



Daily Report

Monday, 24 February 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 24 February 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:56 P.M., 24 February 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	3	FOREIGN AND	
ATTORNEY GENERAL	3	COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	35
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	3	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	35
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	5	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	40
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	5	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	40
CABINET OFFICE	9	HOME OFFICE	55
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	9	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	55
DEFENCE	11	HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION	63
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	11	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	63
■ International Military Services: Finance	13	HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	64
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	13	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	64
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	13	■ Buildings: Fire Prevention	78
EDUCATION	21	■ Buildings: Insulation	78
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	21	■ High Rise Flats: Fires	79
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	29	■ Youth Services: Finance	79
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	29	INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	80
		■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	80

■ Developing Countries: Education and Family Planning	81	WALES	107
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	82	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	107
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	82	WORK AND PENSIONS	107
JUSTICE	86	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	107
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	86	WRITTEN STATEMENTS	117
■ Reoffenders: Sentencing	91	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	117
■ Suspended Sentences	91	■ Response to consultation on cleaner domestic burning of solid fuels and wood	117
TRANSPORT	91	HOME OFFICE	119
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	91	■ Relaxation of licensing hours to mark the 75th anniversary of Victory over Japan (VJ) Day	119
TREASURY	97		
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	97		

Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Jane Hunt:

[2009]

To ask the Attorney General, what steps her Department is taking to (a) review and (b) reduce the backlog of cases in Leicestershire awaiting assessment by the CPS for more than 28 days.

Michael Ellis:

The Government is committed to swifter justice.

In Leicestershire during 2019, the average number of calendar days between first submission of a case to the last decision made to charge was under 26 days. This includes cases where the police were required to submit further evidence prior to a decision to charge.

The senior management of CPS East Midlands meet weekly to consider cases awaiting charge, prioritising the most sensitive and serious cases and ensuring Prosecutors have sufficient capacity to provide charging advice to police on a daily basis. At weekends, CPS Direct support CPS East Midlands by providing charging advice. Furthermore, Crown Advocates can be diverted from other work to complete charging cases as required.

The national CPS recruitment campaign will increase prosecutorial capacity significantly.

Work with the police to improve police file quality is ongoing, with the aim of reducing the number of submissions rejected at basic administrative triage and requiring action plans.

Philip Davies:

[526]

To ask the Attorney General, whether there is a legislative basis for the 28-day limit on appealing an unduly lenient sentence meaning something other than 28 days.

Michael Ellis:

A referral to the Court of Appeal for consideration of a sentence as unduly lenient must be made within 28 days of the date of the sentence as set out in Schedule 3, Paragraph 1 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. The 28 day statutory time limit is absolute; the statute provides no power to extend the time limit or to apply for leave to refer out of time.

An unduly lenient sentence case can only be taken forward if either myself or the Attorney General has approved action (on the basis of a complete prosecution file and proper legal advice) and an application has been filed with the Court of Appeal before the expiry of the statutory 28 day deadline. Tracey Hanson emailed the Attorney General's office, requesting a review of a potentially unduly lenient

sentence. The email was received by my office at 8.41pm on the 28th day and therefore was received after the close of court business. By the time my office received the email it was impossible to act on it and it was too late to file a referral with The Court of Appeal.

Philip Davies:

[527]

To ask the Attorney General, what the basis was for his authority to refuse the application of Tracey Hanson in relation to a potentially unduly lenient sentence; and if he will make a statement.

Michael Ellis:

A referral to the Court of Appeal for consideration of a sentence as unduly lenient must be made within 28 days of the date of the sentence as set out in Schedule 3, Paragraph 1 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. The 28 day statutory time limit is absolute; the statute provides no power to extend the time limit or to apply for leave to refer out of time.

An unduly lenient sentence case can only be taken forward if either myself or the Attorney General has approved action (on the basis of a complete prosecution file and proper legal advice) and an application has been filed with the Court of Appeal before the expiry of the statutory 28 day deadline. Tracey Hanson emailed the Attorney General's office, requesting a review of a potentially unduly lenient sentence. The email was received by my office at 8.41pm on the 28th day and therefore was received after the close of court business. By the time my office received the email it was impossible to act on it and it was too late to file a referral with The Court of Appeal.

Steve Reed:

[757]

To ask the Attorney General, how many prosecutions there have been under the Modern Slavery Act since 2015 for cases involving child victims.

Michael Ellis:

The CPS records all offences charged under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and within those, the offences that involve child abuse are flagged. Since the Act came into force and up to the end of September 2019, the CPS has prosecuted 59 Modern Slavery Act offences involving child abuse.

Cases referred to the CPS by the police as modern slavery are often prosecuted under other legislation. The CPS has prosecuted 209 defendants for human trafficking offences involving child abuse, from 2015/16 to September 2019.

There is no indication of the number of individual defendants prosecuted for these offences or the final outcome of the prosecution proceeding or if the charged offence was the substantive charge at the time of finalisation. It is often the case that defendants will be prosecuted for more than one offence in the same set of proceedings.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Mr Laurence Robertson:****[1159]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of capacity of the UK manufacturing sector to produce electric heavy goods vehicles.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Figures released by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), showed the UK manufactured 78,270 commercial vehicles in 2019; 18,420 of these were Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) manufactured by Leyland Trucks.

Alongside industry, we have committed approximately £1 billion over 10 years up until 2023. With this funding, the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC) will research, develop, and commercialise the next generation of low carbon technologies to keep the UK at the cutting edge of low carbon automotive innovations.

The Government continues to work alongside industry to unlock the significant opportunity to support the electrification of the HGV sector through the Faraday Battery Challenge and Driving the Electric Revolution.

Ms Harriet Harman:**[14935]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate she has made of the number of households living in fuel poverty in (a) Camberwell and Peckham constituency and (b) the London Borough of Southwark.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Parliamentary constituency data can be found in table 5 of the Fuel Poverty Sub-regional tables at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-2019>. Data for Southwark can be found in table 2 of the same set of tables.

Ms Harriet Harman:**[14936]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to end household fuel poverty.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Improving energy efficiency is the best long-term solution to tackle fuel poverty. The Energy Company Obligation, worth £640m per year, provides energy efficiency upgrades to low income and vulnerable households. Over 2 million households have received measures since the scheme began in 2013.

Tenants living in energy inefficient properties are some of the most at risk of fuel poverty. The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards now require landlords spend up to £3500 improving their properties to energy efficiency Band E before renting them out.

In addition to support to improve energy efficiency the Warm Home Discount provides support to more than 2 million low income and vulnerable households each year

through a £140 rebate. Over £2.7 billion has been provided by the scheme over the last nine years.

Our 2020 Fuel Poverty Strategy will set out further detail around our future plans to tackle fuel poverty.

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[14947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if her Department will support a referral to the Competition and Markets Authority of alleged unfair and anti-competitive practices by some owners and operators of residential park home sites in England; and if she will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to tackling consumer rip-offs and bad business practices. The Department is engaging with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to follow up the evidence gathered by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on park homes regarding alleged unfair practices. The Government plans to consult with the Consumer Protection Partnership to review this evidence and agree what actions can be taken. The Consumer Protection Partnership is a network bringing together consumer bodies covering all aspects of consumer protection and includes the Competition and Markets Authority as a member.

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[14949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what definition of scale-up businesses her Department uses; and what steps she is taking to support those businesses.

Paul Scully:

We define scaleups using the OECD definition of high growth, i.e. an enterprise with a cumulative average annual growth in employees or turnover greater than 20 per cent per annum over a three-year period, and with more than 10 employees at the beginning of the period.

Scaleups play an important role in the UK economy: they generate around 20% of all turnover in the economy and around 15% of employment, and Scale Ups can play a role in driving innovation. The number of scaleups has risen overall by 25% over the 5 years to 2018 to 33,860.

We have taken a number of actions to create the right conditions for businesses to achieve their potential to grow to scale, including:

- Supporting over £7bn of finance to over 91K smaller businesses through the British Business Bank (as at June 2019).
- improving the support available through local Growth Hubs to help businesses to overcome the challenges they face in scaling up; and
- using cutting edge data science techniques to identify high potential firms and connect them the right help at the right time.

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[14951]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on providing compensation to people with petrol, diesel and hybrid vehicles ahead of the ban on the sale of new versions of those vehicles in 2035; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

My rt. hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced on the 4th February that we are consulting on bringing forward the end to the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible, as well as including hybrids for the first time. We are consulting on the Committee on Climate Change recommendation that any new vehicles sold after the phase out date must be zero emission at the tailpipe. The proposals relate to new cars and vans - owners of existing petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans will still be able to use these vehicles and buy and sell them on the used market. The purpose of the consultation is to inform our understanding of what the measures will need to be will need to be to enable the transition and minimise the impacts on businesses and consumers across the UK, building on the significant demand and supply side measures already in place.

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[14952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to increase the amount of electricity generated from hydro sources; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government acknowledges the valuable contribution of hydropower to the UK energy mix over many decades, including at times when other renewables do not generate.

Hydropower accounts for almost 2% of total electricity generation in the UK. Studies in Scotland, England and Wales indicate that there is a maximum remaining technical potential of around 1.5GW for small-scale hydro across these countries, with the majority in Scotland. Economic and environmental constraints mean that in practice the viable remaining resource is less than 1GW or 1% of total electricity generation capacity.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[15049]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the viability of kaolinite-rich clay mining in Wales.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department has not assessed kaolinite-rich clay deposits in Wales, though I would encourage my officials, alongside Welsh Government representatives, to meet with private sector investors who have commercially viable proposals for such activity. This is the case for any investment proposition in the UK, including Wales.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:**[1951]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to (a) record and (b) name businesses that breach national minimum wage rules as a result of unpaid work trials.

Paul Scully:

The Government is clear that anyone entitled to be paid the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or National Living Wage (NLW) should receive it. We are committed to cracking down on employers who fail to pay the NMW/NLW.

The current law makes clear that anyone who carries out “work” for an employer is entitled to the NMW/NLW. Where HMRC enforcement officers identify that there has been an underpayment, including for breaches related to unpaid working time, they may issue a Notice of Underpayment instructing the employer to pay the workers the arrears they are owed, and a penalty of up to 200% of those arrears.

In cases where the total arrears are over £500, the Government considers publicly naming the employer via the NMW Naming Scheme. We publicly name in most eligible cases (almost 95%), and exemption from naming is only granted in the very limited circumstances set out in the NMW enforcement policy document on gov.uk.

Liz Saville Roberts:**[2000]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with the Welsh Government on the organisation of COP 26.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The UK Government is committed to working with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive to deliver an ambitious and successful summit for the whole of the UK.

The Business Secretary and Welsh Government ministers have instructed officials to work collaboratively across a number of common portfolio areas, including climate change. This is part of the ongoing engagement between the UK Government and the Welsh Government to support the successful delivery of COP26.

Fleur Anderson:**[2051]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will reintroduce subsidies for home solar panel installation.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The cost of household solar panels has more than halved since 2011. Government support through the Feed-in Tariff between 2010 and 2019 supported over 830,000 small solar projects – and helped drive this reduction in cost.

Now, under the Smart Export Guarantee, we have given scale low-carbon electricity generators, such as homes with solar panels, the right to be paid for the renewable electricity they export to the grid. This reflects our continued commitment to ensuring that low carbon electricity – whether at the household level or the national level –

is central to the transition to the smart and flexible energy systems of the future.

Unlike the previous Feed-in Tariff scheme, the Smart Export Guarantee is a market-driven mechanism and paves the way to projects being deployed without subsidies.

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the loan guarantee offered by the Government for the construction of Hinkley Point C remains valid despite the delays in its construction.

Nadhim Zahawi:

On 12 June 2018, the then Minister for Business and Industry stated that the £2 billion debt guarantee for Hinkley Point C, made through the UK Guarantees Scheme, had been cancelled by EDF.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of giving workers on zero-hours contracts the right to a contract with guaranteed minimum hours.

Paul Scully:

We are committed to making the UK the best place in the world to work and grow a business. As announced in the Queen's Speech we will be bringing forward an Employment Rights Bill to deliver the greatest reform of workers' rights in over 20 years.

These reforms include taking firm action to tackle what Matthew Taylor termed one-sided flexibility, where some businesses have transferred too much business risk to the individual, sometimes at the detriment of their financial security and personal well-being.

We will also give all workers the right to request a more stable contract, which aims to encourage conversations between employers and businesses.

CABINET OFFICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Hilary Benn:

[\[1166\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to encourage civil society dialogue as set out in paragraph 125 of the Political Declaration agreed with the EU.

Chloe Smith:

We want a relationship with the EU which is based on friendly cooperation between sovereign equals, and centred on free trade. We will have a relationship with our European friends inspired by our shared history and values.

The Political Declaration sets out the potential scope of the future relationship. This is now a matter for negotiations.

Preet Kaur Gill: [15038]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what RAG rating the Infrastructure and Projects Authority has given to delivery confidence for the 2021 Census.

Chloe Smith:

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority's Annual Report was published on 18 July 2019 and is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). It includes the Government Major Projects Portfolio dataset.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: [15059]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the correlation between the level of (a) turnout at elections and (b) detection of electoral fraud.

Chloe Smith:

The Government has not undertaken an assessment of the correlation between the level of turnout at elections and detection of electoral fraud.

Chris Stephens: [746]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what functions have been (a) delegated to Departments and (b) retained by the civil service under the civil service management code.

Chris Stephens: [748]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many times his Department has used the right under paragraph 7 of the civil service management code to inspect and monitor observance of the civil service management code in the last three years.

Chris Stephens: [754]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what legislation under paragraph 5 of the civil service management code Ministers have undertaken to apply as if it were binding on the Crown.

Chloe Smith:

The Cabinet Office works closely with all departments on many of the matters outlined within the Civil Service Management Code. All departments are expected to follow the instructions within the Civil Service Management Code when setting terms and conditions of Civil Service employment.

Paragraph three of the Civil Service Management Code outlines the authority delegated to Ministers in charge of departments.

Some legislative employment provisions are applied to Civil Servants. These areas, which include notice and redundancy, are as set out in the Civil Service Management Code and departmental policies.

DEFENCE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Mr Gregory Campbell:****[1174]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what changes to the duty of care for armed forces personnel have been introduced under the Defence Safety Authority since 2015.

Johnny Mercer:

The safety and wellbeing of our personnel remains our top priority. Many elements of our training carry risk, and it is regularly assessed and monitored. The Defence Safety Authority (DSA) works in tandem with the new Director of Health Safety and Environmental Protection (D HS&EP), appointed in March 2019, to assist the Permanent Secretary in discharging his HS&EP responsibilities. Since 2015, the DSA has made a significant contribution to the development of the Ministry of Defence's Safety approach, including:

- a. Supporting the introduction of the Defence Safety & Environmental Committee (DSEC), chaired by the Permanent Secretary, to improve oversight of the duty of care and risk associated with defence activities;
- b. The establishment, in 2016, of a pan-domain standardised approach to Duty Holding for managing hazardous activities that represent a credible and foreseeable Risk to Life. The Duty Holder role being to balance and reduce the risk to as low as reasonably practicable and tolerable with due regard to the strategic benefits required from Defence; and
- c. The publication of new guidance and regulations setting out rules and standards for Defence HS&EP, in line with the Defence Secretary's Policy Statement for all HS&EP matters in Defence. These include chapters on the duty holding construct and duty of care on deployments. Those appropriate for the Gov.uk website are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implementation-of-defence-policy-for-health-safety-and-environmental-protection-dsa-012>

Jessica Morden:**[1237]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) Royal Navy, (b) RAF, (c) Army and (d) Royal Marines personnel have killed themselves in each month of each year since 2015, by gender.

Johnny Mercer:

The attached table provides the requested breakdown of coroner-confirmed suicides by month, service and gender from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2018, the last published data available. Figures are for Regular personnel and only those Reservists who died whilst on operational deployment. The definition of suicide is that used by the Office for National Statistics. It should be noted that figures may be subject to change following coroner's inquests on deaths awaiting verdicts.

Defence Statistics (Health) produce an annual National Statistic on Suicide in the UK Armed Forces which is released at the end of March every year and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-suicide-and-open-verdict-deaths-index>

Attachments:

1. 1237 - Armed Forces Suicides [20200217-UIN 1237-AF Suicides.xlsx]

Mr Gregory Campbell: [14963]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether UK defence forces will be deployed with the EU battlegroup until 31 December 2020.

James Heappey:

There will be no UK forces deployed to an EU Battlegroup during 2020.

Mr Stephen Morgan: [2023]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to give Portsmouth residents the opportunity to go onboard HMS Prince of Wales while she is docked in the city.

Mr Stephen Morgan: [2024]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing Portsmouth residents to go onboard HMS Prince of Wales while docked in the city to showcase the vessel.

James Heappey:

While there are currently no plans for HMS PRINCE OF WALES to be opened to members of the public while berthed in HM Naval Base Portsmouth, the Royal Navy will continue to consider opportunities in the future.

Portsmouth is a complex industrial and operational Naval Base and a key engineering support hub for the Royal Navy. As such, ships alongside will always have some sort of engineering, training or refit activity being undertaken.

With the number of Naval and Defence assets within the Base, and taking account of the current security climate and posture, scheduling dates in a ship's programme can be disruptive to operational output. This is especially the case with ships as complex and in demand as the Queen Elizabeth Class.

Jessica Morden: [591]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Stellate Ganglion Block injections have been approved in the UK for the treatment of military personnel suffering from PTSD; and if he will make a statement.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence is committed to providing the best evidenced-based healthcare for Service personnel, and follows the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines for all interventions in military healthcare. Stellate

Ganglion Block injections are not NICE-approved in the treatment of PTSD, and are therefore not used by the Defence Medical Services.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what ongoing supply commitments did IMS (Saudi Arabia) Ltd have that continued (a) after 1985 and (b) beyond 1 Oct 2002.

Jeremy Quin:

This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ International Military Services: Finance

Tulip Siddiq: [\[612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 3 February 2020 to Question 9095, on International Military Services: Finance, how his Department's contribution to that payment of £382.5 million in December 2002 was represented in his Department's annual report and accounts for that year.

Jeremy Quin:

This payment is represented in the 2002-03 accounts in Note 12: Debtors. Prepayments in this note include an amount of £343.5 million paid into an Escrow account in respect of an adjudication decision where an appeal is pending.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Steve McCabe: [\[1160\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he holds information on how much and what proportion of the BBC licence fee was spent in the last year on multiple letters to households suspected of requiring a licence.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The BBC's Annual Report shows that spent £103m on TV licence collection in 2018/19.

However, the Government does not hold information on the costs of the BBC's enforcement methods. The BBC and TV Licensing may hold this information.

Tracy Brabin: [\[15064\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding her Department has allocated to to UK Anti-Doping in each of the last three years.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has provided the following Grant-in-Aid funding to UK Anti-Doping over the past three years:

FY2016/17: £6.096m

FY2017/18: £5.996m

FY2018/19: £7.998m

Tracy Brabin:

[15068]

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of UK anti-doping procedures in preventing athletes who have failed drug tests from partaking in combat sports.

Nigel Huddleston:

The UK's national anti-doping organisation, UK Anti-Doping (UKAD), an arm's length body of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, acts according to the remit laid out in the UK's National Anti-Doping Policy, and implements the UK's National Anti-Doping Rules: <https://www.ukad.org.uk/anti-doping-rules>.

These Rules ensure the requirements of the World Anti-Doping Code are met in the UK. The Rules make no distinction between individual sports in terms of sanctions.

Decisions around any athlete ban from sport (if contested) are made by the independent National Anti-Doping Panel (NADP). This is independent of UKAD and is run on behalf of DCMS. The NADP's procedural rules are available on their website:

https://www.sportresolutions.co.uk/images/uploads/files/D_1_-_2019_NADP_Rules.pdf

Attachments:

1. 2019 Rules of the National Anti-Doping Panel [NADP 2019.pdf]

Chris Elmore:

[15105]

To ask the Minister of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Shared Rural Network, what proportion of the UK will have geographic coverage from all four operators by 2025.

Matt Warman:

The Government's in-principle support for the Mobile Network Operators' Shared Rural Network proposal remains subject to detailed negotiations, but our ambition is that by the end of 2025, 4G geographic coverage from all four operators will be significantly higher than the 66% it is today. I continue to work with the sector to conclude those negotiations and will be in a position to provide an update to this question later this spring.

Richard Fuller:

[15130]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to improve broadband coverage in North East Bedfordshire constituency.

Matt Warman:

The government has made significant progress in North East Bedfordshire, with over £8 million of central government funding allocated to the Bedford and Milton Keynes

project area. As a result, 95.9% of premises now have access to superfast broadband - up from 54.3% in February 2012.

There are a range of options available to those in North East Bedfordshire suffering from slow speeds. The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme is available to those who are not due to receive an upgrade from a publicly funded rollout programme. Small to medium sized businesses can claim a voucher worth up to £2,500, and residents can claim a voucher worth up to £500 as part of a group project to offset the costs of installing gigabit-capable infrastructure. Increased funding is available to rural premises.

In addition to this, the government has pledged £5 billion to deliver gigabit-capable broadband to the most difficult to reach areas of the UK.

Martyn Day:

[15149]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to roll-out gigabit broadband (a) in Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency and (b) throughout Scotland.

Matt Warman:

The government has made good progress in the constituency of Linlithgow and East Falkirk, with over £50 million of central government funding allocated to the Rest of Scotland project area. As a result, superfast coverage in the constituency now stands at 97.3% - up from 46.5% in March 2012 and compares favourably to the UK average of 96.5%. Full fibre coverage stands at 11.8%, above the Scottish average figure of 8.8%. In total, the government has invested over £100 million in improving Scotland's broadband infrastructure.

There are three government funded Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) projects taking place in Scotland - Tay Cities, Shetlands Council and Highlands Council. Almost £12 million of central government funding is being invested to upgrade public sector assets with gigabit-capable infrastructure. These upgrades will then stimulate the market to invest commercially in the surrounding communities.

The Scottish Borderlands area is also a priority for the government's £200 million Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme, which is upgrading public sector sites in rural areas with gigabit-capable networks. This programme also offers vouchers for rural customers, which can be used to contribute towards the cost of installing gigabit-capable infrastructure.

In addition, the government has pledged £5 billion to deliver gigabit-capable broadband to the most difficult to reach areas of the UK, including communities in Scotland.

Mr David Davis:

[1865]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much Huawei equipment analysis has been installed by UK 5G carriers since March 2019.

Matt Warman:

Huawei's presence in the UK is subject to detailed, formal oversight through the Huawei Cyber Security Evaluation Centre and its oversight board. The recent conclusions of the Telecoms Supply Chain Review set out clear limits on the role of Huawei, as a High Risk Vendor, in the UK telecoms market. The Government examined the full range of threats and risks when making its decision on the use of high risk vendors in the UK telecoms networks.

Carolyn Harris:[\[1944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the review into online stakes will be launched by the Gambling Commission.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Gambling Commission announced last October that it would be looking at the evidence regarding online stake limits as part of its ongoing work to reduce the risks of gambling related harm. This is in addition to their particular focus on VIP practices, advertising technology, and game design. The Gambling Commission has said that it will publish the assessment and next steps for online stakes and further protections later this year.

The Government has committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 to make sure it is fit for the digital age.

Chi Onwurah:[\[1967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to publish the telecoms security plan.

Matt Warman:

We have undertaken a comprehensive review of the telecoms supply chain to ensure the security and resilience of 5G and fibre in the UK. The Review, published in July 2019, set out our priorities for the future of telecommunications, and proposed the introduction of a new, strengthened security framework for telecoms and targeted diversification strategy. The final conclusions of the Review in relation to high risk vendors were announced on 28 January, following a robust, evidence-based decision-making process involving security analysis by the UK's world-leading National Cyber Security Centre.

