#)

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

**Justin Tomlinson:**

*[Holding answer 3 February 2020]:* Please see below the percentages of audited files for each supplier, Independent Assessment Services (IAS) and Capita by audit grade, for 2018 and 2019 as requested. Note the numbers are unpublished.

<b>IAS (L1&amp;3)</b>	<b>JAN-18</b>	<b>FEB-18</b>	<b>MAR-18</b>	<b>APR-18</b>	<b>MAY-18</b>	<b>JUN-18</b>	<b>JUL-18</b>	<b>AUG-18</b>	<b>SEP-18</b>	<b>OCT-18</b>	<b>NOV-18</b>	<b>DEC-18</b>
A	62%	65%	70%	63%	62%	64%	66%	64%	65%	65%	61%	60%
AF	19%	17%	16%	15%	18%	17%	17%	18%	15%	14%	16%	22%
AA	13%	13%	10%	15%	13%	13%	13%	15%	16%	17%	20%	15%
U	6%	6%	4%	7%	7%	6%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	2%
<b>Capita (Lot 2)</b>	<b>Jan-18</b>	<b>Feb-18</b>	<b>Mar-18</b>	<b>Apr-18</b>	<b>May-18</b>	<b>Jun-18</b>	<b>Jul-18</b>	<b>Aug-18</b>	<b>Sep-18</b>	<b>Oct-18</b>	<b>Nov-18</b>	<b>Dec-18</b>
A	60%	62%	64%	64%	65%	67%	68%	63%	64%	66%	59%	64%
AF	17%	16%	15%	15%	13%	14%	15%	21%	20%	17%	20%	21%
AA	18%	17%	17%	16%	17%	15%	15%	15%	14%	15%	19%	12%
U	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%
<b>IAS (L1&amp;3)</b>	<b>Jan-19</b>	<b>Feb-19</b>	<b>Mar-19</b>	<b>Apr-19</b>	<b>May-19</b>	<b>Jun-19</b>	<b>Jul-19</b>	<b>Aug-19</b>	<b>Sep-19</b>	<b>Oct-19</b>	<b>Nov-19</b>	<b>Dec-19</b>
A	65%	64%	65%	66%	69%	63%	62%	62%	58%	65%	66%	69%
AF	18%	18%	15%	16%	15%	17%	15%	18%	17%	15%	14%	14%
AA	14%	14%	17%	16%	13%	15%	19%	15%	20%	15%	16%	14%
U	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%	3%
<b>Capita (Lot 2)</b>	<b>Jan-19</b>	<b>Feb-19</b>	<b>Mar-19</b>	<b>Apr-19</b>	<b>May-19</b>	<b>Jun-19</b>	<b>Jul-19</b>	<b>Aug-19</b>	<b>Sep-19</b>	<b>Oct-19</b>	<b>Nov-19</b>	<b>Dec-19</b>
A	65%	62%	66%	67%	66%	62%	62%	63%	65%	67%	69%	69%
AF	15%	16%	16%	13%	17%	17%	16%	17%	14%	15%	14%	10%
AA	17%	19%	15%	17%	14%	15%	18%	17%	16%	14%	13%	17%
U	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	6%	4%	3%	6%	4%	3%	4%

## ■ Poverty: Children

**Rachel Hopkins:**

[7285]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support Luton Borough Council to reduce child poverty in Luton South constituency.

**Will Quince:**

The Government is committed to delivering a sustainable long-term solution to child poverty, including reforming the benefits system so that it supports employment and higher pay. Tackling child poverty requires an approach that goes beyond targets, which focus on income alone, to one that addresses the root causes of poverty and disadvantage and improves long-term outcomes for families and children.

The approach we are taking goes beyond focus on income alone. We are seeing to address the root causes of poverty and improve long-term outcome from families and children with a particular focus on parental employment and children's educational attainment – the two areas that we know can make the biggest difference.