Legislation will be brought forward at the earliest available opportunity to implement the conclusions of the Review. The decision made regarding the use of high risk vendors has been supported by guidance for the UK's telecoms operators issued by the National Cyber Security Centre, which has been published online.

Chi Onwurah:[\[1968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what guidance his Department has issued to network operators on mitigating the effect of high risk vendors in their network.

Matt Warman:

We have undertaken a comprehensive review of the telecoms supply chain to ensure the security and resilience of 5G and fibre in the UK. The final conclusions of the Review in relation to high risk vendors were announced on 28 January, following a robust, evidence-based decision-making process involving security analysis by the UK's world-leading National Cyber Security Centre.

The previous Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced that high risk vendors should be excluded from those parts of the 5G and full fibre networks that are critical to security ("the core"), and their presence in the rest of the UK's networks should be limited to 35 per cent, with further restrictions in sensitive geographic locations.

This decision is supported by guidance for the UK's telecoms operators issued by the National Cyber Security Centre which has been published online.

Chi Onwurah:**[1969]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government has made an assessment on the effect of the decision to give Huawei permission to build parts of the UK's 5G network on UK-US digital trade.

Matt Warman:

The UK has one of the world's largest and most dynamic economies, and we welcome open trade and inward investment in our digital sectors. At the same time, the UK's economy can only prosper when we, and our international partners, are assured that our critical national infrastructure remains safe and secure.

We have announced one of the toughest regimes for telecoms security in the world. This should reassure the US and other partners that we are clear about the security risks we face. We worked closely with the US throughout the course of the Telecoms Supply Chain Review and will continue to work closely with them on telecoms security.

We have not taken these decisions lightly, this Government has underlined its commitment to making the UK a world leader in gigabit capable networks like 5G and full fibre, and have taken the decisions necessary to safeguard the UK's national security interests.

Chi Onwurah:**[1976]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what Ofcom's budget was in each year since its inception; what proportion of that budget was allocated by Her Majesty's Treasury; and whether the Government plans to change Ofcom's funding model when it is responsible for the regulation of online harms.

Caroline Dinenage:

Please see the table below which sets out Ofcom's budget for each year during the current spending review period, including what proportion of that budget was allocated by HM Treasury. Information in relation to Ofcom's budget for previous years since its inception can be found in Ofcom's published accounts, copies of

which are lodged in the House of Commons Library and published on Ofcom's website.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Ofcom Budget	£114.3m	£116.6m	£121.7m	£124.2m	£124.2m
Grant-in-Aid	£60.2m	£74.4m	£115.5m*	£72.5m	£85.8m**

The above table provides funding for both Ofcom's core responsibilities (including managing the UK spectrum) and 700 MHz clearance programme.

*The additional Grant-in-Aid was to cover the costs of managing the UK spectrum, given the significant infrastructure work taking place across the UK in 2017/18.

** Figure taken from the published [Supply Estimates 2019-20](#).

In relation to Ofcom's responsibility for the regulation of online harms, the Government is carrying out extensive analysis on potential funding options taking Ofcom's existing funding model into consideration. As outlined in the Government's 'The Online Harms White Paper - Initial consultation response', published on 12 February 2020, 'The White Paper makes clear that in order to recoup both the implementation costs and running costs of the regulator, the government is considering fees, charges or a levy on companies whose services are in scope. This could fund the full range of the regulator's activity. The government intends the new regulator to become cost neutral to the public sector.' Full details on the funding mechanism for the Online Harms regulatory regime will be set out in due course.

Attachments:

1. Supplementary Estimates 2019-20 [Supplementary_Estimates_2019-20_-_Web.pdf]

Chi Onwurah:

[1988]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent steps his Department has taken to increase regional digital growth throughout the UK.

Matt Warman:

Digital technology underpins our ambition to level-up the country. Investments in digital infrastructure, skills and business growth ensure Britain's economy and society are fit for the future. My department has recently undertaken work to deliver on this key priority across our digital policy agenda.

BDUK has increased superfast coverage to 96% of UK premises. The Government announced in-principle support in October 2019 for the Mobile Network Operators' Shared Rural Network proposal. 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, and I am keeping all options on the table, including rural roaming.

In order to boost regional digital skills, the Government launched a competition for new degree conversion courses in data science and AI in October 2019. The competitive process for bidders from English Universities is specifically seeking a good regional spread and includes £10m for up to 1,000 scholarships to open up opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds.

The government responded to the Cairncross Review into the sustainability of high-quality journalism on 27 January, outlining the steps the government will take to support regional and local newspapers as they transition online. We have 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.

There is much more to do - though delivering with ministerial colleagues, local partners and the private sector, we can build on recent success. The latest figures show that the digital sector contributed £149 billion to the economy in 2018, meaning it accounts for 7.7% of the UK economy, and is growing nearly six times the rate of the UK as a whole.

This Government will deliver on its promise to commit £5bn to make sure the hardest to reach areas aren't left behind. With this funding, we can deliver world-class broadband connectivity and ensure that a connected, 21st century Britain is a reality for all regions in the UK.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[522\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the blog post dated 22 February 2019 by Dr Ian Levy, Technical Director of the National Cyber Security Centre, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of that person's assessment that security does not pay for mobile networks; and what plans he has to align incentives to improve security.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[523\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the blog post dated 22 February 2019 by Dr Ian Levy, Technical Director of the National Cyber Security Centre, what enforcement powers Ofcom will have to help ensure the security of mobile networks.

Matt Warman:

The Telecoms Supply Chain Review published in July 2019, set out the government's priorities for the security and resilience of future telecommunications networks, the final conclusions of which were announced in January 2020. The Review outlined the Government's three priorities for the future of telecommunications: stronger cyber security practices; greater resilience in telecoms networks, and diversity in the market.

We are establishing an enhanced legislative and regulatory framework for telecoms security with new Telecoms Security Requirements at its core, stronger powers for Ofcom and national security powers for Government.

Fiona Bruce:

[\[605\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to ensure that children are not exposed to alcohol advertisements online.

Caroline Dinenage:

Advertising in the UK is overseen by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the industry's independent regulator, which for online advertising enforces the Code of Non-broadcast Advertising and Direct & Promotional Marketing (CAP Code) through a system of self-regulation. The CAP Code incorporates all relevant legislation and sets standards for accuracy and honesty to which advertisers must adhere, including specific conditions on advertising to children, causing offence and social responsibility. This system operates independently of government.

The Code recognises the social imperative of ensuring alcohol advertising is responsible, and requires that it not be targeted at people under 18 and should not imply, condone or encourage immoderate, irresponsible or anti-social drinking.

The government is reviewing how online advertising is regulated in the UK, looking at how well the current regime is equipped to tackle the challenges posed by developments in online advertising. Although this work will not directly address issues specific only to the advertising of alcohol, it will consider cross-cutting challenges - including exploring measures with potential to impact the wider sector. A call for evidence on online advertising was published last month.

Catherine West:

[\[740\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of his Department's spending was allocated to grassroots sport in each year from 2010.

Nigel Huddleston:

Between April 2010 and March 2019, The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has provided over £870m in Exchequer funding to Sport England, the arms-length body of government responsible for investing in and supporting grassroots sport in England. The table below provides a year-by-year breakdown.

SPORT ENGLAND GRANT-IN-AID/FUNDING

Year	Outturn £'000
2010/11	£121,389
2011/12	£97,571
2012/13	£99,814

SPORT ENGLAND GRANT-IN-AID/FUNDING

2013/14	£88,634
2014/15	£83,044
2015/16	£93,885
2016/17	£105,649
2017/18	£81,343
2018/19	£98,765

Details of DCMS's Exchequer funding to other policy areas can be found in the department's annual reports which are available online.

EDUCATION**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

Angela Rayner:

[1241]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding his Department allocated to place children under 16 in (a) unregulated and (b) unregistered care settings in each of the last five financial years.

Angela Rayner:

[1242]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding his Department allocated to place children over 16 in (a) unregulated, (b) unregistered, and (c) semi-independent care settings in each of the last five financial years.

Vicky Ford:

The information is not held centrally. Core funding for children's services, including funding for placing looked-after children, is un-ring-fenced and part of the wider local government finance settlement. It is for local authorities to decide how best to spend the funding to meet their local needs, priorities and statutory responsibilities, including for children's social care.

The local government settlement for 2020-21 set out proposals to increase local government resources by 4.4% above inflation, which is the largest increase in spending power in almost a decade. Under these proposals, core spending power will rise from £46.2 billion in 2019-20 to £49.1 billion in 2020-21.

We recognise the demand pressures on children's social care. The government is providing local authorities with an additional £1 billion for adult and children's social care in every year of this Parliament.

Steve Reed:**[1254]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2020 to Question 11622, on Pupils: Mental Health, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of standardising the tools such as surveys used by schools to monitor their pupils' wellbeing.

Nick Gibb:

Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils by providing support and activities tailored to their particular needs. It is up to schools to decide what support to offer pupils and what measurement tools to use to inform those decisions.

The Department is working on guidance which will build upon the toolkit^[1] issued by Public Health England. It will set out how schools can use existing measurement tools to inform different aspects of their provision. The Department will consider the use and suitability of existing tools, and decide whether to take any further action to support schools in the context of that work.

[1] <https://www.annafreud.org/media/4612/mwb-toolki-final-draft-4.pdf>.

Fiona Bruce:**[1260]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish the research commissioned by Government from the Early Intervention Foundation on effective local practice with regard to supporting families.

Vicky Ford:

The Early Intervention Foundation is due to report findings from its review of effective local practice in spring 2020. A publication date is yet to be agreed.

Steve Reed:**[15033]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fostering services are paying (a) at or (b) above the national minimum allowance level to foster carers.

Vicky Ford:

The National Minimum Standards for fostering services are clear that every foster parent should receive an allowance that covers the full cost of caring for a child. Whilst local authorities determine the allowance paid to foster parents in their area, the National Minimum Allowance (NMA) serves as a baseline to the minimum amount that foster parents can expect to receive per week to cover the cost of a child living in their home.

The NMA rates for 2020-21 were published on 6 February. We have notified Directors of Children's Services and reiterated that whilst it is not mandatory in regulations, we expect all fostering services to pay at least this amount.

Steve Reed:

[\[15034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of adequacy of the national minimum fostering allowance paid to foster carers to provide high quality care for the children they are fostering.

Vicky Ford:

No foster parent should be out of pocket because of their fostering role. The National Minimum Standards for fostering services are clear that every foster parent should receive an allowance that covers the full cost of caring for a child. Whilst it is for fostering services to decide the level of financial support offered to foster parents in their area, the Department for Education recommends the National Minimum Allowance (NMA) as a minimum benchmark. No foster parent should expect to receive anything less than the NMA per week. The NMA is uplifted annually to keep in line with inflation.

Over and above the NMA, it is for fostering services to set their own payment systems. Many fostering services currently operate local fee payments for foster parents, which is often based on their skills, experience and qualifications, and/or tier based on the complexity of the child's needs. Many local authorities also offer additional allowances for equipment costs or to cover expenses such as travel or emergency clothing or initial set-up costs.

Ben Lake:

[\[15051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with (a) the National Union of Students, (b) Universities UK, (c) University and College Union, (d) Unison and (e) Unite on university use of non-disclosure agreements.

Ben Lake:

[\[15054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with (a) vice-chancellors and (b) student union presidents of universities that have been used non-disclosure agreements.

Ben Lake:

[\[15057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the prevalence of use of non-disclosure agreements by universities.

Michelle Donelan:

The government consulted on the misuse of confidentiality clauses in employer/employee relationships in 2019, and in response announced that we will legislate to prevent the misuse of Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in the workplace – including those being used to cover up harassment and discrimination. This will strengthen protections for individuals and create a fairer workplace for all.

In responding to that consultation, the University and College Union (UCU) and other unions expressed concern about the misuse of NDAs to 'gag' staff after experiencing

poor behaviour in the workplace, including bullying, discrimination or sexual misconduct.

The department does not hold data on the use of NDAs in higher education and therefore has not made any specific analysis of their use. While there are a range of legitimate reasons why universities may use NDAs, including, for example, the protection of commercially sensitive information related to university research, we recognise their misuse is an area of concern.

We have clear expectations that universities should only use NDAs where necessary and appropriate. Any misuse of these agreements to hide workplace harassment or withhold details of student complaints is completely unacceptable and can not only distress individuals but also risk bringing the reputation of our world-leading higher education system into disrepute.

Sexual misconduct and harassment are unacceptable in higher education, as elsewhere, and government expects higher education providers to have robust and appropriate policies and procedures in place to effectively handle disclosures and reports of such behaviour by students and staff.

The Office for Students (OfS) is currently consulting on its approach to regulation and its expectations for providers in addressing sexual misconduct and harassment in their institutions. This consultation closes on 27 March. Government officials meet at least quarterly with both the OfS and Universities UK specifically to discuss making progress on tackling harassment in higher education.

Ms Marie Rimmer:

[15072]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support looked after children who are placed out of borough in homes not registered with Ofsted.

Vicky Ford:

Every child and young person should have access to a stable and secure placement in accommodation that can meet their needs and, most importantly, keep them safe. On 5 November 2019, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, wrote to all local authorities reminding them of their duty to keep children safe, particularly if they are placed away from their area, which requires approval by a Director of Children's Services.

Reform is needed as a matter of urgency to ensure this provision is being used appropriately and meets the needs of the young people placed there. On 12 February 2020 we announced proposals to drive up the quality of children's social care. The consultation invites views on a set of new measures to ensure appropriate use of these placements. The proposals include:

- banning the use of independent and semi-independent placements for children and young people under the age of 16
- driving up the quality of support offered in independent and semi-independent provision through the introduction of new national standards, ensuring that these

standards are enforced and that young people's interests are appropriately represented by their Independent Reviewing Officer

- introducing new measures so that local authorities and local police forces liaise before a placement in such provision is made
- giving Ofsted new legal powers to act against illegal providers. Under the proposal, legislation would be amended so that Ofsted could take legal action before prosecution and issue enforcement notices, which will result in illegal providers either being forced to close, register or face a penalty.

The consultation is open for response until 8 April and is available at the following link: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/unregulated-provision/unregulated-provision-children-in-care/>.

Ofsted has conducted over 150 investigations in the last year into settings suspected to be operating as an unregistered children's home. They are expediting applications to make sure new homes can be inspected and have implemented a new process for informing local authorities when cease and desist letters are sent to unregistered providers so that they know not to place children with them.

Catherine West:

[15115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the value was of apprenticeship levy funds expiring from employers' accounts in each month from May 2019 until January 2020; what proportion of that funding will be returned to the (a) Education and Skills Funding Agency's apprenticeship budget and (b) HM Treasury.

Michelle Donelan:

The value of apprenticeship levy funds that expired from employers' accounts in each month from May 2019 to January 2020 is set out in the table below:

MONTH	VALUE OF EXPIRED APPRENTICESHIP LEVY FUNDS
May 2019	£11,000,000
June 2019	£26,000,000
July 2019	£44,000,000
August 2019	£52,000,000
September 2019	
October 2019	£114,000,000
November 2019	£72,000,000

December 2019	£83,000,000
January 2020	£90,000,000
Total Expired	£492,000,000

Notes:

1. There was no expiry in September 2019 as this was cancelled due to an issue affecting apprenticeship payments. Cancelling expiry ensured employers and providers were not unfairly impacted as a result of this issue. All September 2019 expiry was therefore rolled forward into the process for October 2019.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest million.
3. Information is available at the end of each calendar month.

The funds in employers' accounts reflect the 'English percentage' of an employer's levy contribution and include a 10% top-up from government. Employers' levy funds are available for them to use for 24 months before they begin to expire on a rolling, month-by-month basis. We do not anticipate that all employers who pay the levy will need or want to use all the funds in their accounts, though they are able to do so. Funds that expire are no longer available for the employer to spend on apprenticeship training.

The funds available to levy-paying employers through their apprenticeship service accounts are not the same as the Department for Education's annual apprenticeship budget. The expiry of these levy funds does not, therefore, result in additional funds becoming available to the department or to HM Treasury.

The department's ring-fenced apprenticeship budget was set in advance by HM Treasury for the current Spending Review period and is independent of the funds in levy payers' accounts. In 2019-20, over £2.5 billion is available for investment in apprenticeships in England, which is double what was spent in 2010.

Our annual apprenticeship budget supports new apprenticeship starts both in levy-paying employers and non-levy paying employers as well as existing apprenticeship learners. Details of actual spend against the apprenticeships budget are published in the Education and Skills Funding Agency's annual report and accounts.

Richard Fuller:

[15129]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of alternative curricula for children with special educational needs.

Vicky Ford:

The 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years' makes clear our expectation that all pupils should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs should usually be taught the same curriculum as other pupils, with those needs being addressed through how lessons are planned and delivered. The Code states:

“The National Curriculum Inclusion Statement states that teachers should set high expectations for every pupil, whatever their prior attainment. Teachers should use appropriate assessment to set targets which are deliberately ambitious. Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at the outset. Lessons should be planned to address potential areas of difficulty and to remove barriers to pupil achievement. In many cases, such planning will mean that pupils with SEN and disabilities will be able to study the full national curriculum.”

Steve Reed:

[\[15158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department's policy is to support foster carers to maintain contact with children that they have fostered.

Vicky Ford:

Maintaining contact is consistently one of the most important issues raised by children and young people. Many children value the relationships that they have, not only with family, but also with previous carers. Children should be supported and encouraged to maintain positive and constructive contact with all those who are important to them and this should include previous foster parents unless this is not consistent with the child's best interest.

The department is currently talking to the sector to find ways that foster parents can be supported with all aspects of contact, including contact with children that they have previously fostered.

Claudia Webbe:

[\[2012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children were taken into care in (a) the East Midlands, (b) Leicester and (c) Leicester East constituency in each of the last 5 years.

Vicky Ford:

The latest figures on the number of children taken into care in England, the East Midlands region and Leicester local authority area since 2014/15 are shown in the attached table. The department does not collect this data by parliamentary constituency area.

Attachments:

1. 2012_Table [2012_Children_Taken_Into_Care.xls]

Taiwo Owatemi:

[\[2019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of students from Europe studying in the UK through the Erasmus+ programme, at each university.

Michelle Donelan:

The Department for Education has made no estimate of the number of students from Europe studying in the UK through the Erasmus+ programme by university. While the European Commission (EC) records the number of incoming mobilities to the UK on

the Erasmus+ programme this is not broken down by sub-national, regional or institutional level.

The number of incoming Higher Education students, trainees and staff to the UK on the Erasmus+ programme from 2014/15 to 2017/18 can be found here:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/factsheets_en.

The EC publishes more data on Erasmus+ in their statistical annexes:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/statistics_en.

Helen Hayes:

[667]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked-after children who were cared for in a friends and family foster placement on 31 March 2019 had also been in (a) an unrelated foster placement, (b) another family and friends care placement, (c) a children's home and (d) other provision for looked-after children in each region.

Vicky Ford:

The information is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The latest figures on looked after children in family and friends fostering arrangements are published in table A2 of the statistical release Children looked after in England including adoption: 2018 to 2019 at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>.

Steve Reed:

[759]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Education, whether his Department collects data from local authorities on the number of (a) trafficked and (b) at risk children in their care.

Vicky Ford:

The latest information on episodes of need where trafficking was identified as a factor at the end of assessment is included in the department's 'Characteristics of children in need: 2018 to 2019' statistical publication, available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/characteristics-of-children-in-need-2018-to-2019>.

Table C3 of this publication shows that, at a national level, trafficking was identified as a factor at the end of assessment in 2,490 (0.5%) of the 498,870 episodes with assessment factor information in the year ending 31 March 2019.

Information on looked-after children is collected from local authorities in the annual looked-after children census, but does not include information on whether the child is specifically considered to be at risk of being trafficked.

The latest information on looked-after children is published in the 'Children looked after in England including adoption: 2018 to 2019' statistical release, available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Kerry McCarthy:

[1194]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what her policy is on the compliance of imported agricultural goods with UK (a) animal welfare, (b) environmental and (c) food safety standards after the transition period.

Kerry McCarthy:

[1197]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to bring forward legislative proposals to ensure the protection of UK standards on (a) animal welfare, (b) environmental and (c) food safety in negotiations on future free trade agreements.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK is proud of its world-leading food, health and animal welfare standards. We remain firmly committed to upholding our high environmental, food, and animal welfare standards now we have left the EU.

As set out in our manifesto, we will not compromise our standards as we negotiate new trade deals. Nor will we put the UK's biosecurity at risk. The Government will stand firm in trade negotiations to ensure any future trade deals live up to the values of farmers and consumers across the UK.

Ms Harriet Harman:

[14937]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of deaths each year attributable to air pollution in the London Borough of Southwark.

Rebecca Pow:

The Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) estimates that the mortality burden of the air pollution mixture (based on both PM_{2.5} and NO₂) in the UK is equivalent to 28,000 to 36,000 deaths per year. Mortality burden is a statistical way of assessing the impact of diseases and pollution. The equivalent figures at a more localised level are not available.

Public Health England has, however, estimated the fraction of adult mortality attributable to long-term exposure to particulate air pollution at local authority level in the Public Health Outcomes Framework, available to view and search online at:

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework>.

Ms Harriet Harman:

[14938]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to improve air quality in the London Borough of Southwark.

Rebecca Pow:

Our Clean Air Strategy (CAS) sets out an ambitious programme of action to reduce air pollutant emissions from a wide range of sources. The World Health Organization has recognised the CAS as an example for the rest of the world to follow. We have also put in place a £3.5 billion plan to tackle roadside nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations and are working closely with 61 English local authorities, and have placed legal duties on them, to tackle their NO₂ exceedances as soon as possible. Our Environment Bill was reintroduced to Parliament on 30 January 2020 and makes a clear commitment to set an ambitious target for fine particulate matter, the pollutant of most concern for human health. It also ensures that local authorities have a clear framework and simple to use powers to tackle air pollution in their areas, and will provide the Government with new powers to enforce environmental standards for vehicles. All of this action will improve air quality across the UK.

In London, air quality is the responsibility of the Mayor of London.

Ms Harriet Harman:

[14939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many trees have been planted in England in each of the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

The Forestry Commission routinely publishes statistics on planting rates in England as part of its Key Performance Indicators.

The reporting of new planting in terms of numbers of trees, reproduced in the table below, is based on the area of grant claims approved for payment under the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), and from 2017-18 all other recorded forms of Government support. Together this accounts for nearly all new planting of woodland in England.

YEAR (ENDING 31 MARCH)	AREA (HECTARES)	TREE NUMBERS
2014-15	1,782	1,960,000
2015-16	546	642,000
2016-17	558	860,000
2017-18	1,045	1,579,000
2018-19	1,273	2,060,000

The Government's support for this woodland creation has predominantly been from the Countryside Stewardship scheme (under the RDPE). Further Government support has been through Forestry England, the Woodland Carbon Fund, the High

Speed 2 Woodland Fund, the Environment Agency, the National Forest Company, and in the Northern Forest.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[15063]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential effect of naming people responsible for fly-tipping on rates of that offence; and if he will issue guidance to local authorities to encourage them to name offenders.

Rebecca Pow:

Fly-tipping is unacceptable wherever it occurs and tackling this crime is a priority for the Government. We therefore welcome suggestions and initiatives being explored by enforcement agencies to tackle this unacceptable crime.

The role of central Government is to enable and support local action: providing a clear legal framework of rights, responsibilities and powers, setting national standards and, where possible, making sure that the costs of dealing with fly-tipping issues are passed to those responsible for causing the problem.

The Government is committed to encouraging local solutions for local problems. This is particularly relevant in tackling fly-tipping, which requires a local approach, tailored to the characteristics of the area and the community in which the problem occurs. The naming of fly-tipping offenders is not current Government policy and, given our commitment to encouraging local solutions to reflect local circumstances, it is not for central Government to assess or publish national guidance promoting a single approach.

However, building on a commitment in our Resources and Waste Strategy, Defra is developing a toolkit to tackle fly-tipping. The toolkit will include examples of existing good practice to prevent fly-tipping, as well as advice and guidance on how local authorities can set up and run effective fly-tipping partnerships and share intelligence. We encourage local authorities to provide evidence and share details of successful initiatives with Defra, and the toolkit could in the future therefore include reference to the naming of those responsible for fly-tipping, alongside a number of other initiatives that are being used throughout England.

Clive Lewis:

[15116]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the cost to the public purse has been of flood damage in the UK in each of the last three years.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) does not hold records that show cost to the public purse from flood damage on an annual basis. It reviews the total economic damages after significant flood events in England.

The EA has published reports for the flood events of 2007, 2013/14 and 2015/16. It has also estimated the economic damages of the recent widespread flooding that took place in November 2019.

Total economic costs of the summer 2007 floods in England are estimated at £3.9 billion, inflation adjusted to 2015 prices.

Total economic costs of the winter 2013 to 2014 floods in England and Wales are estimated at £1.3 billion, inflation adjusted to 2015 prices.

Total economic costs of the winter 2015 to 2016 floods in England are estimated at £1.6 billion at 2015 prices.

The estimated economic damages for the November 2019 floods in England are £78 million and repair costs to defences around £120 million. Without flood defences, the economic damages could have been £1.6 billion higher. In other words, defences have helped to reduce the damages by 95%. The impacts during November 2019 would also have been significantly higher without the significant investment in flood risk management since 2007, when these areas also experienced extreme rainfall.

There is currently an ongoing research project funded by the Joint Research Programme to capture, calculate and store data on the economic costs of floods. Among other benefits, this project will allow the EA to better analyse flood impact data. Improved consistency in how data is recorded will enable economic damages to be compared across flood events and years.

The EA will produce estimates of economic damage to England for Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis once the full extent of the impacts are known.

John Spellar:

[1863]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the enforcement of the Pet Travel Scheme in 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government takes the welfare of animals seriously, and that is why we have committed to cracking down on the abhorrent trade of puppy smuggling. We are currently considering the most effective approach to achieve this.

All pet animals entering Great Britain on approved routes under the EU Pet Travel Scheme undergo documentary and identity checks. The checks are performed by ferry, train or airline carriers or agents acting on their behalf. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) undertakes random checks of the pet animals travelling to ensure the carriers are performing checks to the required standard. The APHA also carries out quality assurance checks to ensure that the standard of performance of the carrier and approved checker is maintained.

The APHA continues to work collaboratively with Border Force and other operational partners at ports, airports and inland, sharing intelligence to enforce the Pet Travel Scheme, disrupt illegal imports and seize non-compliant animals. The numbers of dogs quarantined after being illegally landed in Great Britain between 2016 and 2018 stands at 1,344. This includes those that were imported under the EU Pet Travel Scheme, as well as those imported commercially under the Balai Directive.

Anna McMorris:

[716]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Environmental Audit Committee's first report of Session 2019 entitled, Invasive Species, if her Department will establish a biosecurity citizens' army to (a) improve public understanding of invasive non-native species and (b) help identify emerging biosecurity threats.

Victoria Prentis:

Partnership working is vital to deliver long-term management of invasive non-native species (INNS). The Great Britain INNS Strategy aims to guide a strong partnership approach with non-Governmental organisations, businesses, Government and the general public working together to improve biosecurity and reduce the risk from INNS.

Defra funded 29 Non-native Species Local Action Groups (LAGs) between 2011 and 2015 to support their start-up and give them time to become self-sustaining. Defra continues to provide advice to the LAGs and hosts an annual workshop for LAGs to meet and share progress. Non-native Species LAG coordinators and volunteers work with land owners to control INNS in catchment areas to reduce the risk of reinvasion. LAGs provide a key resource to help manage many species and raise awareness and they have mobilised a large number of volunteers in the fight against INNS. Other stakeholders also play a key role, such as Angling Trust members undertaking clearance of Himalayan balsam on river banks and trapping signal crayfish in their ponds. British Canoeing participates in our strategic approach to floating pennywort control and its members are engaged in organised control work alongside the Environment Agency and the Canal and River Trust.

We will examine the Environmental Audit Committee's recommendation, and in particular the New Zealand model that it promotes for the mobilisation of large numbers of people. Citizen science is a vital addition to Government surveillance, providing more eyes on the ground and shared responsibility, which improves our overall biosecurity culture. We are assessing the options to facilitate the expansion of current local action into a 'biosecurity citizens' army'.

Anna McMorris:

[717]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if her Department will fund a public awareness campaign on invasive non-native species in 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

Increasing levels of public awareness is critical to tackling invasive species. Extra resources will be considered as part of departmental business planning and future Government spending reviews, including Spending Review 2020.

The Great Britain Non-native Species Secretariat (GBNNSS), on behalf of Defra, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government, is currently reviewing the Be Plant Wise campaign. We will be revising the messaging and extending it to cover terrestrial as well as aquatic plants. The GBNNSS is in discussion with some of the

English water companies about extending the very successful partnership work on the Check Clean Dry campaign with them for a further five years beyond 2020 and expanding the campaign to the near Continent.

We launched the first Invasive Species Week in 2015, to bring together a wide range of organisations to raise awareness of invasive non-native species, to highlight work going on to tackle them and to inspire people to get involved and help prevent their spread. Over 320 organisations were involved in last year's Invasive Species Week with 93 events held across the country. Invasive Species Week 2020 will take place from 18-22 May and I would encourage all hon. Members to look for ways to get involved in their constituencies.

Anna McMorris:

[718]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of (a) the contribution of the commercial crayfish industry to the UK economy and (b) the cost to the UK economy of signal crayfish damage and control.

Victoria Prentis:

We have made no specific assessment of the contribution of the crayfish industry to the UK economy. As part of the development of the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019, we engaged with representatives of the crayfish industry to understand the impact of the Order on their businesses.

The 2010 technical report "The economic cost of invasive non-native species on Great Britain" investigated the cost of signal crayfish to the GB economy in regard to management, riverbank restoration, angling and research. The total cost to GB was found to be £2,689,000 annually (England: £1,538,000; Wales: £576,000; Scotland: £575,000. Northern Ireland has no populations of signal crayfish).

Defra recently published the results of a scoping study documenting the current evidence in relation to the ecosystem service impacts of invasive non-native species (INNS) in the UK. This study^[1] sought to determine the feasibility of expanding on the 2010 report by estimating natural capital costs resulting from INNS, alongside the direct economic costs which were the focus of the 2010 report. This found that the costs of control were higher than the reported economic impacts, but these did not include river bank damage or wider ecosystem costs.

[1] Scoping study: ecosystem services and natural capital costs of invasive non-native species in the UK - BE0162

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=1&ProjectID=20315>

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Emily Thornberry:****[1204]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the Kurdish community in relation to the situation in Northern Syria.

James Cleverly:

Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials have regular contact with representatives from different Kurdish political groups about the situation in Syria, including northern Syria.

Emily Thornberry:**[1209]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the threat posed to that country by Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

James Cleverly:

As we made clear in our statement on 13 November 2019, indiscriminate attacks against civilians are unacceptable and unjustifiable, and make peace harder to achieve. The ongoing decision by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) to embrace violence and reject the Quartet principles lies at the heart of the Gaza situation. The UK fully supports Israel's right to self-defence and to defend its citizens from such acts of terror. PIJ and other terrorist groups must cease all actions that are violent or provocative, or that put civilian lives at risk.

Jonathan Edwards:**[1234]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential for UK military hardware to be used by Turkish forces in Syria as a result of their increasing engagement in that region.

James Cleverly:

We continue to monitor the situation in Syria very closely and keep the licensing position under review. As the Foreign Secretary told the House of Commons on 15 October 2019, no further export licences to Turkey for items which might be used in military operations in Syria will be granted while we do so. We take into account any developments in operations as part of our licensing process.

Dr Matthew Offord:**[1239]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what progress towards a two-state solution in Israel was made under Rt Hon Tony Blair's tenure as the Quartet's Middle East Peace Envoy.

James Cleverly:

The UK is committed to making progress towards a two-state solution and supports any serious proposal to bring about that outcome. In that context we welcome the

efforts of the Rt Hon. Tony Blair who served as Quartet Envoy until May 2015. Progress is difficult to achieve, but the realisation of the two-state solution is the best outcome for the parties and the countries of the region, and is in the UK's national interest. We believe that negotiations will only succeed when they are conducted between Israelis and Palestinians, supported by the international community.

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[14961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to the Kenyan authorities on a reported attack on a school in Kamuthe on 13 January 2020 in which terrorists murdered three Christian teachers.

James Duddridge:

The UK is appalled by the reported attack on the school in Kamuthe, Kenya and the killings of three Christian teachers. The UK is firmly committed to promoting and protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief around the world. We are a strong voice internationally in defence of this fundamental right. Our High Commission in Nairobi regularly engages with the Kenyan authorities on the importance of protecting civilians, including all ethnic and religious communities, and human rights for all Kenyans.

While we have not made representations to the Government of Kenya about this specific incident, the UK and Kenya are close partners in the fight against terrorism and recognise Kenya's sacrifices leading efforts to defeat Al Shabaab. Further strengthening our counterterrorism cooperation is a priority under the UK-Kenya Strategic Partnership agreed on by the Prime Minister and President Kenyatta in their meeting on 21 January.

Andrew Rosindell:

[14976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

James Cleverly:

We continue to work closely with international partners including the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel, strongly advocating a two state solution and encouraging a return to meaningful negotiations. The US has offered proposals for breaking the current deadlock. We do not believe these proposals are the end of the road, but we hope that they may lead to a first step towards resolving the conflict. The UK consistently calls for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution, including terrorism, incitement, settlement expansion, and the demolition of Palestinian property in the West Bank. Steps to transform the situation in Gaza are also needed. We are encouraging both sides to avoid taking actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

Andrew Rosindell:

[14982]

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

James Cleverly:

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

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

Alex Norris:[\[15101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on the (a) overcrowding of the Moria refugee camp on the island of Lesbos and (b) resettlement and repatriation of refugees on (i) other islands and (ii) mainland Greece.

Wendy Morton:

Our Ambassador last raised the situation of migrants on the Greek islands with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) when the UNHCR visited Greece in November 2019.

Hywel Williams:[\[1877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Western Sahara region is included in the UK-Morocco trade and political continuity agreement.

James Cleverly:

The UK-Morocco Association Agreement, once in force, will apply in the same way as the EU-Morocco Association Agreement. It treats products originating in Western Sahara in the same way as the EU-Morocco Association Agreement, in line with the European Court of Justice's ruling on that issue and the subsequent amendment of the EU-Morocco Association Agreement. The UK is clear that the application of parts of the UK-Morocco Association Agreement to certain products originating in Western Sahara is without prejudice to our position on the status of Western Sahara, which we regard as undetermined.

Hywel Williams:

[1879]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of civil servants based in the UK Mission to the EU in Brussels in each of the last five years.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Mission to the European Union (UKMis Brussels) currently employs around 180 people, comprising both permanent civil servants from multiple Government Departments and locally recruited staff. We keep staffing under regular review to ensure it is appropriate to deliver HMG objectives including supporting negotiations on the future UK-EU relationship.

Jonathan Edwards:

[1939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Egyptian counterpart on that country's logistical support to the Libyan National Army.

James Cleverly:

The Government is in frequent contact with Egypt about the situation in Libya. The Foreign Secretary discussed it with the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shoukry, in London on 21 January. The UK and Egypt supported the conclusions of the Berlin conference on Libya on 19 January that called for an end to external military support to the parties in Libya. The UN Security Council endorsed the Berlin conference conclusions in Resolution 2510 of 12 February.

Jonathan Edwards:

[1940]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his French counterpart on the Libyan National Army.

Jonathan Edwards:

[1941]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Italian counterpart on the Libyan National Army.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary is in regular contact with his French and Italian counterparts about the situation in Libya and met to discuss Libya in Brussels on 7 January. The Prime Minister met President Macron and Prime Minister Conte at the Libya conference in Berlin on 19 January. Our governments agreed a set of conclusions at Berlin which the UN Security Council endorsed in Resolution 2510 of 12 February. This calls on all the parties, including the Libyan National Army, to support a lasting ceasefire and engage in a renewed political process under UN auspices.

Daniel Kawczynski:

[602]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans the Government has to follow the US in imposing sanctions on any company involved in the construction of Nord Stream II pipeline in the Baltic.

Wendy Morton:

The UK remains concerned about the impact Nord Stream 2 will have on European energy security and on the interests of Ukraine. We continue to be supportive of initiatives that strengthen and diversify the supply of gas and competition across the European market. We engage regularly with our close allies and partners on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and European energy security more broadly.

There are currently no unilateral UK sanctions being imposed with respect to Nord Stream 2. During the transition period, the UK will continue to be bound by the EU sanctions regime.

Jonathan Edwards:[\[606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) political and (b) humanitarian situation in Syria.

James Cleverly:

We are gravely concerned about the political and humanitarian situation in Syria, particularly in Idlib as a result of regime and Russian military action. As of 12 February, the UN reports that at least 832,000 people have been displaced since 1 December 2019, and many more are at risk of imminent further displacement. We are calling on all parties to adhere to previously agreed ceasefires and abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law. The former Minister for the Middle East and North Africa discussed the crisis in north-west Syria with Turkish counterparts as well as UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs, during a visit to Turkey on 5-6 February. We are committed to supporting the victims of this appalling conflict. The Syria crisis has been the UK's biggest ever humanitarian response, with the UK committing £2.81bn of support to Syria and the region since 2012, including a commitment of £400m at the Brussels III Conference in 2019.

Sarah Olney:[\[705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the welfare of Paul Whelan; and what representations he has made to his Russian counterpart on his trial or release.

Wendy Morton:

Whilst I am unable to go into the details of the case I can confirm that consular staff continue to provide assistance.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[1173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on increasing the availability of the ovarian cancer drug Zejula.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for developing authoritative, evidence-based recommendations on whether new medicines represent value for money for the National Health Service in England.

NICE may recommend promising new cancer drugs for use in the Cancer Drugs Fund (CDF) where there is potential for the drug to be considered for routine commissioning but there is significant remaining clinical uncertainty which needs more investigation through data collection in the NHS or clinical trials.

In July 2018 NICE published guidance recommending niraparib (brand name Zejula) for use within the CDF as an option for treating relapsed, platinum-sensitive high-grade serious epithelial ovarian, fallopian tube, or primary peritoneal cancer, that has responded to the most recent course of platinum-based chemotherapy in adults who have had two or more courses of platinum-based chemotherapy. Niraparib is now available to NHS patients through the CDF in line with this guidance.

In March 2019, the Department asked NICE to conduct an appraisal of niraparib for maintenance treatment of advanced ovarian, fallopian tube and peritoneal cancer after response to first-line platinum-based chemotherapy. NICE expects to publish final guidance in February 2021.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[1182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 4 February 2020 to Question 8166 on Plastic Surgery, how many surgeons on the GMC register are not resident in the UK.

Helen Whately:

The General Medical Council does not hold information on the number of surgeons on its register that do not reside in the United Kingdom.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[1201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to issue guidance to local authorities on the (a) timescale and (b) implementation process for the routine commissioning of PrEP.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is continuing to work closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement, Public Health England and local authorities to plan for routine commissioning of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) from April 2020. NHS England

and NHS Improvement have already agreed to fund the on-going costs of drugs for PrEP going forward. We will provide information on how other elements of the programme will be funded, including the timescale and implementation process, and how commissioners will be supported very shortly.

Jo Stevens:

[\[1228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure parity of financial compensation for people affected by the infected blood scandal in each nation of the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

The Government established the England Infected Blood Support Scheme in 2017 to provide dedicated ex-gratia financial and non-financial support to people infected by HIV and/or hepatitis C through treatment with National Health Service-supplied blood or blood products, and their affected families. This scheme is currently administered by NHS Business Services Authority.

We are working with our partners in the devolved nations and other relevant Government departments to improve parity of support across the United Kingdom.

We will consider any recommendations when the Infected Blood Inquiry reports, including those on compensation.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[14948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what savings have accrued to his Department as a result of UK NHS Pharmacy 2 U service; and what steps his Department is taking to increase the levels of use of that service.

Jo Churchill:

No such assessment has been made of savings accrued as a result of the Pharmacy 2U service.

Under the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework five-year deal, funding has been agreed for the period 2019/20 to 2023/24. Irrespective of the payments made to any specific pharmacy, the total funding for National Health Service pharmaceutical services is to remain at £2.592 billion per year for that period, albeit that a shift in spend from dispensing to more clinical services is expected.

The current Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework outlines our future vision for community pharmacy playing an expanded role in the delivery of health and care in England. Patient choice from which community pharmacy they access NHS pharmaceutical services will continue.

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[14964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment the National Supply Disruption Response has made of the potential risk to supplies of essential medicines in the next two years.

Jo Churchill:

The Department assesses the potential risk to the supply of medicines on an ongoing basis. It is not the role of the National Supply Disruption Response to provide an ongoing assessment of the potential risk to the supply of medicines.

Where we are aware of a potential risk, the Department's Medicine Supply team works closely with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority, the pharmaceutical industry, the National Health Service and others operating in the supply chain to help prevent shortages and to ensure that the risks to patients are minimised when they do arise.

In addition to this, marketing authorisation holders of United Kingdom licensed medicines are required under the Health Service Products Regulations 2018 to notify the Department if they are aware of an impending supply shortage of a medicine at least six months prior to the shortage or, if not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable.

Jeremy Hunt:[\[14984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department has taken to conduct a national review of the provision of maternity care and paediatrics in (a) rural areas, (b) areas that are difficult to recruit to or (c) isolated areas.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Maternity Review report, 'Better Births - Improving outcomes of maternity services in England, A Five Year Forward View for maternity care' reviewed maternity services across the country including in rural and isolated areas. It found that in a number of rural areas, small obstetric units see a low number of births and face challenges in employing sufficient numbers of staff.

As part of the New Care Models programme, NHS England alongside the other arm's length bodies, has established 50 vanguards to explore how new models of care can address the quality, care and efficiency challenges faced by the National Health Service; this includes services that are rural, geographically isolated or difficult to recruit to. Examples of best practice and shared learning from these Vanguard sites are continually made available to the wider NHS, through reports, publications, press and media.

Jeremy Hunt:[\[14987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department has taken to (a) establish national standards of the professional duties and expectations of (i) clinical directors, (ii) clinical leads, (ii) heads of service, (iii) medical directors and (iv) nurse directors and (b) ensure that NHS trusts provide evidence of their policies and training to the Care Quality Commission on meeting those national standards.

Jeremy Hunt:

[14988]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department has taken to (a) publish national standards setting out the responsibilities for (i) clinical quality of managers, (ii) executive directors, (iii) middle managers and (iv) non-executives and (b) ensure that NHS Trusts provide evidence to the Care Quality Commission to ensure that standards are met.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management is developing the third edition of the Leadership and management standards for medical professionals to be released in 2020.

The interim People Plan published in June 2019 gave a commitment to undertake a system wide engagement on a new 'NHS Leadership Compact' that will establish the cultural values and leadership behaviours we expect from National Health Service leaders, together with the support and development that leaders should expect in return. NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to reflect the principles of the leadership compact in an updated version of the CQC's Well-Led Framework, which will be consulted on and launched by spring 2021.

The NHS Leadership Academy's Healthcare Leadership Model sets out the behaviours that are required of all NHS leaders in order to deliver effective, high quality care. Additionally, in November 2019, NHS England and NHS Improvement published a competency framework for Chairs and will publish further competency frameworks for executive and non-executive role on NHS boards, in line with the commitment set out in the interim People Plan.

Seema Malhotra:

[14992]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on capital investment needed to deliver the modernisation of the primary care estate outlined in the Health Infrastructure Plan published on 30 September 2019.

Edward Argar:

We are having ongoing discussions with the Chancellor about capital investment in the National Health Service, including primary care.

In September 2019, the Government announced the next stage of our strategic investment in the future of the NHS: the Health Infrastructure Plan (HIP). The HIP will ensure our world-class healthcare staff have world-class facilities to deliver cutting edge care.

As part of this, the Government recognises that more community and primary care is pivotal to the delivery of more personalised, preventative healthcare as set out in the NHS Long Term Plan.

The Department will receive a multi-year capital settlement at the next capital review, which will help the Department and the NHS to deliver the ambitions of the HIP.

Seema Malhotra: [14993]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with NHS England on alternative procurement routes for primary care modernisation proposals after the suspension in 2019 of new Local Improvement Finance Trust projects.

Edward Argar:

The local NHS England and NHS Improvement teams for the proposed National Health Service Local Improvement Finance Trust schemes in Heston and West Hull were informed in June 2019 that they will need to be locally prioritised and funded through available public capital.

There are a range of procurement routes available to deliver prioritised public capital schemes; these include using existing construction frameworks such as Procure 22 and standalone procurements. The most appropriate procurement route for each scheme in terms of value for money and affordability is considered as part of the business case for each scheme.

Dan Jarvis: [14994]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle eye conditions and sight loss associated with diabetes.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England delivers a diabetic eye screening service to help reduce sight loss and blindness in people with diabetes. Diabetic eye screening is offered to anyone with diabetes who is 12 years old or over once a year. Further information on diabetic eye screening can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/diabetic-eye-screening-programme-overview>

Dan Jarvis: [14995]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle eye conditions and sight loss associated with homelessness.

Jo Churchill:

The Government takes the concerns around avoidable sight loss very seriously. Prevention, early detection and access to timely treatment are key to preventing avoidable sight loss. NHS England has issued guidance making clear that lack of identification or proof of address is not grounds for refusing National Health Service primary care treatment, including eye care services. NHS England's Primary Care Access Cards will be launching this spring. These will provide simple and clear information on how homeless patients and other vulnerable groups can access services and their entitlements.

The Government set out its plans to eliminate rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament in its Rough Sleeping Strategy published in August 2018 at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-rough-sleeping-strategy>

The Department is working to deliver the health and social care commitments in the Strategy, with a focus on mental health and substance misuse services, as well as physical health services.

Dan Jarvis:

[14996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle eye conditions and sight loss associated with optic atrophy.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to reducing avoidable sight loss, ensuring that patients have access to timely treatment and support in line with clinical need and the best available evidence.

Any individuals experiencing visual symptoms associated with optic atrophy should consult an optometrist to ensure that eye disease is not overlooked. If after a sight test (and glasses if necessary) an individual is still experiencing difficulties, then a wider assessment may be necessary. Optometrists are able to arrange an onward referral to the appropriate discipline, if required.

Help with the cost of prescription glasses, through National Health Service optical vouchers, is currently available for eligible groups, including children, to help correct a defect in sight, identified during an NHS sight test. There are no plans to change the criteria for NHS optical vouchers.

Helen Hayes:

[15048]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) funding for and (b) provision of mental health services is adequate to meet the high need in London.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The NHS Long Term Plan committed to growing investment in mental health services faster than the National Health Service budget overall for each of the next five years, meaning that, by 2023/24, 380,000 more adults and a further 345,000 children and younger people can access support if they need it.