Through our network of Jobcentres, the Department is taking a range of action to support disadvantaged groups, working closely with employers and partners in their local community to provide opportunities to help them move closer and into employment. Examples from Luton include employability and confidence building courses for lone parents, a Domestic Abuse forum involving a range of local stakeholders including the Samaritans and Women's Aid in Luton, hosted by the Jobcentre; and support for people with English as a second language, including a bespoke course specifically aimed at women.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: British Nationals Abroad

**Wera Hobhouse:**

[11641]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what welfare support she plans to make available to UK citizens living in the EU who are no longer entitled to that support from EU member states after the transition period.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

UK nationals living in an EEA state or Switzerland by 31 December 2020 are covered by the Withdrawal Agreement. Under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, EU rules on social security coordination will continue to apply to them for as long as they remain in scope of the Withdrawal Agreement.

UK nationals who are currently being paid a pension or benefit by an EEA state or Switzerland will need to check with the organisation that pays them to find out what they will need to do to continue receiving any benefits or pension after 31 December 2020. For example, they may be required to register their residence. Country specific guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/overseas-living-in-guides#eu-and-other-countries-affected-by-brexit>

The rules for UK nationals who are not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement and move to live in an EEA state or Switzerland from 1 January 2021 will depend on the outcome of negotiations with the EU and may change.

### ■ Social Security Benefits: Vulnerable Adults

**Lilian Greenwood:** [\[10364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit claimants assessed as vulnerable had their payments stopped after two failed safeguarding visits from her Department in each year from 2010.

**Lilian Greenwood:** [\[10365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit claimants assessed as vulnerable received (a) one and (b) two safeguarding visits from her Department in each year from 2010.

**Lilian Greenwood:** [\[10367\]](#)

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

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 4 February 2020]:* DWP Visiting undertakes safeguarding visits for customers who are deemed to be vulnerable in relation to benefit claims.

DWP cannot provide figures exclusively for payments stopped in relation to safeguarding visits as the Department does not hold this information centrally and to do so would incur disproportionate costs.

### ■ Universal Credit

**Chris Stephens:** [\[10759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2020 to Question 5465, if she will publish the value of deductions to universal credit payments by parliamentary constituency in the latest period for which figures are available.

**Will Quince:**

The requested information surrounding the value of deductions to Universal Credit payments by parliamentary constituency is shown in the attached table.

**Attachments:**

1. Deductions to Universal Credit payments [Deductions table.xlsx]

**Chris Stephens:** [\[10760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of staff given responsibility for (a) monitoring and (b) responding to messages on universal credit claimants' online journals.

**Will Quince:**

In December 2019 we had 4,598 Case Managers, 12,711 Work Coaches and 1048 UC Decision Makers delivering Universal Credit. All of these job roles will use the journal to correspond with claimants as just one part of their varied job roles, and Case Managers will use their dashboards to see their cases that have a journal entry waiting to be viewed. Not all journal entries will require a response.

**Stephen Timms:** [\[9581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has plans to reduce the level of universal credit deductions for claimants with court fines.

**Stephen Timms:** [\[9582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of universal credit deductions on the (a) cost of living and (b) health and well-being of former rough sleepers.

**Stephen Timms:** [\[9583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Justice on the rate of universal credit deductions for claimants with court fines.

**Will Quince:**

The Department's deductions policy strikes a fair balance between a claimant's need to meet their financial obligations and their ability to ensure they can meet their day-to-day needs. Deductions for court fines are based on rates provided in legislation. Since October 2019, Universal Credit deductions are a maximum of 30% of a claimant's standard allowance down from 40% previously.

We recognise the importance of safeguarding the welfare of claimants who have incurred debt, so last resort deductions can be applied to protect vulnerable claimants from eviction and/or having their fuel supply disconnected, by providing a repayment method for arrears of these essential services.

The Department engages a range of stakeholders, including welfare rights organisations, to ensure we understand the effect Universal Credit has, which helps us to design improvements. In addition, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues, including the Secretary of State for Justice, on a range of economic and social issues.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ NHS: Expenditure

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[4739\]](#)

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

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 28 January 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Edward Argar:**

The information requested is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. [PQ4739 PQ4749 CCG aggregate spend 2019-20 formatted.docx](#)
2. [pq4739 4740 table.docx](#)

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[4740\]](#)

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

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 28 January 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Edward Argar:**

The information requested is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. [PQ4739 PQ4749 CCG aggregate spend 2019-20 formatted.docx](#)
2. [pq4739 4740 table.docx](#)

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### DEFENCE

#### ■ Ministry of Defence Votes A Annual Estimate 2020-21

**Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):**

[\[HCWS99\]](#)

The Ministry of Defence Votes A Estimate 2020-21, will be laid before the House on 6 February 2020 as HC 33. This outlines the maximum numbers of personnel to be maintained for each Service in the Armed Forces during Financial Year 2020-21.

### ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

#### ■ January Agriculture and Fisheries Council

**Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (George Eustice):**

[\[HCWS98\]](#)

The UK did not attend the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels on 27 January 2020.

The UK Government decided that until the 31st of January UK Ministers and officials only attend EU meetings where the UK has a significant national interest in the outcome of the discussions.

### FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

#### ■ Transfer of the Cemeteries Endowment Fund to BACSA

**Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mrs Heather Wheeler):**

[\[HCWS97\]](#)

My Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

I announce today the transfer of the Cemeteries Endowment Fund ('the Fund') from the High Commission in New Delhi to the British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia ("BACSA"), a UK based charity.

The Fund was originally established in India in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century for the purpose of maintaining European graves and cemeteries. Any such cemeteries maintained by the Government of India could be endowed by friends or relatives of deceased persons and such endowments were credited to the Fund.

After India gained independence in 1947, arrangements were made for the UK Government, through the High Commission, to take responsibility for the maintenance of the European graves and cemeteries. A parliamentary undertaking, in the form of answers to parliamentary questions in both Houses, was given on 15 March 1949, that the UK Government would be responsible for European cemeteries in India – and had

been since April 1948. The Government of India authorised transfer of the Fund to the High Commission in June 1949 and the Secretary of State for the Commonwealth Office inherited responsibility for the Fund.

Over recent years, it has become apparent that administration of the Fund requires dedicated resources. For this reason, the High Commission requested that the Fund be transferred to BACSA, a UK-registered charity (charity no. 273422) which would be able to use the Fund more effectively in accordance with the Fund's original purpose. BACSA has as its aim to promote the preservation, conservation and recording of former European cemeteries and isolated monuments in South Asia and elsewhere in Asia. It also seeks to promote education in the history of all places in South Asia and elsewhere in Asia associated with European residence, and in particular the territories formerly administered by the East India Company and the British Government of India. Its objectives therefore coincide with those of the Fund.

Following appropriate consultation across Whitehall and with BACSA, the Fund was transferred to BACSA on 15 March 2019 to the sum of £19,047.64.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Local Government Finance

**Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick):** [\[HCWS102\]](#)

Today I laid before the House the 'Local Government Finance Report (England) 2020–21', the 'Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increases (Principles) (England) Report 2020-21' and the 'Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increases (Alternative Notional Amounts) (England) Report 2020-21', which represent the final local government finance settlement for 2020-21.

This year's settlement delivers an increase in Core Spending Power from £46.2 billion in 2019-20 to £49.2 billion in 2020-21. In real terms this is a 4.4% increase and the largest year on year real terms increase in a decade.

The local government finance settlement relies on collaboration. My Ministers and I have engaged extensively with the sector, holding meetings with representative groups, with councils, and with MPs. During this process, we received over 200 representations from organisations or individuals, and these have been carefully considered before finalising the settlement. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all colleagues in the House, and council leaders and officers, who have contributed to the consultation process.

This year's settlement is a strong and well-balanced package, that delivers significant extra resources to the priority areas of adult and children's social care, whilst protecting other vital service areas.

### **Extra social care resources**

This Government is serious about protecting the millions of people that rely upon adult and children's social care in their daily lives. To do this, this settlement will allow local

authorities to access an additional £1.5 billion for social care. This comprises £1 billion of additional grant – for both adult and children’s social care – and a proposed 2% council tax precept for adult social care, which will enable councils to access a further £500 million. £150 million of the additional grant will be used to equalise the distributional impact of the adult social care council tax precept.

These additional resources sit on top of the existing social care package, which will continue at 2019-20 levels, and mean that local authorities will have access to almost £6 billion of dedicated funding across adult and children’s social care in 2020-21.

### **Core settlement resources**

The local government finance settlement for 2020-21 will also protect other key services by providing a uniform percentage uplift in core settlement resources, in line with the change in the small business rates multiplier. Vital services are also protected by continuing other key grants from 2019-20.