There is a requirement that clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) increase the spending on mental health by at least as much as their overall budget increases (what is known as the Mental Health Investment Standard (MHIS)). All London CCGs are on track to meet the MHIS.

Kerry McCarthy:

[15124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many student midwives there were in each academic year since 2014-15.

Helen Whately:

The latest data on the total number of enrolments into midwifery courses in each academic year is presented in the following table which shows the number of enrolled students across all years of study residing in England, almost all of whom study at English universities.

MIDWIFERY

Academic year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Total number of enrolments	7,905	8,000	8,020	7,985	8,130

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency, published at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-22>

Note:

- Enrolments include all levels of study: all undergraduate and postgraduate midwifery courses.

Jeremy Hunt:**[15127]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, what plans his Department has to improve the 2014 duty of candour for all NHS professionals.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government introduced a statutory duty of candour on organisations in response to the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry, and this is regulated as part of the Care Quality Commission inspection regime. Providers must ensure that they have processes in place to ensure staff are supported to deliver the duty of candour and have a system in place to identify and deal with possible breaches by registered staff. There are currently no plans to make further changes to these regulations.

The General Medical Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council produce professional duty of candour guidance that registered doctors, nurses and midwives must follow.

Tom Kark QC in his Review into the Fit and Proper Persons Test suggested that compliance with the duty of candour should be included in the core competencies of directors to sit on the board of any health providing organisation. NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently considering how best to bring forward this proposal as part of the NHS People Plan.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**[15144]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will issue guidance to NHS Trusts to increase the provision for fathers staying with the mother and baby in hospital.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

It is important that fathers have time to bond with their baby and support their partner. 'Health Building Note 09-02: Maternity care facilities' sets out best practice guidance on the design and planning of healthcare facilities so that partners and other supporters feel welcome in maternity services. This includes the provision of overnight accommodation for partners within birthing spaces and postnatal rooms or close to the unit. Maternity services need to understand their local populations and develop local policies that enable fathers to support their partners as much as they want to whilst respecting the privacy of other women.

Parents of babies who may require neonatal critical care should also be supported to stay with their baby. The NHS Long Term Plan sets out how we will redesign and expand neonatal critical care services to improve the safety and effectiveness of services and experience of families.

Fleur Anderson:**[2047]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commission an independent inquiry into the causes of shortages of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) medications and products.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is aware that the ongoing supply issues with some hormone replacement therapy (HRT) preparations are due to a range of issues including manufacturing issues, regulatory issues and problems accessing the raw pharmaceutical ingredient as well as commercial decisions made by some companies to divest these products. Although some HRT products are affected by supply issues, supplies of other alternative HRT products remain available.

We are in regular discussion with all HRT suppliers about the underlying causes behind these issues and are working with them closely to resolve the situation as quickly as possible. We therefore have no plans to commission an independent inquiry.

We anticipate the overall supply situation for HRT products will improve from the end of this month.

Barbara Keeley:**[524]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to reports in the Health Service journal, published 6 February 2020, when his Department plans to publish its report on the use of Section 140 of the Mental Health Act 1983 by the NHS.

Barbara Keeley:**[525]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the implementation by clinical commissioning groups of the requirements under section 140 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The final report providing advice to clinical commissioning groups and local authorities on the use of Section 140 of the Mental Health Act 1983 will be published in the next few months.

The report has been prepared by the independent review of the Mental Health Act and published in December 2018, which recommended that guidance should be issued to support National Health Service commissioners to discharge their statutory duties under Section 40 more effectively and consistently.

Grahame Morris:[\[531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2020 to Question 12901 on Ambulance Services: Emergency Calls, for what reason the department does not hold information on long wait performance of Ambulance Trusts.

Edward Argar:

NHS England publish ambulance response times by category and ambulance trust and month and year.

Jeremy Hunt:[\[544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what step has his department taken to introduce a clear national policy on whistleblowing that ensures a systematic and proportionate response is made by Trusts to concerns identified.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government has established an independent National Guardian to help drive positive cultural change across the National Health Service so that speaking up becomes business as usual. The National Guardian oversees a network of over 500 Local Guardians covering every trust. We have also enhanced the legal protections available for whistle blowers to prohibit discrimination against job applicants.

Jeremy Hunt:[\[545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department have taken to review the NHS complaints system to (a) strengthen local resolution and improve timeliness, (b) introduce external scrutiny of local resolution and (c) reduce reliance on the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to intervene in unresolved complaints.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are currently developing a national strategy which aims to drive improvements in how feedback and concerns from patients are dealt with by the National Health Service so that the NHS listens, learns and acts.

Jeremy Hunt:

[546]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department has taken to reform the Local Supervising Authority system for midwives.

Helen Whately:

Both the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's and Dr Bill Kirkup's reports following Morecambe Bay were critical of the Local Supervising Authority system provided for in legislation for midwives.

The Nursing and Midwifery (Amendment) Order 2017 separated the function of midwifery supervision, which is the responsibility of the employer, from regulatory activity, which is the responsibility of the Nursing and Midwifery Council. This brought the regulation of midwives into line with the arrangements for other regulated professions and means that supervisors are no longer involved in regulatory investigations and sanctions.

Subsequently, a new non-statutory model of supervision for midwives has been developed and rolled out in each of the four countries of the United Kingdom with NHS England leading this work in England. The new model focuses on the professional and developmental aspects of the role.

Jeremy Hunt:

[547]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his department has taken to improve recording systems for perinatal deaths.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government has introduced measures to improve the systematic recording of perinatal deaths.

The Perinatal Mortality Review Tool was launched in 2018 to support National Health Service trusts to undertake systematic, multidisciplinary, high quality reviews of the circumstances and care leading up to and surrounding each stillbirth and neonatal death. Reports from the tool enable organisations providing and commissioning care to identify emerging themes across a number of deaths to support learning and changes in the delivery and commissioning of care to improve future care and prevent the future deaths which are avoidable.

In May 2019, MBRRACE-UK introduced a new real-time data monitoring tool, incorporated into the MBRRACE-UK web-based system. The tool allows registered users of the MBRRACE-UK surveillance system to monitor, filter and summarise the perinatal deaths reported for their organisation, using live surveillance data from the MBRRACE-UK system.

Jeremy Hunt:

[548]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled, The Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation, published in March 2015, what steps he has taken to extend the medical examiners system to (a) stillbirths and (b) neonatal deaths to ensure that appropriate recommendations are made to coroners on the occasional need for inquests in individual cases.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Medical examiners will scrutinise all non-coronial deaths and ensure the right deaths are referred to coroners. This includes neonatal deaths. We remain committed to establishing a statutory system in the National Health Service, that will scrutinise all deaths which do not involve a coroner, as soon as Parliamentary time allows. This will build upon the non-statutory system already being implemented.

There is currently no provision for the medical examiner to become involved in the certification for stillborn babies. This is because the functions of medical examiners, as set out in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, are limited to scrutinising causes of death. Stillborn babies are not legally classified as having died because Common law does not see this as a death, as they were not born alive. Officials have been analysing responses to the consultation that sets out proposals for giving coroners new powers to investigate term stillbirths. The Government plans to publish a response in the spring or early summer.

Barbara Keeley:

[558]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the answer of 30 January 2020 to Question 7600 on Mental Health Services and the Network Contract Direct Enhanced Service Specifications published in December 2019, what mechanisms his Department plans to use to ensure that (a) Primary Care Networks, (b) mental health services and (c) other community services work in partnership.

Jo Churchill:

The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement are committed to dissolving the boundaries between primary medical care, mental health services and community health services so that they work together better for the benefits of patients. To deliver the requirements of the Network Contract Direct Enhanced Service, Primary Care Networks will be required to work with their community services providers, community mental health providers and community pharmacies, and to record in their network agreement how they will deliver services in an integrated way.

Alun Cairns:

[581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of overseas (a) doctors and (b) nurses have indefinite leave to remain.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold the information requested.

Fiona Bruce:

[604]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a requirement for pregnancy warning labels on alcohol products.

Jo Churchill:

In March 2017, the Department issued guidance to industry setting out how the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines could best be communicated on the labels of alcoholic drinks. This included specific advice on the communication of warnings not to drink alcohol during pregnancy. The Department agreed, with industry, a transitional period until 1 September 2019 after which all labels should reflect the new guidelines. There are no current plans to legislate for pregnancy warning labels on alcohol products.

Matt Western:

[657]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that mental health support is available for young people waiting for mental health treatments.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Following on from our Green Paper on transforming children and young people's mental health, we are:

- incentivising every school or college to identify and train a Senior Lead for Mental Health;
- creating new mental health support teams in and near schools and colleges; and
- piloting a four-week waiting time to allow swifter access to specialist NHS services for those children and young people who need them

Once implemented, the Green Paper has the potential to significantly improve early intervention and prevention, along with expanding the current children and young people's mental health workforce.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[660]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with local NHS trusts on tackling further outbreaks of Coronavirus.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service is well prepared and we are doing everything we can to protect the public. Guidance has been released to NHS trusts on how to deal with coronavirus. This guidance can be found on the NHS website.

A United Kingdom-wide public information campaign has been launched in conjunction with the NHS to advise the public on how to slow the spread of coronavirus and reduce the impact on NHS services. Government and NHS-branded information will appear in radio and print media, as well as social media.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has also announced the immediate launch of a capital facility to support any urgent works the NHS needs for the coronavirus response, such as the creation of further isolation areas and other necessary facilities.

The Department, the NHS and Public Health England continue to collaborate and work together closely in response to this outbreak.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[677]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust on the steps it will take to tackle an outbreak of the Covid-19 in Slough.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service is well prepared and we are doing everything we can to protect the public. Guidance has been released to NHS trusts on how to deal with coronavirus. This guidance can be found on the NHS website.

A United Kingdom-wide public information campaign has been launched in conjunction with the NHS to advise the public on how to slow the spread of coronavirus and reduce the impact on NHS services. Government and NHS-branded information will appear in radio and print media, as well as social media.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has also announced the immediate launch of a capital facility to support any urgent works the NHS needs for the coronavirus response, such as the creation of further isolation areas and other necessary facilities.

The Department, the NHS and Public Health England continue to collaborate and work together closely in response to this outbreak. Individual trusts have completed plans to tackle an outbreak of coronavirus, in line with national guidance.

Sarah Olney:

[679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times for primary healthcare services.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to improving access to general practice which is why we have committed to delivering 50 million additional appointments in general practice within the next five years. To ensure we can deliver the additional appointments, we have committed to growing the workforce by 6,000 more doctors in general practice and increasing the skills mix with 26,000 more primary care professionals.

NHS England, working with stakeholders, is undertaking a national review of access to general practice services. The main objectives of the review are to consider improving patient access both in hours and at evenings and weekends and to reduce the variations in patient experiences around the country and the inequalities in access for specific groups in society. Initial actions arising from the review were

published in the updated general practitioner (GP) contract agreement 2020/21 - the review will complete in 2020, to inform contract discussions in 2020/21.

Taiwo Owatemi:

[708]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of A&E waiting times (a) at University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire and (b) in England.

Edward Argar:

Accident and emergency (A&E) attendances have increased both nationally and locally on the previous year, December 2019 A&E attendances were 6.5% up nationally over December 2018, the position at University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) was up by 6.6% (4.1% year to date). Latest published performance data for January against the 4 hour A&E performance standard was 77.9% for UHCW compared to 84.6% in January 2019. The latest published national performance for January against the standard was 79.8% compared to 84.5% in January 2019.

The large growth in attendances has had an impact on delivery of the four hour A&E performance standard. The NHS Long Term Plan's Urgent and Emergency Care reform agenda will look to address this through:

- Urgent Treatment Centres that will reduce attendance at, and conveyance to, A&E;
- Same Day Emergency Care which will increase the proportion of acute admissions discharged on the day of attendance from a fifth to a third; and
- To reduce the number of patients that have unnecessary long lengths of stay (+21 days) in hospital and Delayed Transfer of Care - where patients are still in hospital once medically fit to be discharged back into the community.

Sarah Champion:

[728]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 Jan 2020 to Question 4747 on Gender Recognition: Prescriptions, what information his Department holds on how many general practitioners have declined to accept prescribing responsibility for products related to gender identity.

Jo Churchill:

This information is not collected centrally.

Sarah Champion:

[729]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 Jan 2020 to Question 4747 on Gender Recognition: Prescriptions, what steps his Department takes when general practitioners do not comply with Public Sector Equalities Duties and the Equalities Act 2010 in respect of the treatment of transgender and non-binary patients.

Jo Churchill:

The Department discharges its responsibilities through bodies such as the Care Quality Commission, clinical commissioning groups, NHS England and the General

Medical Council, which have various legal, contractual and regulatory powers. The Royal College of General Practitioners and the British Medical Association also have a role in the advice and guidelines that they provide to general practitioners.

Sarah Champion:

[731]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 Jan 2020 to Question 4747 on Gender Recognition: Prescriptions, in cases where general practitioners have declined to accept prescribing responsibility for products related to gender identity (a) how people requesting those medications received that medication via other NHS routes and (b) what signposting information NHS England provides for those people on accessing medication other than via their general practitioner.

Jo Churchill:

In accordance with current clinical protocols and NHS England commissioning documents, responsibility for prescribing hormone treatments rests solely with the individual's general practitioner (GP) on the recommendation of a specialist gender dysphoria team. If a patient is refused a prescription by their GP then a patient has no alternative other than registering with a new GP.

To address this, in 2019 NHS England updated its service specification so that an individual will only be transferred from a Gender Dysphoria Clinic to primary care when their clinical condition is stable or predictable. Additionally, the Gender Dysphoria Clinic will retain responsibility for providing prescriptions and monitoring until the GP has agreed to a transfer of responsibility through a shared care agreement.

NHS England has established a working group, chaired by the Royal College of General Practitioners and comprising of representatives of the British Medical Association and British Association of Gender Identity Specialists, to provide advice on effecting these changes.

Steve Reed:

[756]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2020 to Question 12296, on Special Educational Needs: Nurses, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that Clinical Commissioning Groups ensure their commissioning arrangements are adequate to provide the ongoing support essential to the safety of vulnerable children whilst in school in line with the guidance.

Jo Churchill:

Clinical commissioning groups (CCG) should ensure that commissioning arrangements are adequate to provide the ongoing support essential to the safety of vulnerable children whilst in school.

NHS England have advised that CCG Chief Operating Officers are now co-signatories for Local Safeguarding Partnership plans which should include collaborative governance processes and partnership solutions for the commissioning arrangements for children with special needs.

HOME OFFICE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Mr Clive Betts:****[1165]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many reports of identity theft and fraud made to Action Fraud were referred to trading standards departments for investigation in each year from 2015 to 2019.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects information from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau on the number of recorded frauds and on the number of frauds disseminated to police forces for further investigation. The latest statistics are available here:

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

The Home Office does not hold information on the number of frauds or identify thefts referred to Trading Standards for further investigation.

Steve Reed:**[1248]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether British citizens in receipt of personal independence payments are exempt from the minimum income requirement when applying for a spousal visa.

Kevin Foster:

The minimum income requirement must be met by all those who are subject to this requirement. However, we recognise some sponsors will have a reduced earning capacity as a result of disability or caring for someone with a disability. Therefore, an applicant who is applying for a spousal visa whose sponsor is in receipt of a specified disability-related benefit, including personal independence payments, will be exempt from meeting the minimum income requirement.

In such cases the sponsor is required to demonstrate adequate maintenance which is equivalent to the Income Support level.

Sponsors will need to show they remain exempt from the minimum income requirement at each application application stage or they will otherwise need then to meet the requirement.

Steve Reed:**[1257]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2020 to Question 12894, on Immigration: EU Nationals, if his Department will work with local authorities to estimate the number of looked-after children that (a) are eligible for settled status and (b) have applied successfully for settled status.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has put in place a comprehensive vulnerability strategy to ensure the EU Settlement Scheme is accessible for all, including children in care.

The Home Office has engaged extensively with relevant stakeholders such as the Department for Education, Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Children's Services to assess the needs of this group and ensure they are supported. That engagement continues, and all parties are committed to ensuring local authorities are supported throughout the process.

The vital role local authorities and health and social care trusts (HSCT) have with regards to looked after children accessing the EU Settlement Scheme has been agreed nationwide. Those responsibilities include the identification of eligible children and the recording of each application made. This includes the outcome status and future plans for converting pre-settled status into settled status.

Jo Stevens:

[\[1261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending a statutory duty on flood response to the Fire and Rescue Service in England in line with that in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Kit Malthouse:

A statutory duty for firefighters to respond to flooding is unlikely to make a significant difference to the Fire and Rescue Services which already provide effective response to flooding incidents. This has been demonstrated through the fantastic response of Fire and Rescue Services to a range of incidents in 2019 including the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire floods and the Toddbrook Reservoir incident; and more recently in response to this year's severe storms.

Fire and Rescue Authorities in England already have the power to respond to all kinds of emergencies including flooding, under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, and placing a duty on them would remove local choice on responding to local emergencies.

The Government provides the Fire and Rescue Service with additional resource to tackle flooding via the provision of High-Volume Pumps and boats.

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[15003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been extradited from the UK to Indonesia for (a) violent crimes and (b) non-violent crimes in each year since 2003.

James Brokenshire:

There have been no extraditions from the UK to Indonesia between 1 January 2003 and 13 February 2020 for either violent or non-violent crimes.

As any request for extradition made to Scotland or issued by Scotland would be sent or received by the Crown Office directly, therefore the Home Office does not hold these figures.

Steve Reed:

[15020]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 5 February 2020 to Question 10761, on Airguns: Reviews, what her timescale is for the consultation on firearms safety issues.

Kit Malthouse:

We aim to publish the firearms safety consultation as soon.

Rachael Maskell:

[15039]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were recorded as victims of modern slavery in (a) York Central constituency, (b) City of York Local Authority and (c) North Yorkshire in each year since 2010.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office publishes quarterly statistics regarding the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-referral-mechanism-statistics-quarter-3-2019-july-to-september> and the UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2019-uk-annual-report-on-modern-slavery>

NRM statistics were previously recorded at: <https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications?search=&category%5B%5D=3&limit=15&tag=&tag>

The latest statistics show the number of NRM referrals sent to North Yorkshire Police for crime recording purposes and the number of referrals made by York and North Yorkshire Local Authorities broken down by whether the Potential Victim was an adult or minor at the time of exploitation. However, the statistics do not contain data on a constituency level.

Rachael Maskell:

[15040]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many child victims of modern slavery and human trafficking were recorded in (a) York Central constituency, (b) City of York Local Authority and (c) North Yorkshire in each year since 2010.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office publishes quarterly statistics regarding the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-referral-mechanism-statistics-quarter-3-2019-july-to-september> and the UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2019-uk-annual-report-on-modern-slavery>

NRM statistics were previously recorded at: <https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications?search=&category%5B%5D=3&limit=15&tag=&tag>

The latest statistics show the number of NRM referrals sent to North Yorkshire Police for crime recording purposes and the number of referrals made by York and North Yorkshire Local Authorities broken down by whether the Potential Victim was an adult

or minor at the time of exploitation. However, the statistics do not contain data on a constituency level.

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[15066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what comparative assessment he has made of trends in the level of police station closures and the ability of members of the public to report a crime.

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[15069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the effect of recent trends in police station closures on the ability of people without internet access to report crime.

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[15070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of recent trends in police station closures on crime rates.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold information centrally on police station closures across England and Wales.

Hilary Benn: [\[1866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether EU citizens will be required to provide evidence of settled status or pre-settled status by Border Force officials when entering the UK after the end of the transition period.

Kevin Foster:

EU citizens will not be routinely asked to prove they have been granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme in order to re-enter the UK, but systems will be in place to allow border officials to make such checks where necessary.

Once the new points-based immigration system is fully introduced, Border Force will be able to identify those individuals granted status digitally without the need for the individual to provide evidence.

Hilary Benn: [\[1867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether (a) airline and (b) ferry operators will be required to ask EU citizens for evidence of (i) settled status and (ii) pre-settled status before they board flights and ferries to the UK after the end of the transition period.

Hilary Benn: [\[1868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance the Government has issued to airline operators on the evidence EU citizens will be required to provide before boarding flights to the UK from (a) the EU and (b) other countries after the end of the transition period.

Hilary Benn:[\[1869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance the Government has provided to ferry operators on the evidence EU citizens will need to provide before boarding a ferry to the UK after the end of the transition period.

Kevin Foster:

Immediately after the end of free movement, carriers will not be required to ask EU citizens for evidence of EU Settlement Scheme status before they board flights and ferries to the UK.

As part our future plans for strengthening border security, there may be changes to the checks carriers are required to undertake to ensure their passengers have the appropriate permission to travel to the UK. This could include checks for EU Settlement Status. We will work with carriers to develop the detailed policy and system requirements, and ensure there is appropriate guidance in place before any such changes are made.

Hywel Williams:[\[1876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the (a) European Commission and (b) her (i) Austrian, (ii) German and (iii) Slovenian counterparts on the extradition of criminals during the transition period.

James Brokenshire:

Home Office officials and Ministers regularly engage with their international counterparts in EU Member States on security cooperation. As the UK has left the European Union, these policy discussions take place via bilateral rather than EU channels.

Alison Thewliss:[\[1961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many complaints her Department received on biometric residence permits being produced with an incorrect (a) name, (b) date of birth, and (c) place of birth in each of the last three years.

Kevin Foster:

The Biometric Immigration Document Management Unit (BIDMU) is responsible for correcting biographic errors on Biometric Residence Permits (BRP). From locally held records it has received the following number of complaints relating to (a) name, (b) date of birth, and (c) place of birth in each of the last three years.

	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	PLACE OF BIRTH
2017	1203	111	616
2018	2276	177	944
2019	3991	292	1168

Alison Thewliss:**[1962]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the terms of the contract for the physical production of biometric residence permits are on (a) who produces the permits, (b) where they are produced, (c) when the contract is due for renewal, (d) whether the contract includes a break clause and (e) what circumstances would trigger any break clause.

Kevin Foster:

The production of biometric residence permits is carried out by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in Swansea under a Memorandum of Understanding.

This is reviewed yearly on the anniversary of the agreement and should either party wish to terminate they must give 12 months' notice.

Tulip Siddiq:**[1987]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of police powers to intercept packages containing items which may be used for (a) self-harm and (b) suicide.

Kit Malthouse:

Under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016, law enforcement agencies may apply for a warrant in order to intercept postal content where it is considered necessary and proportionate for the purposes of preventing or detecting serious criminal activity.

There are no provisions which would give the police specific powers to intercept items which may be sent through the post in order to assist in self-harm or suicide.

Fiona Bruce:**[2005]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timeframe is for the publication of the Home Office funded research by the University of Bristol on prostitution policy.

Victoria Atkins:

As part of the Government's response to the 2016 Home Affairs Select Committee report into prostitution, the Home Office provided £150,000 to fund research specifically into the nature and prevalence of prostitution in England and Wales.

This independent research was led by the University of Bristol and was published on 30 October 2019. It is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-of-prostitution-and-sex-work-in-england-and-wales>

Luke Pollard:**[2022]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance she is providing for Chinese nationals whose visas expire imminently and whose home provinces are affected by covid-19.

Kevin Foster:

We are taking a proportionate approach to individuals who are unable to comply with their visas due to the coronavirus outbreak.

We have set up a dedicated helpline and are providing visa extensions for anyone whose immigration status has been affected. Full guidance has been published on the GOV.UK website and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-immigration-guidance-if-youre-unable-to-return-to-china-from-the-uk>

No one will be unfairly penalised for events beyond their control.

Fleur Anderson:**[2052]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many inadmissibility decisions based on the concept of safe third country were made by the UK in 2019, by country designated as safe third country.

Chris Philp:

The Dublin III Regulation is a long-standing mechanism between EU Member States to determine responsibility for examining asylum claims. It is not an application route for transfer to the UK. At present we do not publish data on cases covered by the Dublin Regulation. Eurostat, the EU's statistics agency, regularly publishes Member State figures, which can be found at:

http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_dubto&lang=en

The UK is committed to providing protection to those who need it, in accordance with its international obligations. It is an established principle that those in need of protection should seek asylum in the first safe country that they enter and not put their lives at risk by making unnecessary and dangerous onwards journeys to the UK. Illegal migration from safe countries undermines our efforts to help those most in need. Controlled resettlement via safe and legal routes is the best way to protect refugees and disrupt the organised crime groups that exploit migrants and refugees.

Information regarding how many inadmissible decisions based on the concept of safe third country and which designated safe third country those decisions relate to is not recorded or held in a reportable format.

Full guidance on which asylum claims must be treated as inadmissible was published in October 2019 and can be found via the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inadmissibility-third-country-cases>

Jo Stevens:**[664]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have had a (a) passport and (b) UK citizenship withdrawn under the Royal Prerogative in each year since 2013.

Kevin Foster:

(a) The Secretary of State publishes the number of passports withdrawn under the Royal Prerogative in the annual Government Transparency Report: Disruptive and

Investigatory Powers. The last Transparency Report was published in July 2018. A link to that report can be found here;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/727961/CCS207_CCS0418538240-1_Transparency_Report_2018_Web_Accessible.pdf

(b) Citizenship is not withdrawn under the Royal Prerogative, it is the British Nationality Act 1981 that provides the Secretary of State with powers to deprive a person of citizenship status under the circumstances set out at sections 40(2) and 40(3) of the Act.

Section 40(2) allows the Secretary of State to deprive any person of British citizenship, should they deem it conducive to the public good to do so.

Section 40(3) allows the Secretary of State to deprive a person who has obtained citizenship by naturalisation or registration, where the Secretary of State is satisfied citizenship was obtained by means of fraud, false representation or concealment of material fact.

Three reports have been published to date in 2015, 2017 and 2018, which have included figures for section 40(2) deprivations. Figures from May 2010 to December 2014 are included in the 2015 report, from January to December 2015 in the 2017 report and January 2016 to December 2017 in the 2018 report. The links to these reports are below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/473603/51973_Cm_9151_Transparency_Accessible.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/593668/58597_Cm_9420_Transparency_report_web.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disruptive-and-investigatory-powers-transparency-report-2018>

Jo Stevens:

[665]

To ask the Secretary of State for Home Department, how many Unexplained Wealth Orders have been issued in each quarter since the implementation of those orders.

James Brokenshire:

Since implementation, 15 unexplained wealth orders (UWOs) have been granted in relation to 4 cases.

The quarterly breakdown is as follows:

3 UWOs were granted in relation to 1 case in Q4 of 2017/18

3 UWOs were granted in relation to 1 case in Q1 2019/20

9 UWOs were granted in relation to 2 cases in Q2 2019/20

Steve Reed:

[\[758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of potential child victims of trafficking currently not supported by an Independent Child Trafficking Guardian.

Victoria Atkins:

Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs) have been rolled out in one third of local authorities in England and Wales. If a child presents indicators of trafficking in these areas, first responder organisations have a responsibility to make a referral to the ICTG service.

The Home Office will publish its next evaluation of the ICTG service later this year, which will provide further updates on outcomes of the service including the number of children it supports.

The Government is currently considering improvements to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 made by the Independent Review in 2019, which considered Section 48, which makes provision for ICTGs. The Government remains committed to the national roll out of ICTGs.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[14945\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, on how many occasions since June 2019 reports have been made on the missing towel dispenser in the men's lavatory on the ground floor of Norman Shaw North; for what reasons no action has been taken in response to those reports; and if he will make a statement.

Pete Wishart:

Parliamentary Maintenance Services Team (PMST) has three recorded instances of this roller towel being reported to its Helpdesk – on 18/06/19, 09/09/19 and 16/10/19.

On each occasion a reactive works request was correctly raised and a tradesperson attended; however this particular roller towel is located in a stainless steel housing which means our standard roller towels do not fit so we were unable to resolve the issue on our initial visit and the requests were incorrectly closed.

PMST apologises for this oversight and is pleased to confirm that a new modified roller towel has now been installed. In addition PMST has reviewed its procedures to minimise any re-occurrence of reactive works requests being closed incorrectly.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[14946\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether the Commission consulted the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards before making its recommendations of 10 February 2020 on

the creation of an independent panel to consider complaints made against hon Members; and whether the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards supports the Commission's preferred option.

Pete Wishart:

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards (PCS) was fully consulted during the process of drawing up options for implementing the third Cox recommendation. The House of Commons Commission cannot speak on behalf of the PCS who is independent, but the option selected by the Commission was the one which commanded most widespread support during that consultation process, including from the PCS.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

Mr Clive Betts:

[1162]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the (a) projected annual net costs of Help to Buy from its inception until 2021-22 as set out in the original business case, (b) actual annual net costs from inception until 2018-2019 and (c) current projected net costs until 2021-22.

Christopher Pincher:

The following answer sets out Capital Departmental Expenditure Limits (CDEL) forecast expenditure of the Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme, as set out in published Budget reports. It includes CDEL financial transactions only, as the primary cost associated with the scheme. It does not include running costs. Help to Buy: Equity Loan is a demand-led scheme: the uptake is driven by the market. Budget forecasts are therefore revised regularly in light of the most recent market information and estimated demand for the scheme.

It would not be appropriate to set out annualised net forecast expenditure or costs because they are not reflective of the actual cost and return to government for the scheme. In particular, the annual net cost amount does not fully account for the equity element of the homes which is held as an asset.

For the reasons set out above, the Department does not set out annual net costs for Help to Buy: Equity Loan. Annual cost and income figures in relation to the scheme are set out in the Annual Report and Accounts of Homes England (formerly Homes and Communities Agency) for the financial years 2013-14 to 2018-19.

The figures published in the Budget reports are:

2013 Spring Budget Report

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221885/budget2013_complete.pdf

This contains announcement of scheme from 2013 to 2016.

page 65, page 71 Table 2.6 (£ million)

HELP TO BUY:

EQUITY LOAN	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	TOTAL
	£1,150m	£1,430m	£1,550m	£4,130m

2014 Spring Budget Report

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/293759/37630_Budget_2014_Web_Accessible.pdf

This contains the announcement of extending the scheme to 2020 (paragraphs 1.140, 2.15). page 62, Table 2.5 (£ million)

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL
Help to Buy: 0 Equity Loan	0	£1,700m	£1,750m	£1,800m	£5,250m	

2015 Spending Review Autumn Statement

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/479749/52229_Blue_Book_PU1865_Web_Accessible.pdf

page 42, paragraph 1.146 part 4 This contains the announcement of extending the scheme to 2021, along with the new London Help to Buy scheme.

2016 Spring Budget Report

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508193/HMT_Budget_2016_Web_Accessible.pdf

page 42, paragraph 1.105 This contains an update on scheme performance.

2017 Autumn Budget Report

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/661480/autumn_budget_2017_web.pdf

This contains the announcement of the additional £10 billion. page 25, Table 1.9 (£ million)

HELP TO BUY:

EQUITY LOAN	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	TOTAL
	£1,895m	£2,870m	£3,325m	£3,780m	£11,870m

2018 Autumn Budget Report

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/752202/Budget_2018_red_web.pdf

Contains the announcement of the new scheme from 2021 to 2023. page 27, Table 1.8 (£ million)

HELP TO BUY:

EQUITY LOAN	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	TOTAL
	£170m	£4,065m	£4,605m	£8,840m

Mr Clive Betts:

[1163]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's press release of 24 October 2019, entitled £38 million Homes England funding to speed up development of over 2,000 homes, what assessment criteria were used to determine the distribution of that funding to support modular construction; whether the assessment criteria and associated weighting were determined before applications were invited for that funding; on what date those criteria were determined; whether Ministers had a role in the selection process; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

On 24 October 2019 an announcement was made by Homes England that funding worth £38.2 million was approved for six local authorities to speed up the construction of at least 2,072 homes across the country. This was made under the £450 million Local Authority Accelerated Construction programme which aims to unlock up to 33,500 additional homes on surplus public sector land.

In January 2017 initial expressions of interest were sought from local authorities content to see sites developed which: could deliver starts within the expected parliamentary term as part of the local authorities' wider housing ambitions; had capacity for 50 sites or more; could demonstrate additionality; could support market diversification; had accelerated build out; were not held in a Local Authority's Housing Revenue Account and could make use of a range of modern methods of construction.

Subsequently, Homes England worked with engaged Local authorities on projects which appeared viable, sharing details of due diligence requirements.

Ministers did not select the sites on the programme. Selection was done by Homes England who, as the Government's housing agency, have been commissioned to deliver the programme. Funding decisions are taken in accordance with Homes England's internal processes and in line with set parameters.

Mr Clive Betts:

[1164]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to make an announcement on the uplift in planning fees; for what reason that announcement has not yet been made; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

We announced a Planning White Paper which will look into the resourcing and capacity of local planning authorities and how planning application fees can support this. We will be making an announcement in due course.

Kerry McCarthy:[\[1188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish a Statement of Expectations for supported housing providers; and if he will make a statement.

Luke Hall:

My Department is completing a National Statement of Expectations (NSE) for supported housing, which we have developed in close collaboration with local authorities and provider membership bodies. The guidance sets out Government's vision for the planning, commissioning and delivery of supported housing, and outlines our expectations for standards in accommodation. We are currently finalising the NSE and intend to publish it shortly.

Kerry McCarthy:[\[1189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many people received a Disabled Facilities Grant in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Luke Hall:

The Government does not currently produce data on the Disabled Facilities Grant. However, the Department provides local authority returns to Foundations, the Government-funded national body for home improvement agencies. Foundations analyse the data to understand Disabled Facilities Grant delivery nationally. From records provided by Foundations, the data shows the following estimates for adaptations that were delivered from 2014 to 2019:

Estimates for number of Disabled Facilities Grants delivered (2014 to 2019)

2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL
40,645	40,800	46,000	47,850	53,500	228,795

Source: Foundations, the national body for home improvement agencies

Kerry McCarthy:[\[1190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government, how many people with a diagnosis of autism received a Disabled Facilities Grant in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Luke Hall:

The number of people with a diagnosis of autism who received a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for each of the last 5 years is not held centrally. However, anyone can apply for a DFG, including people diagnosed with autism. The Government is

committed to helping people to live independently and safely in their own homes, which is why we have invested over £2.7 billion into the grant since 2012, delivering around 280,000 home adaptations by the end of 2018-19.

Grahame Morris:

[1259]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to bring forward proposals to require landlords to leave a deposit when they engage the services of a Property Management Company in order that the Property Management Company can carry out urgent repairs in circumstances where absentee landlords cannot be contacted.

Christopher Pincher:

Tenancy deposits must be protected with a Government-approved Tenancy Deposit Protection scheme, and cannot be used mid-tenancy for repair and maintenance work. We do not have plans to intervene in the direct financial arrangements between landlords and agents. However, we plan to further empower tenants to seek resolution and rectification in cases of disrepair and otherwise poor conditions by requiring landlords to belong to a redress scheme.

Dan Jarvis:

[14998]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to support planning and development on brownfield sites.

Christopher Pincher:

The revised National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that local authorities should prioritise brownfield land for development, especially for new homes to meet local need. We now require every local authority to publish a brownfield register; these registers have identified an estimated 26,000 or more hectares of brownfield with potential for around a million homes.

Government also offers practical support for regeneration, including brownfield redevelopment: for instance, the £4.5 billion Home Building Fund provides loan funding, some of it supporting the re-use of brownfield sites; the Single Housing Infrastructure Fund helps with provision of roads, schools and other infrastructure for housing schemes; and Land Remediation Relief can reduce taxation for companies cleaning up contaminated land.

Mike Amesbury:

[15037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to page 110 of the background briefing to the Queen's Speech published in December 2019, what plans he has to (a) publish a devolution framework for England and (b) consult local authorities in (i) Cheshire and (ii) Warrington.

Mr Simon Clarke:

a) We will publish an English Devolution White Paper in 2020, setting out our strategy to unleash the potential of our regions. It will consider the future role of local growth funding and will provide further information on our plans for full devolution across England, whilst levelling up powers between Mayoral Combined Authorities.

(b) The Government recognises the importance of engaging with a wide range of stakeholders on the future of devolution in England and will continue this as it develops the English Devolution White Paper.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[15161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans the Government has to reintroduce the Community Housing Fund.

Christopher Pincher:

The Community Housing Fund is currently scheduled to close in March 2020.

Ministers are considering all budgets in the round and allocations for 2020/21 will be confirmed through a business planning exercise. Allocations for future years will be considered at the next fiscal event.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[15162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of recent trends in the level of the Community Housing Fund on the rate of build of community housing.

Christopher Pincher:

The Community Housing Fund is delivered outside London by Homes England and within London by the Greater London Authority (GLA). Prior to the Community Housing Fund delivery programmes being launched in Summer 2018, data on the delivery of community-led housing was not routinely collected by the Government.

Data collected by stakeholder groups indicates that the sector delivered approximately 400 homes in 2016. The most recent data from Homes England (February 2020) and the GLA (November 2019) indicates that community groups applying for support from the Community Housing Fund propose to build a total of 12,292 homes. In 2019 MHCLG, working with Homes England and the GLA, identified a potential delivery pipeline of 16,700 community-led homes over the next few years.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[15163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of renewing the Community Housing Fund on community cohesion.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government recognises that the community-led housing sector offers significant potential for promoting community cohesion through helping to meet local housing need and also through the common endeavour of bringing local housebuilding schemes forward.

The Community Housing Fund is currently scheduled to close in March 2020.

Ministers are considering all budgets in the round and allocations for 2020/21 will be confirmed through a business planning exercise. Allocations for future years will be considered at the next fiscal event.

Sarah Jones:

[15177]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his statement of 20 January 2020 on Building Safety, Official Report, column 23, if he will publish the names of the 43 private residential tower block owners who according to the government's latest Building Safety Programme data release have not put a plan in place to remove unsafe ACM cladding by February 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

Where building owners are failing to make acceptable progress, those responsible should expect further action to be taken – including naming and shaming and enforcement.

Sir Roger Gale:

[1847]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the criteria upon which high street shops were determined to be eligible for rate relief.

Luke Hall:

The Government published updated guidance to local authorities on the application of the retail discount for 2020-21, on 27 January 2020 which can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861633/200129_Retail_Discount_Guidance.pdf

The guidance sets out the relevant criteria to enable local authorities to determine which high street properties are eligible for the discount.

Sir Roger Gale:

[1848]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reasons adult gaming centres are excluded from high street rate relief.

Luke Hall:

The guidance for local authorities on application of the business rates retail discount sets out the types of property use that the Government considers to be retail use for the purposes of the discount. While the guidance does not specifically refer to adult gaming centres, it lists a range of service provision uses that the Government does not consider to be retail use, including betting shops. As set out in the guidance it is for local authorities to determine whether particular properties are broadly similar in nature to those specifically excluded by the guidance and, if so, to consider them not eligible for the relief under their local scheme.

Ms Karen Buck:

[1857]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what restrictions are placed on the activities of Government-appointed commissioners who provide services to firms operating within the local authority area for which they are responsible; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Karen Buck:

[1862]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what restrictions are placed on Government-appointed commissioners who provide services to firms operating within the council area for which they are responsible; and if he will make a statement.

Luke Hall:

Commissioners are appointed under the Secretary of State's powers provided in the Local Government Act 1999 ("the 1999 Act"). Their terms of appointment require individuals to declare any personal or business interests which may, or may be perceived to, influence their judgements in performing their functions. These interests include (without limitation), personal direct and indirect pecuniary interests, and, any such interests of their close family members and/or of people living in the same household or as their close family members. As a public appointee, they must act appropriately and in accordance with the required standards. They are required to uphold the standards of conduct set out in by the Seven Principles of Public Life.

Ms Karen Buck:

[1858]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he holds information on the amount of money that the commissioner for Northamptonshire Mr Tony McArdle has received in fees as an adviser to Newton Europe since May 2018; and if he will make a statement.

Luke Hall:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government does not hold this information

Steve Reed:

[1958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the value of contracts awarded by his Department to the British Standards Institute was in each of the last five years.

Christopher Pincher:

My Department has not awarded any contracts to the British Standards Institute for the period requested.

Steve Reed:

[1959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has commissioned large-scale fire safety tests on expanded polystyrene in rendered systems.

Steve Reed:

[1960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans to commission large-scale fire safety tests on systems with (a) timber cladding and (b) expanded polystyrene insulation.

Christopher Pincher:

Acting on advice from the Expert Panel, the government has commissioned research from the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to support further understanding of the fire performance of Non-Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) external wall systems. This includes bespoke medium scale tests on timber cladding panels

The results of this research will be published shortly. So far, the results show that none of the materials tested present as significant a fire hazard as ACM (and other metal composites) with unmodified polyethylene core.

Subject to the research findings, a decision will be made as to the testing of further materials used on external wall systems, including timber cladding. This may include tests at large medium or small scale. We currently have no plan to commission a large-scale fire safety test on systems, incorporating timber cladding or expanded polystyrene.

Stephanie Peacock:**[1963]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many people that served in the armed forces were identified as statutorily homeless by local authority housing services throughout England in each year since 2010.

Luke Hall:

Our veterans have played a vital role in keeping our country safe and we owe them a duty to ensure they are provided with all the support they need to successfully adjust back into civilian life.

A person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of Her Majesty's regular armed forces has a priority need for accommodation and we have put in place an additional £1 million fund to boost support on offer to vulnerable veterans who are, or at risk of becoming homeless.

The Department introduced a new data collection tool in 2018 to improve the information we collect from local authorities on homelessness: the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC).

The figures for people that served in the armed forces identified as statutory homeless from 2018 onwards can be found in table A3 of the homeless tables:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

Prior to 2018, the figures for levels of statutory homelessness in those who served in the armed forces can be found in the individual LA level tables (listed under discontinued tables):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness#discontinued-tables>

Helen Hayes:**[1972]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the extent to which his Department's proposed Future Homes Standard is aligned with the Government's net zero carbon target.

Christopher Pincher:

Homes – both new and existing – account for 20 per cent of emissions, and this Department recognises the important contribution that the energy efficiency of homes has to make in meeting the Government's 2050 target.

As part of this, we have consulted on introducing a Future Homes Standard by 2025. This means new homes will be fit for the future, with low carbon heating and lower energy use through high levels of energy efficiency. As a stepping stone to the Future Homes Standard we are proposing a meaningful but achievable strengthening in these requirements in 2020 and then a further strengthening by 2025.

Helen Hayes:[\[1973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what representations he has received from local authorities that wish to set more demanding building regulations than those proposed in his Department's Future Homes Standard.

Christopher Pincher:

The proposed Future Homes Standard aims to create new build homes fit for the future through low carbon heating and energy efficiency, from 2025. The Future Homes Standard consultation closed on 7 February 2020. We are currently analysing over 3,000 responses and will publish the Government's response in due course.

Helen Hayes:[\[1974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the Government's policy is on achieving zero carbon new homes.

Christopher Pincher:

Homes – both new and existing – account for 20 per cent of emissions, and this Department recognises the important contribution that the energy efficiency of homes has to make in meeting the Government's 2050 target.

We have consulted on introducing a Future Homes Standard by 2025. This means new homes will be fit for the future, with low carbon heating and lower energy use through high levels of energy efficiency.

The consultation closed on 7 February 2020. We are currently analysing over 3,000 responses and will publish the Government's response in due course.

Neil O'Brien:[\[2034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding has been allocated under the (a) Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme (SOAHP) 2016 to 2021 and (b) addendum to the SOAHP published in June 2018 to each region (a) in total and (b) per capita.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is committed to increasing the supply of social housing and has made £9 billion available through the Affordable Homes Programme to March 2022 to deliver approximately 250,000 new affordable homes in a wide range of tenures.

The Mayor has overall responsibility for affordable housing policy and programme delivery in London. Government has agreed a £4.8 billion deal with the GLA.

Homes England is responsible for the delivery of the Affordable Homes Programme for the rest of England and have been allocated £4.9 billion.

The Department publishes spend information on spend in its yearly accounts which are available on gov.uk at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mhclg-annual-report-and-accounts-2018-to-2019>

We do not publish annualised data on capital spend by local areas.

Fleur Anderson: [2045]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will extend the scope of the unsafe cladding fund to include all buildings with cladding that do not meet the requirements needed to issue a fire safety certificate.

Tom Hunt: [2060]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will allocate additional funds for the replacement of (a) aluminium composite material and (b) high pressure laminate cladding.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has committed £600 million for the removal and replacement of unsafe ACM cladding on high-rise residential buildings. Government intervention is wholly exceptional, and is based on the unparalleled fire risk ACM poses. We are aware of concerns leaseholders have about meeting the cost of remediation of fire safety issues other than ACM cladding remediation on high-rise buildings. Building safety is the responsibility of the building owner, and they should consider all routes to meet costs, protecting leaseholders where they can – for example through warranties and recovering costs from contractors for incorrect or poor work.

Dan Jarvis: [R] [528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans to change the criteria for the distribution of funding for local authorities.

Dan Jarvis: [R] [539]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timetable is for the publication of the local government funding review.

Luke Hall:

We are committed to undertaking a review of the relative needs and resources of local authorities in England. The review will consider the drivers of local authorities' needs, the resources available to them to fund services, and how to account for these in a way that draws a more transparent and understandable link between local circumstances and local authority funding.

We aim to develop a funding methodology that will give a more up-to-date and robust assessment of the needs and resources for every local council, whether in the north or south, and are working closely with local government representatives and others to examine all elements of the review.

We intend to share emerging results with the sector shortly, followed by a full consultation in the Spring. Our aim is to implement the review in 2021-22.

Rushanara Ali:

[533]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will ask the Regulator for Social Housing to explain why Clarion Housing Group's failure to ensure that its contractor Ecolution responded within 24 hours as an urgent appointment to reports by tenants of a loss of heating and hot water in its all-electric blocks does not represent serious detriment to tenants amounting to a breach of the Home Standard.

Christopher Pincher:

While the framework within which the Regulator of Social Housing operates is set out in legislation, the regulator is operationally independent and it would not be appropriate for me to direct it as to how it carries out its functions.

It is important to note, however, that when considering whether consumer standards have been breached the regulator is looking to identify systemic failings in an organisation.

Rushanara Ali:

[534]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will ask the Chief Executive of Clarion Housing Group to report how many tenants in all-electric blocks who suffered a loss of heating and/or hot water since the new contract for those utilities commenced with Ecolution Energy Services were given appointments for an electrician or engineer to attend those blocks within (a) 24 hours, (b) 72 hours and (c) 28 days.

Christopher Pincher:

As a private registered provider of social housing, Clarion is required to meet the Regulator of Social Housing's standards. This includes a requirement that landlords provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service that responds to the needs of and offers choices to tenants. It also has the objective of getting repairs and improvements right the first time. However, it is up to housing associations to develop their own procedures for tenants to report repairs and complaints and their own service commitments to their tenants.

Rushanara Ali:

[535]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will ask the Regulator for Social Housing to state (a) how many complaints it has received about services provided by Clarion Housing Group in each of the last four years and (b) what the outcome of each of those complaints was.