### **Council tax**

Local authorities will continue to be able to increase council tax in 2020-21 by a core principle of up to 2%, without holding a local referendum, with a bespoke council tax referendum principle of 2% or £5, whichever is higher, for shire district councils, and a £10 Band D council tax referendum principle for all police authorities.

Authorities with adult social care responsibilities will be able to increase their council tax by a further 2% on top of the core principle, without holding a local referendum, to be spent exclusively on adult social care.

The proposed referendum principles strike a balance between giving local authorities the flexibility to address service pressures, and not overburdening council tax payers with excessive increases which do not have local support.

The 2020-21 final local government finance settlement will mean that the expected average council tax increase for 2020-21 will be the lowest since 2016.

### **New Homes Bonus**

The Government will be making a new round of allocations of the New Homes Bonus for 2020-21, amounting to £907 million.

As part of this, I am committing an additional £7 million to maintain the growth baseline for payments at 0.4%. We will make no legacy payments on these new allocations, but the Government will make legacy payments on allocations made in earlier years which are due to be paid in 2020-21.

In order to ensure that the New Homes Bonus is focussed on incentivising homes where they are needed most, I am announcing that the Government will consult on the future of the housing incentive in the Spring. This will include moving to a new, more targeted approach that rewards local authorities where they are ambitious in delivering the homes we need.

### Rural Services Delivery Grant

We will continue to recognise the extra costs of delivering services in rural areas and propose to maintain last year's Rural Services Delivery Grant of £81 million, which is the joint-highest paid to date. It will be distributed using the same methodology as in 2019-20, which allocated funding to the top quartile of local authorities on the 'super-sparsity' indicator.

### Conclusion

This settlement acts as the foundation for a robust and resilient future for local government finance, delivering on calls for certainty and stability from local government. For those who deliver key front-line services, it provides significant extra resources where they are needed most.

I look forward to debating this topic with all MPs next week.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Free Trade Agreements with the Rest of the World

**Secretary of State for International Trade (Elizabeth Truss):**

[\[HCWS96\]](#)

On Monday the Prime Minister set out our approach to negotiations with the European Union. This statement sets out the Government's proposed approach to negotiations with other priority partners. Further details will be made available to parliament as the negotiating process develops.

Having left the European Union the UK now faces an opportunity to re-emerge after decades of hibernation as a campaigner for global free trade. According to the IMF, 90% of global GDP growth is forecast to come from outside the EU over the next 5 years. The UK needs to be ready to capitalise upon this. As set out in our manifesto, this Government has ambitious goals for British trade. We aim to secure free trade agreements with countries covering 80% of UK trade within the next three years. We will drive a hard bargain and, as with all negotiations, we will be prepared to walk away if that is in the national interest. Independence will allow the UK to become a truly Global Britain, championing free trade and showing the UK is a force for good.

A key priority is to deepen trade and investment relationships with like-minded partners, starting with the USA, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. These bilateral negotiations will also be a potential stepping-stone to joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. Regarding the UK-USA FTA the Government will be setting out negotiating objectives in due course, alongside a response to the public consultation as well as an initial economic assessment. This will be the first in a series of statements setting out our plans for FTAs with global partners.

By striking free trade agreements with partners across the globe, the UK has the opportunity to increase prosperity in all parts of our country. In the negotiations the

Government will strike a tough bargain and seek an agreement in the national interest that removes tariffs and cuts red tape to support British businesses and benefit British consumers, as well as setting out cutting edge rules that will help underpin our world-class digital economy. Any agreement must respect the autonomy and sovereignty of both parties. In its negotiations, the Government will be acting on behalf of the whole UK family and our overall principle is to ensure all parts of the UK benefit from any deal. In addition, nothing in any agreement will undermine the Government's commitment to tackling climate change.

The Government has been clear that when we are negotiating trade deals, the NHS will not be on the table. The price the NHS pays for drugs will not be on the table. The services the NHS provides will not be on the table. We will not agree measures which undermine the Government's ability to deliver on our manifesto commitments to the NHS.

As we committed to in our manifesto in all of our trade negotiations, we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards.