Christopher Pincher:

The Regulator of Social Housing received 36 referrals complaining about Clarion in 2017 and 21, 31 and 3 in 2018, 2019 and so far in 2020 respectively.

Once received the regulator carries out an initial review to assess whether it can, within its remit, consider these further. In 2017, six of the cases were investigated further and nine and eight cases in 2018 and 2019 respectively. None of the referrals were considered to have breached the regulator's consumer standards.

Rushanara Ali:[\[536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 9 May 2019 to Question 249190 on Clarion Housing Group and with reference to the oral contribution of the former Minister for Housing and Planning of 31 October 2016, Official Report, column 754, on Social Housing: Regulation, whether the Housing Ombudsman has referred any complaints about Clarion Housing Group to the Regulator of Social Housing as involving evidence of potentially systemic issues relating to any registered providers since the 31 October 2016.

Christopher Pincher:

The Housing Ombudsman has not referred Clarion Housing Group to the Regulator of Social Housing under this Scheme for potentially systemic issues or non-compliance with the Ombudsman's orders since 31 October 2016.

The Regulator of Social Housing continues to monitor the level of complaints and referrals from individual Clarion tenants made to the Regulator and to take any follow up engagement as appropriate. The Regulator also liaises closely with the Housing Ombudsman.

Rushanara Ali:[\[537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2019 to Question 291215 on Housing Ombudsman Service: Complaints, what the average length of time taken was to determine complaints to the Housing Ombudsman Service for (a) July to September and (b) October to December 2019; and how many complaints were determined in each of those quarters.

Christopher Pincher:

The average time taken to determine complaints and the number of complaints determined by the Housing Ombudsman Service is set out below.

1. July to September 2019: average time taken was 5.6 months and 576 determinations were issued.
2. October to December 2019: average time taken was 5.4 months and 553 determinations were issued.

Ben Lake:[\[611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to hold engagement events on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

in the next (a) four weeks, (b) three months and (c) six months in (i) Wales, (ii) England, (iii) Scotland and (iv) Northern Ireland.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government recognises the importance of providing clarity to local areas on the future of local growth funding now we have left the European Union, and of wide engagement in developing the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which will tackle inequality and deprivation across the United Kingdom.

The Government has been working closely with interested parties across the UK whilst developing the fund, and officials have met with their counterparts in the devolved administrations on multiple occasions to discuss the fund.

In total, Government officials have held 25 engagement events across the UK, attended by over five hundred representatives from a breadth of sectors, which has helped inform progress on policy design.

There is continued regular engagement at official level, and it is expected this will be maintained in the future.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[680]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans to establish a building safety fund to help remove dangerous non-ACM cladding from buildings over 18 metres in height.

Christopher Pincher:

Government intervention to fund the removal and replacement of unsafe ACM cladding is wholly exceptional. It is based on the unparalleled fire risk ACM poses. That is why, to date, Government has committed £600 million to the removal and replacement of unsafe ACM on high rise residential buildings.

We are aware of concerns leaseholders have about meeting the cost of remediation of fire safety issues other than ACM cladding remediation. Building safety is the responsibility of the building owner, and they should consider all routes to meet costs, protecting leaseholders where they can – for example through warranties and recovering costs from contractors for incorrect or poor work.

Government continues to ensure these fire safety risks are remediated as quickly as possible, including through stronger enforcement and tackling costs for leaseholders. We therefore stand ready to take further steps to ensure necessary remediation happens at pace.

Sarah Jones:

[755]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what data his Department is collecting on the cost of interim fire safety measures in high rise buildings being borne by (a) leaseholders, (b) councils and (c) housing associations; and if he will publish that data.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department does not hold this information.

Jeff Smith:

[\[900885\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of Government funding for local authorities in England.

Luke Hall:

The Government has responded to the pressures councils are facing. The settlement provides access to an estimated 4.4 per cent increase in core spending power; the largest year on year increase in a decade, with a further £1.5 billion to fund adult and children's social care.

■ Buildings: Fire Prevention

Steve Reed:

[\[13491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of remedial fire safety works other than the replacement of ACM cladding on the ability of Housing Associations to develop new affordable housing.

Christopher Pincher:

[Holding answer 11 February 2020]: The Department is helping landlords refine the estimates of the costs associated with ensuring their buildings are safe. As part of that we continue to engage with landlords, including housing associations, to understand their capacity to deliver these safety improvements. We are aware of the impact these costs might have on housing associations' other plans, but landlords also have an obligation to ensure their buildings are safe. Action has been taken to address buildings with the greatest safety risks associated with ACM cladding and supported funding for the remediation of 140 buildings in the social housing sector through the government's social sector ACM cladding remediation fund.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Steve Reed:

[\[13487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what information his Department holds on leaseholders who have been forced to declare bankruptcy because of inability to pay combustible building cladding remediation costs.

Christopher Pincher:

[Holding answer 11 February 2020]: The Department does not hold this information. The Government has committed £200 million for the removal and replacement of unsafe ACM cladding on private sector residential high-rise buildings.

We are aware of concerns leaseholders have about meeting the cost of remediation of fire safety issues other than ACM cladding remediation. Building safety is the responsibility of the building owner, and they should consider all routes to meet costs, to protect leaseholders – for example through warranties and recovering costs from contractors for incorrect or poor work. However, we do not want the cost to be a barrier to remediation, so the Department is considering options to support leaseholders with Her Majesty's Treasury.

■ High Rise Flats: Fires

Neil Coyle:

[9051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to ensure owners and managers of high-rise residential buildings introduce measures to support residents whose ability to self-evacuate may be compromised.

Christopher Pincher:

The Home Office will introduce a Fire Safety Bill in early 2020 which will put beyond doubt that owners or managers of multi-occupied residential buildings need to fully consider and mitigate the risks of external wall systems and front doors to individual flats.

The Fire Safety Bill will create a firm foundation to enable the Government to lay regulations to deliver the legislative recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report, including in relation to personal evacuation plans for residents whose ability to evacuate may be compromised. A consultation on the Grenfell Tower Phase 1 legislative recommendations is planned for spring 2020.

In addition, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has committed to bringing forward a Building Safety Bill. In our consultation, *Building a Safer Future: proposals for reform of the building safety regulatory system*, we set out proposals to create an enhanced safety framework for high-rise residential buildings. This included proposals for residents of buildings in scope of this new regime to receive key safety information about their building, which would include details about how to notify their 'building safety manager' if their ability to evacuate may be compromised. We will publish the response to our consultation shortly and will introduce legislation at the earliest opportunity.

■ Youth Services: Finance

Seema Malhotra:

[1224]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with the Local Government Association on the adequacy of funding allocated by local authorities for the provision of youth services.

Luke Hall:

I and my Ministerial colleagues and officials have very regular engagement with the Local Government Association (LGA) and other representatives of local government on a wide range of issues, including services for children and young people.

In 2020-21, local government will receive the largest year-on-year increase in spending power in almost a decade. Core Spending Power will rise by an estimated 4.4 per cent in real terms, to around £49.2 billion. This will help provide valuable support for services to young people. Longer term funding decisions will be made at the next Spending Review.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Mr Gregory Campbell:****[1880]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle the desert locust invasion in Eastern Africa.

James Duddridge:

We are deeply concerned about the devastating locust outbreak in East Africa. It is destroying crops, livelihoods and essential food supplies.

UK aid is helping to tackle this outbreak through the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The CERF has released £7.5 million to the UN Food and Agriculture Office (FAO) Locust Appeal. Our support is having an immediate impact, with UK aid backed funding, the FAO is spraying pesticides on the ground and by air to prevent further damage to crops and protect livelihoods.

DFID's existing humanitarian and development programming in the region is working to address current food insecurity and poverty challenges and is ready to flex to respond to this crisis. We continue to monitor the situation closely and stand ready to help further.

As rising temperatures due to climate change make such events across Africa more likely, we are also helping communities adapt longer term to climate shocks.

Dan Carden:**[671]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps his Department is taking to improve access for humanitarian agencies operating in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

The UK is increasingly concerned by the constraints placed on the international humanitarian response in Houthi-controlled areas of northern Yemen. In line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2451, we are calling on all parties to facilitate unhindered access for humanitarian actors and agencies and ensure that humanitarian workers are able to conduct their work safely and without harm.

In mid-February, donors (including the UK), International Non-Governmental Organisations and the United Nations met in Brussels and agreed to move forward with a coordinated response to improve access for humanitarian agencies operating in Yemen, including reducing aid if restrictions are not lifted.

Dan Carden:**[673]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment he has made of the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

Yemen remains the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with nearly 80% of the entire population, over 24 million people, requiring some form of humanitarian assistance.

More than 20 million people in Yemen do not have reliable access to food and almost 10 million people face extreme food shortages.

The UK is increasingly concerned by the constraints placed on the international humanitarian response in Houthi-controlled areas of northern Yemen. In line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2451, we are calling on all parties to facilitate unhindered access for humanitarian actors and agencies and ensure that humanitarian workers are able to conduct their work safely and without harm.

A political settlement is the only way to fully address the humanitarian crisis and we encourage further constructive engagement from all parties to achieve this.

■ **Developing Countries: Education and Family Planning**

Harriett Baldwin:

[12878]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the findings of Project Drawdown in 2017 on reversing global warming, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of educating girls and providing access to family planning to reduce atmospheric CO2 levels by over 100 gigatonnes by 2050.

James Cleverly:

We are familiar with the Project Drawdown report and recognise the strong links between our work on girls' education, gender, and tackling climate change, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Coping with climate change is a challenge that faces us all and it is having wide ranging effects on economies, livelihoods, access to education and natural resources. The poorest communities, and girls and women within them, are likely to be hardest hit, which is why we are investing in building the resilience of the world's poorest by doubling our International Climate Finance. This has helped 57 million people cope with the effects of climate change since 2011.

The UK is firmly committed to working to ensure that all girls have access to twelve years of quality education. This access is significantly impacted by climate change. Girls are often the first to be taken out of school when climate affects livelihoods and household food security. Girls and women can also be powerful agents of change, at political, community and household level. For example, women in developing countries currently play critical roles in supplying and managing household energy which means they can make a significant contribution to the uptake of solid fuel alternatives and sustainable energy solutions. Indeed, educating women and girls has been described as one of the 'best climate change disaster prevention investments' both because educated women are better able to adapt their homes and livelihoods to climate extremes and because the evidence suggests that when a girl has an education, she marries later, has better employment and fewer children, who are healthier and better educated.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[1198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has plans to ensure the exclusion of goods produced to animal welfare standards that are lower than the UK standard from negotiations on future trade deals, and if she will make a statement.

Conor Burns:

All animal products imported into the UK under existing or future free trade agreements will, as now, have to comply with our food safety standards. We will use the opportunities provided through future free trade agreements and wider international engagement to promote high animal welfare standards among our international trading partners.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[15042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what criteria she plans to use to guide negotiations on future free trade agreements.

Conor Burns:

The Government intends to publish its objectives for future free trade agreements before commencing negotiations. These will be used to guide negotiations.

Our approach to trade policy is focussed on developing an economy that delivers good, skilled, well-paid jobs for individuals and creates the conditions for competitive, world-leading businesses to prosper and grow across the UK, and greater choice and value for our consumers. As we made clear in our manifesto, we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare or food standards, and the NHS is not on the table.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[15088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February to Question 11626 on Trade Agreements, whether she has had discussions with her Canadian counterpart on gender-based impact assessments in addition to those on economic empowerment.

Conor Burns:

We are aware that Canada has published online their gender-based impact assessment for the possible trade agreement between Canada and Mercusor. The UK has not had any discussion with Canada on this.

The Department of International Trade is committed to exploring the best domestic and international approaches for promoting women's economic empowerment through trade.

Caroline Lucas: [\[15138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 12 February 2020 to Question 12924, what her Department's timescale is for considering

how to factor climate change and environmental impacts into the Government's trade strategy.

Graham Stuart:

This Department continues to explore all options in the design of future trade and investment agreements, including environmental provisions within these, taking into account responses to the Government's consultation exercise. We are committed to upholding the UK's high environmental standards and will consider the full range of mechanisms available to us. The Government shares the public's high regard for the UK's environmental protections and has made clear that we will not compromise on these.

Furthermore, the Department for International Trade will continue to promote export and investment opportunities in clean growth sectors, building on the UK's world-leading capabilities in offshore wind, smart energy systems, green finance and electric vehicle manufacture, among others.

Hywel Williams:

[\[1878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made on trade negotiations with Algeria.

Conor Burns:

We have been in dialogue with all our trading partners around the world to ensure continuity of our current trading arrangements at the end of the Transition Period. Discussions with Algeria are ongoing, and I have personally visited Algeria to drive this agenda forward. These discussions will continue throughout the Transition Period.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[2044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps he is taking to ensure that the introduction of a new regime for a UK Global Tariff and the Most Favoured Nation schemes does not impose additional (a) costs and (b) administrative burdens on importers of (i) catheters and (ii) other incontinence products; and if he will make a statement.

Conor Burns:

The UK Global Tariff (UKGT) will enter into force at the end of the transition period. For the first time in almost fifty years, the UK will be able to set its own tariff rates on imported goods. This is an opportunity to create a tariff tailored to our economy, benefiting our consumers and supportive of our industry. To inform the development of this bespoke tariff regime, the Government has launched a public consultation. Once the consultation closes, the Government will carefully consider all available evidence, including consultation responses, and an announcement on the UKGT will follow in due course.

Catherine West:

[\[658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the UK arms licensing system is compliant with international law.

Greg Hands:

All export licence applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. Our assessment of each export licence against the Consolidated Criteria takes into account our obligations under the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty and other relevant rules of international law.

Layla Moran:[\[734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate she has made to the cost of the public purse of the (a) staffing and (b) rent of (i) DIT East of England, (ii) DIT North East, (iii) DIT South West, (iv) DIT East Midlands, (v) DIT North West, (vi) DIT West Midlands, (vii) DIT London, (viii) DIT South East, and (ix) DIT Yorkshire and the Humber.

Conor Burns:

The Department for International Trade's (DIT) staff across the UK operate in a nine-region structure across England, as well as having a presence in Scotland, all of which work to support businesses across the whole of the UK to export and grow overseas, as well as to attract Foreign Direct Investment. The current forecast staff pay costs for these teams in 2019-20 are set out below.

REGION	STAFF COSTS(2019-20)
East of England	£273,867
North East	£265,428
South West	£222,869
East & West Midlands*	£1,374,359
North West	£637,337
London and Scotland**	£507,155
South East	£374,511
Yorkshire and Humber	£420,829
Grand Total	£4,076,355

* Staff costs are recorded against the Midlands as a whole and are not separated between East and West Midlands

** Staff costs for staff who support London and staff who support Scotland are reported together and can not be separated.

Other functions at DIT are not organised into English regions.

The 2019-20 full year forecast staff costs of all civil servants and other staff working in the UK is £139,114,653.

The annual property rental costs in 2019-20 of all DIT's buildings by English region are:-

REGION	PROPERTY RENTAL COSTS (2019-20)
East of England	£32,000
North East	£24,000
South West	£20,000
East Midlands	£40,000
West Midlands	£45,692
North West	£39,649
London	£8,973,578
South East	£298,711
Yorkshire and the Humber	£42,695
Grand Total	£9,516,325

These buildings accommodate staff from a number of different teams from across DIT. It is not possible to identify the rental costs of space in these buildings occupied solely by the regional teams supporting businesses to export.

Layla Moran:

[735]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 10 June 2019 to Question 260105, what estimate her Department has made of the cost to the public purse of the (a) operation, (b) maintenance and (c) promotion of her Department's export hub truck (i) in this financial year to date, (ii) over the last six months and (iii) this calendar year to date.

Graham Stuart:

The Export Hub is a mobile outreach platform that hosts workshops and advice sessions so that businesses across the UK can access Department for International Trade export services on their doorstep. It is available for use by Members of Parliament to help boost exports in their constituencies.

The spend on the Export hub is as follows:

- In this financial year to date: £1,195,253.34
- Over the last six months (August 2019 to January 2020): £1,009,189.32
- This calendar year to date: £100,799.19

We are not able to break these costs down by operation, maintenance and promotion.

Layla Moran:

[\[736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate she has made of the cost to the public purse of the printing and postage of the document entitled Exporting: A Toolkit for MPs.

Graham Stuart:

The printing cost of the updated 'Exporting: A Toolkit for MPs' that was distributed on 22 January 2019 was £901.56. There were no postage costs incurred.

The Exporting Toolkit has been sent to all Members of Parliament. Those interested in working with the Exporting is GREAT campaign and the Department for International Trade can use the toolkit to help inform businesses in their constituency about international trade and the support available to take advantage of export opportunities.

Ben Lake:

[\[744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether there is an Expert Trade Advisory Group for agriculture.

Conor Burns:

The Department for International Trade has established a number of cross-government Expert Trade Advisory Groups (ETAGs), including a dedicated Agri Food ETAG set up jointly with the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs. ETAGs enable the Government to draw on external knowledge and expertise to ensure that the UK's trade policy is backed up by evidence at a detailed level.

JUSTICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Hilary Benn:

[\[1167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government has plans for the UK to accede to the Lugano Convention.

Alex Chalk:

The Lugano Convention 2007 is an international agreement establishing rules on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters covering the EU, Norway, Switzerland and Iceland.

Further details on the Government's proposed approach to negotiations with the EU about our future relationship will be published shortly.

Derek Twigg:

[\[1168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Senior Coroner at the Southport office plans to make a decision on reopening the investigation into the death of Laura Higginson; and whether a Middleton type inquest will be part of that consideration.

Alex Chalk:

Coronial investigation decisions are entirely a matter for coroners as independent judicial office holders; it is therefore inappropriate for the Government to comment on those decisions.

Mr Gregory Campbell:[\[14962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of drug finds in prisons between 2008 and 2018.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of drug finds in prisons across England and Wales between 2008 and 2018 can be found in the HMPPS Annual Digest 2018/19:

2008	4,654
2009	4,392
2010	3,537
2011	3,353
2012	4,143
2013	4,292
2014	5,617
2015	8,757
2016	10,611
2017	12,077
2018	17,283

Drug finds in prisons continue to rise, and in the 12 months to March 2019, there were 18,435 incidents; an increase of 41% over the previous 12-month period.

The increase in drug finds since 2015 is partly due to the increase in finds of psychoactive substances. HM Prison and Probation Service has also put in place a number of security counter-measures over this period, allowing it to seize more items of contraband than ever before. These included:

- In 2017 - intelligence units to help identify, understand and disrupt security threats at prisons;
- In 2018 – Serious and Organised Crime Unit, Financial Investigations Unit, technology to obtain data from mobile phones seized in prisons, dedicated search teams, X-ray body scanners for 20 prisons including the establishments in the Ten Prisons Project who also received bag scanners and metal detectors and dedicated search teams; and

- In 2019 - our new Counter-Corruption Unit.

We are now investing a further £100m in prison security to stop contraband such as drugs from entering prisons. This includes more X-ray baggage scanners to enhance searching of visitors and staff and more X-ray body scanners to detect prisoners concealing contraband inside their bodies.

This is part of our £2.75 billion investment to make prisons safer for offenders and staff, while working closely with healthcare providers to ensure prisoners have the support they need to live drug-free. We therefore also published in April 2019 The National Prison Drug Strategy which has three strands: restricting supply, reducing demand and ensuring prisoners are encouraged to engage in meaningful activity and treatment interventions.

Taiwo Owatemi:

[15102]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has held discussions with the Attorney General on the reasons for the decline in the rate of convictions for rape since 2010.

Kit Malthouse:

The Secretary of State for Justice and the Attorney General meet regularly to discuss critical issues which cut across the criminal justice system, including how the system responds to rape, and most recently met in early February.

More needs to be done to support rape victims and bring perpetrators of these appalling crimes to justice. That's why we're recruiting 20,000 more police officers, investing £85 million in more prosecutors and building 10,000 extra prison places to ensure that dangerous offenders are locked up. We're also investing more in victim support, with an extra £5 million announced last autumn to recruit more Independent Sexual Violence Advisors and fund rape support centres.

But we want to do more, which is why the Criminal Justice Board is working with experts across the system and in the third sector to understand what processes can be improved to ensure more cases reach court.

Jessica Morden:

[15126]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many litigants in person there were in (a) crown courts, (b) family courts and (c) county courts in each court area in Wales in (i) 2013, (ii) 2014, (iii) 2015, (iv) 2016, (v) 2017, (vi) 2018 and (vii) 2019.

Chris Philp:

This information is not held centrally and would require reviewing individual court files in each year specified. The requested information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. However, self-representation in criminal, civil and family cases is identified in HMCTS case management systems by the legal representation field being left blank. These figures should therefore be considered as counting parties without a recorded representative, and **are not necessarily self-representing litigants in person.**

PERSONS WITHOUT RECORDED REPRESENTATION IN HMCTS WALES 2013-2019

YEAR	CROWN COURTS	COUNTY COURT	FAMILY COURT
2013	22	2291	6660
2014	17	1792	6243
2015	22	1800	5813
2016	30	1653	6506
2017	30	1852	6757
2018	48	1763	6679
2019	Data not published until June 2020	1511 ¹	5086 ¹

Access to justice is a central pillar of society, which is why we spent around £1.7 billion on legal aid last year. We have also committed a further £5 million on innovative technologies to enable access to legal support at the earliest opportunity.

We are improving the Exceptional Case Funding scheme, reviewing legal aid means testing, and will launch an awareness campaign to ensure even more people know what support they are entitled to.

Notes to accompany release of data:

1. Family and county court data for 2019 is available at present only for the period January 2019 until September 2019.
2. County court data is for cases where claims were defended. The data represents defended cases where there was a claimant only represented, defendant only represented or neither claimants or defendants were represented. Please note: it cannot be assumed that each defended claim has only one claimant and defendant.
3. In both the family and county court, some cases involve more than one applicant/claimant or respondent/defendant. As such there are more applicants and respondents than there are cases.
4. Please note, the Crown Court data includes both defendants who did not have an advocate recorded at all hearings and defendants whose advocate representation was unknown. It is not necessarily the case that someone whose representation was unknown, did not have representation.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[1936]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Answer of 6 February 2020 to Question 11632, Prisons: Industrial Health and Safety, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing a single reporting system in each prison for

assaults against staff that is accessible (a) internally and (b) externally in order for staff to report incidents away from the workplace.

Lucy Frazer:

All assaults are reported via the Incident Reporting System for reasons of operational control and recording. Assaults leading to injuries or ill health to staff are also recorded on the HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Health and Safety Information system. This is currently being configured to allow online recording from remote locations where an intranet connection is available. Established procedures are in place to ensure staff can report and record all incidents occurring outside prison premises.

Yasmin Qureshi:

[588]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October 2019 to Question HL133 on Taking Control of Goods (Fees) Regulations 2014, what his policy is on debtors being charged VAT.

Chris Philp:

Creditors are the recipients of High Court enforcement services, which are subject to VAT. Therefore, 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.

However, there are circumstances under the Taking Control of Goods legislation, where this cost may be recovered from a debtor as part of enforcement costs. The Ministry of Justice is currently 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 as soon as possible.

Hannah Bardell:

[700]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) women and (b) men were (i) charged, (ii) convicted and (iii) received custodial sentences in relation to television licence fraud in the last 12 months for which such information is available.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice holds and publishes data on prosecutions, convictions and sentencing outcomes, but not on charges. We have interpreted your questions to be related to non-payment of television licence fees rather than fraud. Figures for prosecutions, convictions and sentencing outcomes for the non-payment of TV licence fees up to 2018 are available in the Outcomes by Offence data tool:

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

Filter by offence '191A Television licence evasion'. Then drag the 'Sex' filter into the rows field. The number of a) females, b) males convicted of this offence are shown in rows 35 and 34, respectively.

The number of a) females and b) males sentenced to immediate custody can be found in rows 90 and 89, respectively. However, custody is not a sentencing option for TV licence evasion, therefore these rows appear as nil.

■ Reoffenders: Sentencing

Philip Davies:

[\[510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of offenders receiving an immediate custodial sentence had (a) zero, (b) one to four, (c) five to nine, (d) 10 to 15, (e) 16 to 25, (f) 26 to 50, (g) 51 to 75, (h) 76 to 100, (i) 101 to 150, (j) 151 to 200 and (k) 200 or more previous offences on their record at the time of that sentencing in each year since 2010.

Chris Philp:

Data covering the period year ending March 2010 – year ending March 2019 on the proportion of offenders sentenced to immediate custody with a specified number of previous cautions and convictions can be viewed in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. Table [Copy of PQ 510 Response Table.xlsx]

■ Suspended Sentences

Philip Davies:

[\[505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the highest number of suspended sentences was that one person received without receiving a prison sentence in a (a) magistrates' court and (b) Crown court in each of the last two years.

Chris Philp:

Data covering the period year ending March 2018 – year ending March 2019 on the highest number of suspended sentences received by offenders who have never received an immediate custodial sentence, broken down by specified court type, can be viewed in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. Table [Copy of PQ 505 Response Table.xlsx]

TRANSPORT

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[1161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Prime Minister's oral statement on Transport Infrastructure and oral contribution of 11 February 2020, Official Report, column 723, whether High Speed Two will include the establishment of Sheffield rail links; and if Northern Powerhouse Rail improvements will include the establishment of rail links from Manchester to (a) Sheffield and (b) Leeds.

Andrew Stephenson:

The government has made clear its commitment to delivering HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail. We will develop an integrated rail plan to ensure that HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and Midlands Engine Rail bring benefits to the North and Midlands as quickly and efficiently as possible. The Department for Transport will continue to work with Transport for the North and local leaders, to develop NPR plans for the Leeds to Manchester corridor alongside options for lines serving Sheffield, Liverpool, Tees Valley, Hull and Newcastle.

Sir Graham Brady:**[1169]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the (a) business case and (b) estimated cost for the Golborne Spur section of phase 2b of High Speed Two.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department for Transport published the Business Case for HS2 Phase 2 on 17 July 2017, which includes a connection to the West Coast Mainline near Golborne <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-phase-two-economic-case>.

We will continue to update periodically cost estimates and business cases for delivery of HS2 in line with the Government's protocol for developing major projects. Our latest estimates indicate that the HS2 network will cost between £72-£98 billion with Phase 2b in the region of between £33-£46 billion. The expenditure on Golborne falls within this remit.

As part of the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands we will assess the Golborne Junction to consider the benefits, costs and the best way to serve the North West and Scotland.

Jack Dromey:**[1256]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will place in the Library notes of meetings between Network Rail and (a) Ministers and officials of his Department and (b) the Mayor of the West Midlands on train services in the West Midlands.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Providing notes of (a) meetings between Network Rail and Ministers and officials about train services in the West Midlands would involve disproportionate costs to collect and collate as the request covers interactions with five train operating companies, which are likely to be commercially sensitive so would also require redacting. As regards (b) the Department would not have access to notes of any meetings between Network Rail and the Mayor of the West Midlands about train services in the West Midlands.

Stephen Timms:**[14940]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has for new infrastructure at ports to enable additional checks on vehicles and goods arriving from the EU from 1 January 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

HMG will be engaging with ports, airports and other stakeholders at key border locations over the next few months to understand local constraints and opportunities and how the government can best support planning for operational readiness.

The Department for Transport has already committed £10 million, as part of the Port Infrastructure Resilience and Connectivity (PIRC) competition, to help deliver upgrades which will enhance capacity and maintain trade flow.

Andy McDonald:[\[14986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2020 to Question 11642 on Network Rail: Debts, what assessment he has made of the effect of Network Rail's current level of debt on its ability to allocate future funding for rail infrastructure.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The level of funding provided for operating, maintaining and renewing the railway is set ahead of each Railway Control Period through the Statement of Funds Available (SoFA) in line with the High-Level Output Specification (HLOS), which is a statement of what the Secretary of State for Transport wants to be achieved by railway activities during that control period. As noted in the Statement of Funds Available 2017, Government ensures that adequate funding is provided to meet NR's debt obligations, out-with the SoFA process.

Ms Marie Rimmer:[\[15071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) the re-opening of so-called Beeching lines is implemented equitably throughout the regions according to need and (b) local authorities are (i) fully engaged with and (ii) consulted on that programme.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

I have invited my fellow MPs to work with local authorities and community groups to come forward with proposals for re-opening rail passenger services axed in the 1960s and 1970s. The support and engagement of the local authorities will be an important consideration in deciding which ideas to fund. I am expecting ideas to be put forward from across our regions and we will take forward the best of these for development.

Layla Moran:[\[15075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the decision by Great Western Railway to withdraw from the easitNETWORK scheme on (a) traffic congestion, (b) air quality and (c) carbon emissions in (i) Oxfordshire and (ii) other counties.

Layla Moran:[\[15076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations he has made to Great Western Railway on their decision to withdraw from the easitNETWORK scheme.

Layla Moran:[\[15077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support schemes such as the easitNETWORK scheme that operates on Great Western Railway to encourage more people to use public transport instead of their car.

Layla Moran:[\[15078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will host a meeting between representatives of (a) Great Western Railway, (b) easitNETWORK and (c) Honourable Members who represent constituents who use the easitNETWORK scheme to discuss how Great Western Railway could continue to participate in that scheme.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The franchise agreement allows train operators to participate at their discretion in a wide range of schemes of benefit to passengers without seeking Secretary of State consent, but does not mandate non-national schemes.

We are committed to taking decisive action on the recommendation of the Williams Rail Review this year. Fare transformation is already underway in the form of a single-leg fares trial on LNER and the announcement of flexible season ticket trial for passengers travelling on certain routes with GTR, due to launch later this year. We have also established a new 'fares trials fund', to kick start further trials this year across the country. These will save thousands of passengers money, and provide the foundations for reform of the whole fares system.

Matt Western:[\[15092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many of the new zero carbon buses will (a) be electric and (b) run on hydrogen; and how much funding will be made available for (i) charge points and (ii) hydrogen stations.

Rachel Maclean:

The Prime Minister announced £5 billion of new funding to boost bus and cycling links on 10 February, including at least 4,000 new zero emission buses to make greener travel the convenient option, driving forward the UK's progress on its net zero ambitions. The details of the programmes, including which technologies are eligible and how funding will be distributed, will be announced in due course.

Taiwo Owatemi:[\[15103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to increase the number of people using buses.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Bus Services Act 2017 introduced new powers for local authorities and operators to work together to grow bus passenger numbers.

The £220 million Better Deal for Bus Users package provides new funding to help transform bus services and a series of complementary commitments, including a National Bus Strategy, which together will detail measures to increase bus usage.

On top of the £1 billion spent by the Government on concessionary travel for eligible older and disabled people, around £250 million is paid every year to support bus services in England to keep fares lower.

There is £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London. This package of investment will boost bus services by focusing on a range of priorities, set to include: higher frequency services, new priority schemes will make routes more efficient, more affordable simpler fares and at least 4,000 new Zero Emission Buses.

Taiwo Owatemi:

[15104]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that people in Coventry benefit from High Speed Two.

Andrew Stephenson:

HS2 will result in increased availability of seats for passengers travelling from Coventry to other inter-city destinations, and will also release capacity on existing routes in the West Midlands for additional local and regional commuter services.

HS2 will also form the backbone of the Midlands Rail Hub which will further strengthen connectivity between Coventry and cities of the Midlands and provide greater access to HS2 services.

I will ensure that HS2 Ltd continues to support Local Growth and Transport plans which maximise regeneration opportunities and improve connectivity between HS2 and other regional and national transport modes to enable quick and easy access to high speed services.

The West Midlands will be at the heart of the new high-speed rail network and my Department and HS2 Ltd will continue to work with regional stakeholders to ensure that the region, including Coventry, achieves the full potential of HS2.

Bridget Phillipson:

[2002]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the oral contribution of the hon. Member for Houghton and Sunderland South of 5 February 2020, Official Report column 395, if (a) he or (b) a Minister will visit the Leamside line to discuss its proposed reopening.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

I would be happy to visit the Hon. Member's constituency at a suitable opportunity to discuss the case for reopening the Leamside line.

Stephen McPartland:

[2003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to allow fully electric bikes to be registered as a category with the DVLA.

Rachel Maclean:

A power-assisted bicycle, which is propelled solely by electricity and intended for use on public roads, must be registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. However, there is an exemption from registration and licensing in Great Britain for low

powered bicycles, which cannot exceed 15 mph and have a battery of 250 watts or lower.

The Department for Transport is reviewing the regulations that apply to small, electric vehicles known as micromobility vehicles as part of its review into regulation of innovative transport technologies and business models. A call for evidence is due to be published in the next few weeks. This will include questions about how small, electric vehicles such as fully electric cycles should be regulated in the future.

Ruth Cadbury: [2004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the oral contribution of the Prime Minister of 11 April 2020, official report, column 731, what proportion of the £5 billion announced for transport infrastructure will be spent on cycling.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government is committed to meeting the aim of doubling cycling by 2025, as set out in the statutory 2017 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, and to ensuring that sufficient funding is available for this. A significant proportion of the £5 billion will therefore be allocated to cycling and walking, with further details to be announced at the forthcoming Budget and Spending Review.

Jessica Morden: [560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the amount of UK steel which could be procured for the HS2 project.

Andrew Stephenson:

It is anticipated that around two million tonnes of steel will be used across the HS2 programme.

Jessica Morden: [589]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the potential benefits for Wales of HS2 Ltd procurement contracts.

Andrew Stephenson:

HS2 has huge potential to support growth across the UK including Wales and will promote regeneration, boost skills and generate new jobs for people across the region. Our procurement process is open to all bidders with the relevant experience and required credentials and ensures value for money for the taxpayer. HS2 Ltd has a continuing programme of engagement with local businesses, attending events arranged by local Chambers of Commerce and other networks to ensure that the procurement opportunities of the project are spread across all four nations of the United Kingdom. To date, 26 Welsh companies have provided goods or services to the project, including 16 SMEs.

Aside from procurement contracts, the Department forecasts the north-east Wales economy will be boosted by £50m annually by HS2's quicker journey times.

Jessica Morden:

[\[590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of establishing a nationwide independent Road Collision Investigation branch.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department has sponsored the RAC Foundation to conduct the Road Collision Investigation Project which is ongoing and will report by Summer 2022. This project is seeking to establish whether there is a business case for putting more resource into the investigation of road crashes and if so, to identify how best to develop it. Considerations will include whether the future service should be nationwide and independent among other options. Their recommendations, together with learning from the ongoing Roads Policing Review which will report in 2021, will provide the evidence base necessary for an informed assessment to be made.

TREASURY

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Philip Davies:

[\[1225\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect that the increase in the Living Wage will have on small businesses; and what financial plans he has to support small firms to make this increase.

Steve Barclay:

The Government recently published its Impact Assessment of the planned increases to the National Living Wage applying from this April. The Impact Assessment provides estimates of the costs the National Living Wage increases will place on some businesses. The Government recognises that the increases will mean extra costs for some businesses. However, it's right that workers are fairly rewarded for their input into the economy.

More generally, since 2014 the Employment Allowance has helped businesses with the costs of employment, reducing employers' National Insurance contributions bill by £3,000. Over 1 million employers are benefitting from this relief.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[1233\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Bank of England is subject to regional requirements on its (a) performance, (b) monitoring and (c) reporting.

John Glen:

The Bank of England is the central bank for the whole of the United Kingdom.

The Bank has a network of agents operating from twelve agencies across the UK. Up to four agents are based at each agency and they are supported by small administrative teams. The Agents' Summary of Business Conditions is published four times a year and reflects UK-wide feedback from firms covering all sectors of the

economy. The agents also organise visits for the Bank's policymakers across the UK so they can hear the views of businesses and communities first-hand. This information is used to inform the decisions the Bank of England's policy committees make. For example, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), Financial Policy Committee (FPC) and Prudential Regulation Committee (PRC).

Carol Monaghan: [\[1243\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the Third Report of the Treasury Committee, Session 2019, published on 1 November 2019.

John Glen:

The government responded to the report on 5th February 2020 and the Committee will publish our response in the usual way in due course.

Carol Monaghan: [\[1244\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to place the Contingent Reimbursement Model Code for Authorised Push Payment on a statutory footing.

John Glen:

In March 2018, the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) established a steering group of financial institutions and consumer representatives to develop a voluntary code of good practice to help protect consumers against authorized push payment (APP) scams.

At the end of February 2019, the steering group published the Contingent Reimbursement Model Code for Authorised Push Payments (the Code), which sets out the agreed principles for greater protection of consumers and the circumstances in which they will be reimbursed, making a significant step in delivering improved protections for consumers. The Code became effective on 28 May 2019 and customers of those payment service providers that are signatories (which includes all of the 6 largest banks and building societies) are protected under the Code from this date.

The Code is still in its infancy and the Government believes it should be given time to embed and take full effect before its effectiveness can properly be assessed. The Lending Standards Board (LSB), which is responsible for the Code, has committed to a first annual review of its operation in Summer 2020 and will shortly publish more information about its planned approach, including its intention to consult widely with consumer representatives and the industry. The Government looks forward to reviewing these findings when they become available.

Daisy Cooper: [\[14759\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what impact assessment he undertook on the effect of the closure of the St Albans regional VOA branch on local businesses' ability to challenge or appeal valuations, prior to the closure of that office.

Jesse Norman:

The Check, Challenge, Appeal system was introduced in 2017 to improve and modernise the business rates appeal process. It is a digital system which enables ratepayers to submit Checks and Challenges to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) at a time and from a location which is best for them. Technology changes and greater access to data have fundamentally altered the way the VOA works and this has reduced the need to be based in specific locations. Checks and Challenges are handled by the most appropriate teams and specialists, regardless of where they are physically located. Businesses needing to make a Check or Challenge are not disadvantaged by the closure of any VOA office.

The independent Valuation Tribunal Service is responsible for appeals.

Hilary Benn:[\[14955\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much funding was allocated to dementia care in the last financial year; and what plans he has to increase that funding.

Steve Barclay:

Public expenditure on adult social care was £17.89bn in 2018/19. A further breakdown of this spending is published in the Adult Social Care Activity and Finance Report. Additionally, NHS England and Improvement allocates funding to Clinical Commissioning Groups who distribute on clinical areas, including dementia care, according to local priorities. This funding is part of the £114.6bn NHS budget last year.

At the 2019 Spending Review, the Government announced an additional £1bn grant for social care in 2020-21, as well as giving the NHS a 3.1% real terms growth in their 20/21 budget which represents an extra £6.3bn.

Deidre Brock:[\[15030\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what funding is available through the Scottish Government for victims of contaminated blood.

Steve Barclay:

Following UK government decisions at Spending Round 2019, the Scottish Government benefited from an increase of over £1.3 billion in the Barnett-based block grant, which will therefore increase to £34.5 billion in 2020-21. This is the biggest day-to-day funding settlement for Scotland in a decade.

It is for the Scottish Government to allocate this funding across their devolved responsibilities, including to victims of contaminated blood if they so choose.

Carol Monaghan:[\[15062\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of making the Contingent Reimbursement Model Code for Authorised Push Payment Fraud retrospective.

John Glen:

The Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) established a non-governmental steering group of financial institutions and consumer representatives in March 2018 to develop a voluntary code of good practice to help protect consumers against Authorised Push Payment (APP) scams. At the end of February 2019, the steering group published the Contingent Reimbursement Model Code for Authorised Push Payments (the Code). The Code became effective on 28 May 2019 and customers of those payment service providers that are signatories are protected under the Code from this date. The Government recognises this may be disappointing for victims of APP scams that occurred before this date.

If a victim of an APP scam is not satisfied with how their payment service provider has handled their specific case, they may wish to contact the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS). The FOS was established by Government to provide a proportionate, prompt and informal resolution of disputes between a consumer and financial service firm.

Tonia Antoniazzi:[\[15091\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress he has made on tackling the effect of pension taxation on NHS leaders.

John Glen:

The Government recognises that urgent action is needed to resolve the pensions tax issue which has caused some doctors to turn down extra shifts for fear of high tax bills.

We are committed to ensuring that hard-working NHS staff do not find themselves reducing their work commitments due to the interaction between their pay, their pension and the relevant tax regime.

That is why the Government is taking forward its manifesto commitment to carry out an urgent review of the pensions tapered annual allowance, to make sure that doctors spend as much time as possible treating patients. The Government has announced that the review will report at Budget.

Alyn Smith:[\[15098\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of proposed changes to IR35 rules from April 2020 on SMEs in Scotland.

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. The rules do not apply to the self-employed or stop anyone working through their own company.

The reform of the off-payroll working rules in April 2020 will apply only to medium and large-sized businesses, minimising administrative burdens for the vast majority of engagers. The existing rules will continue to apply to the smallest 1.5m businesses.

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 affect 170,000 individuals. The TIIN can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/rules-for-off-payroll-working-from-april-2020/rules-for-off-payroll-working-from-april-2020. This is a UK-wide figure.

Clive Lewis:

[15154]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his Department's policy is on meeting the UK's Paris Climate Agreement commitments; and if he will make a statement.

Steve Barclay:

The UK played a prominent role in helping to secure the Paris Agreement in 2015, and we are determined that the UK's Presidency of COP26 this November will be a milestone for ambition, targeting action to deliver on the promise of the Agreement.

In June 2019, the UK became the first major economy in the world to legislate to end its contribution to climate change by 2050.

The UK is committed to doubling our International Climate Finance to at least £11.6bn between 2021 and 2025, to help developing countries to take action.

HM Treasury takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously. As you would expect, we are considering what further fiscal and other policy measures are needed to meet our 2050 net zero target.

To support this, HM Treasury launched a review into how the transition to a net zero economy will be funded, and where the costs will fall. The review will publish its findings in Autumn 2020.

Clive Lewis:

[15155]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how the Treasury measures annual progress on carbon reduction commitments.

Steve Barclay:

HM Treasury takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously and works closely with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, who lead on clean growth and carbon budgets policy.

The Committee on Climate Change also provides independent, expert advice to Government on climate change mitigation and adaptation and produce an annual report to Parliament assessing progress in reducing UK emissions over the past year. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy produce a response to these reports annually.

Clive Lewis:

[15156]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential contribution his Department's spending plans to meeting the target to reduce emission to net zero by 2050.

Steve Barclay:

HM Treasury takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously. As you would expect, we are considering what further fiscal and other policy measures are needed to meet our 2050 net zero target.

To support this, HM Treasury launched a review into how the transition to a net zero economy will be funded, and where the costs will fall. The review will publish its findings in Autumn 2020.

Clive Lewis:[\[15157\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps his Department is taking in response to the Resolution of the House of Commons of 1 May 2019 declaring a climate emergency.

Steve Barclay:

HM Treasury takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously. As you would expect, we are considering what further fiscal and other policy measures are needed to meet our 2050 net zero target.

To support this, HM Treasury launched a review into how the transition to a net zero economy will be funded, and where the costs will fall. The review will publish its findings in Autumn 2020.

Clive Lewis:[\[1964\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he has introduced to increase the domestic installation of solar roofs since the closure of the Feed in Tariff framework.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to greening the economy. HM Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs are working closely together to ensure that the tax system as a whole, as well as future spending decisions, facilitate the Government's objectives for both the Net Zero Review and its wider fiscal and economic strategy.

Mr Toby Perkins:[\[1971\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the EU has instigated infringement proceedings against the UK over its post production dilution duty regime; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

Budget 2018 announced the Government's intention to introduce legislation prohibiting the practice of post duty point dilution (PDPD). This change is due to take legal effect from April 2020. The Government's announcement followed a review by HM Revenue & Customs, which considered a wide range of information from businesses across the drinks industry and their representative bodies.

The review concluded that the practice, which is not adopted across the alcohol sector, leads to certain products enjoying an unjustifiable competitive advantage in the UK market place and that this advantage comes at a significant cost to the Exchequer.

The EU Commission has not instigated formal infringement proceedings against the UK on the matter of PDPD. However, under the EU's pre-infringement process the Commission did request the UK's observations regarding the PDPD and its compatibility with EU Law.

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [\[540\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the findings of the Industrial Strategy Council's research paper, UK Regional Productivity Differences: An Evidence Review, published in February 2020, what steps he is taking to tackle the UK's regional productivity gap.

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [\[541\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to ensure long-term equity of national productivity throughout the UK.

Steve Barclay:

So far, we have announced a £5bn package of investment for buses and cycling, opened up a consultation on Freeports, and we've confirmed that we will proceed with HS2 to deliver essential North-South connectivity, greater capacity, and shorter journey times. We will also continue to deliver on our ambitious levelling up agenda, including through the upcoming Budget.

Grahame Morris:

[\[554\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to oral Answer of 7 January 2020, Official Report, column 251, on Durham County Council's housing regeneration masterplan, what progress his Department is making on arranging a meeting between the hon. Member for Easington, Durham County Council and the relevant Minister.

Steve Barclay:

Thank you for raising the important issue of housing regeneration. I have referred your request for a meeting to the Minister of State for Housing.

Stella Creasy:

[\[574\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Financial Conduct Authority to determine the effect of the persistent credit card debt remedies introduced in February 2018, and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that credit card holders do not pay more than the amount borrowed in interest, fees and other charges.

John Glen:

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), as the regulator responsible for the consumer credit market, has taken a range of steps to protect consumers in this market. These include the introduction of new rules in February 2018 to help customers in persistent credit card debt. The rules require firms to better identify struggling customers, carry out greater interventions, and exercise forbearance for those struggling most. In its Policy Statement PS18/4, the FCA commits to reviewing the new rules in 2022 or

2023, once they have been fully implemented by firms and in operation long enough to assess consumer outcomes.

On 3 February 2020, the FCA wrote to credit card firms to reiterate their expectations for handling customers in persistent debt. This letter outlined that firms should encourage customers to open a dialogue about potential repayment arrangements, and, where customers cannot afford the options proposed, firms should consider reducing, waiving, or cancelling any interest or charges.

Treasury ministers and officials meet regularly with the FCA, and the Government will continue to work closely with the FCA to ensure consumers of financial services are treated fairly.

Stella Creasy:

[576]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations his Department has received from consumer groups on unintended consequences of the Financial Conduct Authority's persistent credit card debt remedies; and if he will ask the FCA to (i) bring forward its review of those remedies and (ii) include in that review consideration of a cap on charges.

John Glen:

Treasury ministers and officials meet regularly with a range of interest groups to discuss consumer issues in financial services, including persistent debt.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is responsible for regulating and supervising the financial services industry and has strong powers to protect consumers. Although the Treasury sets the legal framework, the FCA is an independent regulator and Treasury ministers have no general power of direction over the FCA.

The FCA has committed in its Policy Statement PS18/4 to review the persistent credit card debt rules once they have been fully implemented by firms and in operation long enough to assess consumer outcomes. The FCA expect this to be in 2022 or 2023. The Government will continue to work closely with the FCA to ensure consumers of financial services are treated fairly.