Over the last three years, the UK has developed a world-class trade negotiation function, bringing the best talent from international organisations, leading law firms, business, civil society and government. The Government has the capacity to conduct all of its priority negotiations.

Further information on some of the priority areas of the UK-US FTA, is set out below.

#### Goods Market Access

The FTA will secure comprehensive, far-reaching and mutually beneficial tariff reductions (taking into account sensitive UK products) which will increase access to the US market for UK businesses, and lower prices and increase choice for UK consumers. This market access will be further supported through the FTA by efficient, predictable, and transparent customs procedures, with a reduction in technical barriers to trade. The FTA will aim to remove measures that currently restrict UK trade and to prevent their imposition in future, while upholding the safety and quality of products on the UK market

#### Trade Remedies

An FTA with the US will enable the UK to protect its interests when threatened by unexpected surges in imports of goods or unfair trading practices, while making the appropriate commitments to transparency, due process and proportionate use of trade remedies. It will also remove trade distorting tariffs.

#### Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS)

The UK will maintain its own autonomous sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regime to protect public, animal and plant life and health and the environment, reflecting its existing high standards. We will not compromise on our high animal welfare and food standards.

#### Sustainability

The Government will maintain and seek to advance the UK's world-leading environmental, labour and anti-corruption standards, including to support domestic climate ambition and UK low carbon industries, technology and innovation.

### Trade in Services

The FTA with the US will provide a boost for our world-leading services sectors including in key UK export sectors such as financial services, telecommunications, professional and business services, and transport services. The Government will make it easier for professionals from across the UK to do business in the US, (including by easing business travel), securing ambitious commitments to ensure fair competition and consolidating and improving market access for UK services exporters.

### Mutual recognition of Professional Qualifications

An FTA with the US will encourage the mutual recognition of UK and US professional qualifications, by strengthening regulatory cooperation, so that qualification requirements do not become an unnecessary barrier to trade.

### Investment

The US and UK are each other's biggest investors, creating high-skilled jobs and growing our economies. At the end of 2018, British companies had investments worth £295.1bn in the US.

The Government will address market access barriers and ensure UK investors operating in the US have the same level of protection and standards of treatment they receive in the UK.

### SMEs

Over 31,600 small British businesses are already exporting goods to the US. The Government will seek to include a specific SME chapter in the US FTA to support and further stimulate this trade.

### Digital Trade

The Government will set global best practice by future-proofing the agreement to take account of changing technology and developing areas of the economy. For example, the Government will secure cutting-edge provisions which maximise opportunities for digital trade across all sectors of the economy.

### Intellectual Property

Recognising our two world-leading Intellectual Property regimes, the US FTA will secure provisions that support UK creative and innovative industries, whilst maintaining consumer access via an effective and balanced global framework.

### Government Procurement

To maximise access for UK companies to government procurement opportunities at US federal and state level the UK will seek additional market access outcomes that go beyond the level set in the World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement.

## ■ Trade Policy Update

**Secretary of State for International Trade (Elizabeth Truss):** [\[HCWS95\]](#)

This morning the Department for International Trade launched a public consultation to inform the development of the UK's new independent tariff policy.

Now that Britain has left the EU, it will use its new powers to make its mark internationally as a champion of free trade and a bulwark against the forces of protectionism that exist in the world. The Government's message is that free trade is good for all nations, is right for the UK and will deliver benefits for British businesses, households and consumers.

As part of our new approach, the Government is developing a new UK Most Favoured Nation (MFN) tariff schedule which will enter into force on 1st January 2021. This will be a bespoke regime known as the UK Global Tariff (UKGT). It will be designed specifically for the UK economy and will replace the EU's Common External Tariff which is currently applied on imports into the UK. It will ensure UK businesses compete on fair terms with the rest of the world whilst benefitting households through greater choice and lower prices.

This is the first time in almost 50 years that the UK will be able to set its tariff rates on imported goods. This consultation represents an opportunity for every business, every person and every civil society group, in every part of the UK, to have their say. We are calling on businesses, consumers and other groups to help us shape this new instrument of trade policy for the UK.

To inform the development of this bespoke regime, the Government is seeking views on a series of potential amendments as the UK moves away from the EU's Common External Tariff. These are:

- simplifying and tailoring the tariff;
- removing tariffs on key inputs to production;
- removing tariffs where the UK has zero or limited domestic production.