Caroline Lucas:

[597]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to page 8 of the Green Finance Strategy published on 2 July 2019, what correspondence he has sent to the Bank of England (a) Financial Policy Committee and (b) Prudential Regulation Authority to clarify their responsibilities to have regard to the Paris Agreement on climate change; if he will publish that correspondence; what plans he has to further clarify those responsibilities; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

The Government has a statutory obligation to issue letters of recommendations to the Prudential Regulation Authority and the Financial Conduct Authority at least once in each Parliament, and a remit and recommendations letter to the Financial Policy Committee at least once per calendar year. The Treasury lays copies of these letters before Parliament.

In order to meet its statutory obligation, the Government last issued these letters on 4 November 2019. Given the pre-election period was about to begin, the Government decided to roll over the existing remits.

The Government continues to recognise the importance of making clear the responsibilities of these bodies in relation to the COP21 Paris Agreement and will set this out in their next remit letters.

Chi Onwurah:

[600]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of disposable income in the North East.

Steve Barclay:

In 2017, the North East's nominal disposable household income per head grew by 1.3%, which was the second fastest of any region and nation in the UK in that year.

The Government has invested in local economies through the £12bn Local Growth Fund, so that places can fund their own local priorities. The North East LEP has received over £379m since 2015.

Tulip Siddiq:

[650]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much cash or cash equivalents the Government held in offshore bank accounts at 31 December 2019.

John Glen:

Information on the amount of cash or cash equivalents held in offshore bank accounts is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Tulip Siddiq:

[651]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to report the amount of cash and cash equivalents that each Government Department holds in offshore bank accounts in the next Whole of Government Accounts.

John Glen:

There are currently no plans to include disclosures for cash held by departments in offshore bank accounts in Whole of Government Accounts. Departments largely hold their cash balances in the Government Banking Service, in line with the guidance in Managing Public Money.

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [655]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to discourage the migration of higher-skilled workers from towns to cities.

Steve Barclay:

This Government is committed to levelling up opportunity across all places in the UK. This means making sure that prosperity is shared across all our towns and cities. So far, we have announced a £5bn package of investment for buses and cycling, opened up a consultation on Freeports, and we've confirmed that we will proceed with HS2 to

deliver essential North-South connectivity, greater capacity, and shorter journey times.

Jo Stevens: [661]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the annual gross cost of checks on goods from the European Economic Area; and what estimate he has made of the (a) staffing costs and (b) infrastructure maintenance costs of those checks after December 2020.

Jesse Norman:

No cross-departmental assessment is held on the annual cost of checking goods from the EEA.

The Border Delivery Group will work closely with all relevant departments and the border industry to ensure that the necessary staffing and infrastructure is in place for new border controls at the end of the transition period.

Jo Stevens: [662]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the level of additional infrastructure required (a) in and (b) around the port of Holyhead to conduct checks on goods after the transition period.

Jesse Norman:

The Border Delivery Group is working with departments and with the Welsh Government to understand the implications at the border, including for infrastructure, of the end of the transition period.

This work will include working closely with ports and locations, including Holyhead, which may require new infrastructure.

Jo Stevens: [663]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what advice his Department has issued to businesses on the steps required to prepare for importing goods from the European Economic Area after December 2020.

Jesse Norman:

In January 2020, HMRC wrote to 219,000 VAT-registered businesses that trade with the EU, explaining the actions they need to take to prepare for changes to customs arrangements after the transition period. The letter set out that businesses will need to make customs declarations for GB-EU trade and that they should start to prepare for this now by considering whether they want to use a customs agent or make declarations themselves. It also explained that businesses will need an Economic Operator Registration and Identification (EORI) number that starts with the letters GB to be able to submit customs declarations. HMRC has already issued around 200,000 of these. This letter was supported by emails and social media to reach a wider group of businesses.

Alongside this HMRC are continuing to engage with key stakeholders (including Business Representative Bodies and Trade Associations) to seek their input and

amplify HMRC's messaging to ensure it is wide reaching and readily available to those who need to take action. This includes monthly meetings with the top 35 organisations who represent over 500,000 businesses in the UK.

HMRC will continue to provide clear guidance on the actions businesses will need to take, and HMRC will engage with them throughout the transition period to support their readiness to comply with these new requirements.

WALES

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[15145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions took place between officials in his Department on marking the day the UK left the EU; and what the outcome was of those discussions.

Simon Hart:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales took part in cross-Whitehall drives to commemorate the day the UK left the EU. We worked closely with colleagues in other government departments to ensure the accuracy and timely release of material to mark the UK's departure from the EU. This included content on gov.uk, digital channels and press and broadcast media, and pointed people towards the new gov.uk/transition website.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[2001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions his Department has had with the Welsh Government on the organisation of COP 26.

Simon Hart:

My officials continue to work collaboratively with Welsh Government officials and COP 26 officials as part of the ongoing preparations to support the UK Government in the successful delivery of COP26.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Stephen Timms:

[\[1156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to publish the outcome of her Department's review of the Special Rules for Terminal Illness and Severe Conditions.

Jessica Morden:

[\[15001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department has made on its review of the Special Rules for Terminal Illness and Severe Conditions.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department is taking forward as a priority its evaluation of how the benefits system supports people nearing the end of their life and those with severe conditions. We have made progress on all areas of this work and will be continuing to engage with clinicians and claimants to ensure their views are heard.

Stephen Timms: [14941]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Independent Serious Case Panel established in 2019; and if she will make a statement.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are absolutely committed to improving our services, especially to the most vulnerable, which is why we have set up the Serious Case Panel. The panel was developed to take themes and systemic issues that come out of various case reviews and make recommendations for improvements.

More information about the Serious Case Panel will be published in due course.

Stephen Timms: [14944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2020 to Question 9581 on Universal Credit, to which legislative provisions that Answer refers.

Will Quince:

The rate of Universal Credit deductions for court fines is detailed in the Fines (Deduction from Income Support) Regulations 1992, Regulation 4(1B). This piece of legislation was amended to include Universal Credit and can be viewed at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1992/2182/regulation/4>

Dan Jarvis: [14997]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on employment support for the visually impaired.

Justin Tomlinson:

In recognition of the strong two-way relationship between work and health, in 2015 the Joint Work and Health Unit was established as a joint DWP and DHSC team; reporting to both Secretaries of State. The Unit informs the Government's disability employment strategy, using a programme of trials and tests to identify effective models of health and employment support to help people with health conditions or disabilities to stay in work or return to work.

In addition DWP will be bringing forward a Green Paper on health and disability support in the coming months. The Green Paper will explore how the welfare system can better meet the needs of claimants with disabilities and health conditions now and in the future, to build a system that people trust and enables them to live independently and move into work where possible.

Paul Blomfield:

[15027]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the effect of the roll-out of universal credit in Sheffield on (a) the number of people borrowing from loan sharks and (b) the amount of money being borrowed (i) by claimants and (ii) non-claimants.

Will Quince:

The latest caseload data shows Universal Credit is supporting 2.8 million claimants, including those in Sheffield, to more easily start work and access smoother incentives, such as the work allowance and taper, to increase hours. We have scrapped the cliff edges and complicated hours' rules of the legacy benefit system to ensure claimants have flexibility to access the opportunities offered in the labour market. It will provide an extra £2.1bn a year once full rolled out, compared to the legacy benefits it replaces.

During a claimant's first interview, Work Coaches identify those who require immediate financial assistance and will offer access to a New Claim Advance. Around 60% of new claims take up an advance, which are repayable, interest free, over a 12-month period. From October 2021, the repayment period on advances will be further extended to 16 months.

For claimants who require additional support, Work Coaches and Case Managers can signpost individuals to specialist support for personal budgeting, money guidance and debt advice if required, including through the Money and Pensions Service.

Stella Creasy:

[15035]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of universal credit credit claimants whose childcare costs exceed the upper threshold for (a) one child and (b) two or more children.

Will Quince:

Childcare costs should not be a barrier to getting into work; this Government is committed to helping parents into work. Universal Credit pays up to 85% of childcare costs, compared to 70% in legacy benefits and can be claimed up to a month before starting a job. In cases where people need to pay for childcare upfront, prior to starting work, Work Coaches can use the Flexible Support Fund to meet these costs until their first wage is received.

For all Universal Credit monthly payments made in 2019, around 520,000 included a childcare element:

- a. For childcare costs claimed for one child in childcare, 5% of the time, childcare claims exceeded the maximum award of £646.35 (28,000 times).
- b. For childcare costs claimed for two or more children in childcare, 1% of the time, childcare claims exceeded the maximum award of £1108.04 (6,000 times).

Notes:

- (a) and (b) are exclusive categories and (b) is not a subset of (a)

- Payment figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.
- Percentages rounded to the nearest percent.
- Households are counted each time they have received a childcare element in 2019.

Stella Creasy:

[15036]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the effect of the limits on childcare costs claimable through universal credit on (a) women and (b) maternal employment rates.

Will Quince:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost to the Department.

Chris Elmore:

[15109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that paying parents do not delay settlement of their child maintenance liabilities.

Mims Davies:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) continues to take steps to improve compliance, and deal with non-compliance before enforcement action is needed. Where compliance cannot be achieved and the parent is employed, we will attempt to deduct their maintenance and any arrears directly from their earnings. The CMS can also deduct directly from bank accounts as a lump sum or regular amount. We have a range of other strong enforcement powers, including the use of Enforcement Agents to take control of goods, forcing the sale of property, disqualification from holding a UK passport or commitment to prison.

Chris Elmore:

[15110]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many of the Child Maintenance Service's deduction from earnings orders for child maintenance were not complied with in 2018.

Mims Davies:

Information relating to the number of Deduction from Earnings Orders / Requests being used to collect child maintenance each quarter, and their compliance is published online as part of the quarterly Child Maintenance Service statistics. The latest publication includes information to September 2019. This is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-maintenance-service-statistics-data-to-september-2019-experimental>

The requested information is published in the National Tables, Table 12 ("Enforcement Actions").

Chris Elmore:

[15111]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that employers are complying with the seven day deadline of deduction from earnings orders, to ensure child maintenance is deducted from the parents pay.

Mims Davies:

To ensure that employers meet their obligations to deduct child maintenance from earnings, the Child Maintenance Group (CMG) has taken the following steps:

- new employers are issued with a comprehensive welcome pack detailing their role and responsibilities;
- the CMG has a dedicated Employer Payment Team (EPT) to assist and support employers with this process;
- EPT call every employer new to CMG within seven days and talk them through our welcome pack;
- we have enhanced specific procedures and training for Deduction from Earnings Orders (DEO) to ensure they are implemented promptly and accurately;
- we have established DEO ambassadors to assist caseworkers across our organisation; and
- we ensure Enforcement action where an employer is deemed non-compliant.

Chris Elmore:

[15112]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many non-resident parents were fined for non-payment of child maintenance in 2018.

Mims Davies:

The Child Maintenance Service does not fine Paying Parents for not paying their child maintenance. They do however recover the unpaid child maintenance through the use of enforcements actions such as deductions from earnings orders, deduction orders and civil enforcement. In cases where the Child Maintenance Service believe the Paying Parent can pay, but are refusing to do so they can apply to the courts to send the Paying Parents to prison, disqualifying them from holding or obtaining a passport or driving licence. The figures described can be found in the quarterly National Tables for the Child Maintenance Service statistics (data to September 2019), Table 12 ("Enforcement Actions"). This is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-maintenance-service-statistics-data-to-september-2019-experimental>

Stella Creasy:

[15159]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people received support for upfront childcare costs under the Flexible Support Fund; and what proportion of the Flexible Support Fund is used to pay for childcare.

Will Quince:

The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Stella Creasy:[\[15160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support is in place for parents (a) who are in work to cover the cost of childcare costs during school holidays and (b) who have accessed the Flexible Support Fund in the month following that claim and who are not able to recoup the costs of childcare for that period via universal credit.

Will Quince:

The Universal Credit childcare policy aligns with the wider government childcare offer, which includes free childcare hours and tax free childcare. Claimants can utilise both the free childcare entitlement and Universal Credit childcare costs in conjunction with each other. This offer means that reasonable childcare costs should not form a barrier to work, even during school holidays. The Government is committed to supporting working parents and, as part of this, Universal Credit pays up to 85% of childcare costs, compared to 70% in legacy benefits.

Universal Credit claimants are able to upload digital copies of their childcare cost receipts or invoices through their online Universal Credit account. In October 2019, the Department introduced changes to give parents longer to report their childcare costs. Childcare costs can be claimed in the same assessment period they were paid, or by the end of the following assessment period.

Beyond the Universal Credit childcare element, claimants can be considered for two additional methods of funding childcare costs: the Flexible Support Fund (FSF) and Budgeting Advances.

The FSF can pay up to 100% of the upfront childcare costs (subject to payment limits) that the claimant incurs before starting work and receiving their first wage. Through FSF, Work Coaches can support claimants with barriers that may prevent them from moving into employment, such as childcare or travel costs. Each case is considered carefully on its own merits with financial help available in advance to eligible claimants.

A budgeting advance is available for one-off urgent financial events for eligible UC claimants, such as upfront childcare, and is repayable over a period of up to 12 monthly instalments.

Ms Karen Buck:[\[1855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claims were closed in 2019 as a result of a claimant failing to accept their claimant commitment when they have (a) no work-related requirements, (b) work preparation requirements only and (c) work-focused interview requirements.

Will Quince:

The information requested is not held.

It is not possible to provide a conditionality group breakdown for claims which were closed before first payment of Universal Credit. This is because a conditionality group is not determined for all claimants until the end of the first assessment period is reached.

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[1856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claimants whose claims were closed during 2019 because of a claimant failing to accept their claimant commitment have subsequently successfully challenged the claimant commitment and that case closure.

Will Quince:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Rushanara Ali:

[\[1995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 14 January 2020 to Question 1733, on the Independent Case Examiner (ICE), if she will request that the ICE's annual report for 2019-20 includes data on the average number of weeks taken to complete a determination from the date of (a) the complaint and (b) commencement of the investigation.

Mims Davies:

As explained in response to Question 1733, the Independent Case Examiner (ICE) is an Office Holder, appointed under contract to review complaints about DWP and its contracted service providers, and identify wider system issues associated with service failures. Decisions on what information to include in their Annual Report rest with the Office holder, however, your suggestion has been shared with them, to inform future considerations.

Rushanara Ali:

[\[1997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to review the effect on pensioner poverty of the requirement that pensioners make a claim for universal credit on retirement and not pension credit because their partner has not yet reached pension age.

Guy Opperman:

We spend around £100 billion on the State Pension in 2019/20, and as a result of the triple lock, from April 2020 (subject to Parliamentary approval), the full yearly amount of the basic State Pension will be around £700 higher than if it had just been up-rated by earnings since April 2010. There are 100,000 fewer pensioners in absolute poverty (before housing costs) than in 2009/10. Rates of material deprivation for pensioners are also at a record low: since 2009/10 material deprivation for pensioners has fallen from 10% to 7% in 2017/18. Entitlement to the State Pension,

and eligibility to claim it, are unaffected by the changes made to support for people on low incomes through the system of income-related benefits.

This change does not apply to couples already claiming Pension Credit and/or Housing Benefit for pensioners on 14 May 2019 for as long as they remain entitled to either benefit.

In regard to encouraging people below State Pension age to remain in the labour market and continue saving for their own retirement, the Government believes this is important both for individuals and wider society. We do not therefore believe it is right that different labour-market conditions should apply to people below State Pension age based on the age of their partner.

This change in the way support is provided to couples where one partner is below State Pension age will ensure that the same incentives to work and save for retirement apply to the younger partner as apply to other people of the same age. Unlike Pension Credit, which in most cases allows a couple to retain only £10 a week of earned income, Universal Credit provides clear incentives for people to find and progress in work.

The younger partner in a mixed-age couple claiming Universal Credit will get the personalised support provided by Work Coaches to help them find and progress in work where appropriate. If the younger partner is unable to work because of disability or caring requirements, additional amounts may be payable and conditionality requirements adjusted. No work-related requirements will be applied to the older partner. The Government is committed to action that helps to alleviate levels of pensioner poverty.

Rushanara Ali:

[1998]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the net saving that will be made by the public purse from the abolition of the Adult Dependency Increase for pensioners from April 2020.

Guy Opperman:

In 2007 the then Labour Government decided to end State Pension ADIs as part of a package of reforms included in the Pensions Act 2007. This overall reform package, which took account that State Pension ADIs would stop from April 2020, improved the State Pension position for women meaning more women would get a full basic State Pension. The reforms also provided more generous National Insurance credits for carers. Successive Governments of differing political persuasions since 2007 have continued to support this change.

The savings from ending the provision of State Pension Adult Dependency Increases are estimated to be £125m between 2020/21 and 2024/25, based on analysis from 2018. This only reflects savings on Adult Dependency Increases expenditure and does not take into account any offsetting impacts on other benefits.

We have not made an estimate of the net saving once offsetting impacts on other benefits are taken into account. As at May 2019, total annual expenditure on State

Pension Adult Dependency Increases in 2019/20 for people in receipt of both Adult Dependency Increases and at least one of Pension Credit or Housing Benefit was estimated at £7m.

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September 2019 to Question 12926 on Social Security Benefits, on what dates the Independent Serious Case Panel has met in each year since 2018.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are absolutely committed to improving our services, especially to the most vulnerable, which is why we have set up the Serious Case Panel. The panel was developed to take themes and systemic issues that come out of various case reviews and make recommendations for improvements.

The Serious Case Panel met on 30 September 2019 and 7 November 2019 and will meet quarterly from now on.

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September 2019 to Question 12926 on Social Security Benefits, if she will publish the agendas of the Independent Serious Case Panel meetings for each meeting that panel has held since 2018.

Justin Tomlinson:

More information about the Serious Case Panel will be published in due course.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a yellow card warning system for benefit sanctions in England.

Mims Davies:

The Department committed to look at processes to give claimants a written warning, instead of a sanction, for a first sanctionable failure to attend a Work-Search Review and to undertake a series of small-scale Proof of Concepts of this warning system. The Department would like to complete all testing before making an assessment of the merits of introducing such a system.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claimants have successfully disputed the Real Time Information on which their awards have been based in the most recent 12 months for which data are available.

Will Quince:

The Department has been working closely with HMRC since Universal Credit went live in 2013 to support and inform employers who report earnings to emphasise the importance of timely reporting via the Real Time Information (RTI) system.

HMRC have guidance to reiterate to employers the importance of reporting accurate dates and the impact on payment cycles; the Financial Secretary to the Treasury is also working closely with HMRC and employers to do this.

Between February 2019 to January 2020 the Department completed over 23 million Universal Credit earnings calculations using RTI data. Of these, 107,463 were disputed and 20,418 were upheld.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[732]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of personal independence payment decisions have been challenged (a) successfully and (b) unsuccessfully at (i) mandatory reconsideration and (ii) tribunal.

Justin Tomlinson:

Data on Mandatory Reconsiderations (MR) and appeals for initial decisions following a PIP assessment can be found in Table 5A of the “Data tables: PIP award rates, clearance/outstanding times and tracking of initial decisions following a PIP assessment through to mandatory reconsiderations or appeals, to October 2019” available here:

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

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Response to consultation on cleaner domestic burning of solid fuels and wood

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (George Eustice):
[\[HCWS117\]](#)

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published the Government response to the consultation on cleaner domestic burning of solid fuels and wood on Friday 21st February. This consultation ran between August and October 2018.

Wood burning stoves and coal fires are the single largest source of the pollutant PM_{2.5} (Fine Particulate Matter), emitting twice the contribution of industrial combustion and three times the contribution of road transport. This form of pollution consists of tiny particles which penetrate deeply into body tissues, including the lungs and blood. Long term exposure can cause cardiovascular disease, strokes, asthma and lung cancer, shortening lifespans. It has been identified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as the most serious air pollutant for human health. The WHO has stated that coal is a known carcinogen and strongly recommended against its use in domestic burning.

These proposals are in line with our Clean Air Strategy, which sets out our strong commitment to achieve our National Emissions Ceiling targets. We have legally binding commitments to reach specified emissions ceilings for 2020 and 2030 for five key emissions – nitrous oxides (NO_x), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), ammonia (NH₃) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). With domestic combustion identified as the single largest contributor of PM_{2.5} emissions, it is essential to make changes in this area to make progress towards achieving these emissions targets. This announcement comes after statistics released on 14th February showed the significant progress that the government has made in tackling air pollution, with nitrogen oxide, sulphur dioxide, particulate matter, and non-methane volatile organic compounds all down significantly since 2010. However, the statistics also highlighted the impact of the increased popularity of domestic burning on PM_{2.5} pollution, emphasising the importance of these measures.

The consultation response sets out our intention to phase out the sale of house (bituminous) coal and wet wood for use in domestic burning to improve the health of millions by encouraging burners to use cleaner fuels. Wet wood is wood that has not been adequately seasoned and contains high levels of sap. Burning wet wood can result in at least twice the amount of smoke emissions than that produced when seasoned or dry wood is burned. When wet wood is burned, the heat output is significantly reduced, and chemicals build up on the inside of the stove and chimney, which increases the risk of chimney fires.

The accompanying Impact Assessment shows that the benefits accruing from the expected reduction in PM_{2.5} and Sulphur Dioxide from these proposals will reach in excess of £7 billion over the period 2020 to 2030, with the cost to business over the same time period being less than £125m.

Furthermore, concerns raised about the impact of these policies on those in or at risk of being in fuel poverty have been taken on board and additional research was carried out to review the cost and efficiency of a range of solid fuels (house coal, wood and manufactured solid fuels). This research shows that manufactured solid fuels are more efficient on an energy density basis which means they are cheaper to burn than coal. The full report has been published alongside the Government response.

In the light of the consultation and the evidence available, it is proposed to end the sale of wet wood and house (bituminous) coal in a phased approach between 2021 and 2023, giving both the public and suppliers time to move to cleaner alternatives such as dry wood or manufactured solid fuels. These proposals will come into effect in several stages:

- Wood sold in volumes of less than 2m³ will be required to be certified to show that the moisture content is 20% or less from February 2021.
- Wood sold in volumes over 2m³ will need to be sold with guidance on drying and advice on the issues of burning wet wood from February 2021.
- Small foresters will be allowed a further 12 months to become compliant with the legislation. They will need to be compliant with the 20% or less moisture content and be certified by February 2022.
- Manufactured Solid Fuels will need to be certified to confirm that they have a sulphur content below 2% and do not emit more than 5g of smoke per hour from February 2021.
- Bags of traditional house (bituminous) coal will no longer be available for sale from February 2021.
- Sales of loose coal via approved coal merchants will be phased out by February 2023.

HOME OFFICE**■ Relaxation of licensing hours to mark the 75th anniversary of Victory over Japan (VJ) Day**

The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service (Kit Malthouse):
[\[HCWS118\]](#)

Section 172 of the Licensing Act 2003 allows the Secretary of State for the Home Department to make a Licensing Hours Order ('Order') relaxing opening hours for licensed premises (any premises with a premises licence or a club premises certificate) in England and Wales to mark an occasion of 'exceptional international, national or local significance'.

The Government has decided to consult on a proposal to make an Order relaxing licensing hours in England and Wales to mark the 75th anniversary of Victory over Japan (VJ) Day. The proposed Order will extend licensed opening hours from 11pm on Saturday 15 August 2020 until 1am the following morning on Sunday 16 August 2020, for premises licensed for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises and premises licensed for the provision of regulated entertainment.

An extension to licensing hours to mark this occasion will be subject to a short consultation with selected partners including representatives of licensing authorities, the police, residents' groups, veterans' groups, the licensed trade and the Welsh Government. The consultation will focus on the scope of the Order including the dates, times, geographical extent and licensable activities to which it should apply.