The Government will also seek views through a series of events across UK regions and Devolved Administrations to engage with businesses, business representatives, consumers, civil society groups, associations and other interested individuals and organisations.

The Government previously developed the Temporary Tariff Regime (TTR) in 2019. The Temporary Tariff Regime was developed for a possible scenario in which the UK left the EU without a deal. Now that the Withdrawal Agreement has been approved by both the EU and the UK, this scenario is no longer relevant.

The consultation will close on 5th March 2020 and once the Government has carefully considered available evidence, including the consultation responses, an announcement on the UK's new Global Tariff schedule will follow in due course.

## ■ Update on Independent Investigation into Export Licences for Saudi Arabia Issued in Breach of Court Undertaking

**Secretary of State for International Trade (Elizabeth Truss):**

[\[HCWS101\]](#)

I gave a statement to Parliament on 26 September 2019 on matters related to the breaches of the Undertaking given to the Court of Appeal on 20 June 2019 by the then Secretary of State that we would not grant new licences for export to Saudi Arabia of arms and military equipment for possible use in the conflict in Yemen, and the broader commitment to Parliament, also on 20 June 2019, that we would not grant new licences for exports to Saudi Arabia or its Coalition partners which might be used in the conflict in Yemen.

The UK Government is deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The Government fully supports the peace process led by the UN Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, and urges the parties to engage constructively with this process. A political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and to address the worsening humanitarian crisis.

In relation to the breaches, I announced that the Permanent Secretary had commissioned, on my behalf, a full independent investigation to establish the precise circumstances in which these licences were granted, establish whether any other licences have been granted in breach of the Undertaking to the Court or contrary to the Parliamentary Statement, and confirm that procedures are in place so that no further breaches of the Undertaking can occur.

This investigation, led by an independent senior official (the Director General of Policy Group in the Department for Work and Pensions), has now concluded. The report identifies the circumstances in which these licences were granted and assesses the interim procedures which were put in place to ensure no further breaches can occur. It is noted that no further breaches of the Undertaking or the Parliamentary Statement have been identified since I updated the House.

The report notes the steps that have been taken to ensure that there have been no further breaches. In particular, the report states that the *“new processes established address the shortcomings that led to the breaches... The process has a greater iterative and real-time involvement, with the weekly meeting process providing more opportunities for information to be updated and changes in circumstances to be reflected in decision-making. There is greater senior involvement and oversight which should strengthen assurance.”*

The interim process has led to improved, timely information sharing across government and there is now a clear process in place to ensure that any changes in circumstances in the conflict in Yemen are addressed. Further steps have already been taken forward, including increased governance and risk management within the Export Control Joint Unit (ECJU), to meet the issues identified in the report.

I will be considering whether any further action is necessary to ensure the continuance of robust and rigorous operations and assurance processes more widely within ECJU.

I will be placing copies of the report in the Libraries of the House.

## TREASURY

### ■ Breathing space

**The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):**

**[[HCWS100](#)]**

The government is establishing breathing space to help those individuals in problem debt. Today, the government is updating the House in order to reaffirm our commitment to implementing this in 2021, as planned, and to provide figures from the impact assessment which is also published today.

Breathing space will provide a period of up to 60 days, where people in problem debt would be protected from enforcement action by their creditors and the accrual of further interest and fees on their debts.

This protection will help those in problem debt move towards a sustainable debt solution. The protections from enforcement action, fees and charges will encourage more people to seek out debt advice and to seek it earlier. It will provide them with the time and space to work with their debt adviser in an environment free from creditor pressure, in the knowledge their debt won't escalate due to further interest or charges. This will help give people the time and space they need to choose the right debt solution for them.

To ensure that breathing space works for everyone, people receiving treatment for mental health crisis will be able to enter breathing space without seeking advice from a debt adviser. They will be able to remain in breathing space for the period of their crisis treatment and a further 30 days.

In its impact assessment, the government forecasts;

- 700,000 people to be helped by breathing space in the first year, rising in time to over a million a year.
- 25,000 – 50,000 a year are expected to receive a breathing space via a specific route designed to support those in mental health crisis treatment.

The government's impact assessment can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/breathing-space-impact-assessment>